The work done by NASA inevitably involves risks, and during the agency’s fifty-year history, seventeen astronauts have died in the line of duty.

Crews have been lost during ground tests (Apollo 1, January 27, 1967), while launching into space (Space Shuttle Challenger, January 28, 1986), and while returning from orbit to Earth (Space Shuttle Columbia, February 1, 2003).

NASA has responded to each tragedy by determining and correcting the cause of each accident and by working diligently to conduct subsequent space missions as safely as humanly possible.

The Space Mirror Memorial at Florida’s Kennedy Space Center is a national tribute to those who have given their lives in the quest to explore the frontiers of air and space.