

May 26, 2006 7:45am

THE early show

- [Main Page](#) >
- [Living](#) >
- [HealthWatch](#) >
- [Leisure](#) >
- [Series](#) >
- [The Saturday Early Show](#) >
- [Contributors](#) >
- [Bios](#) >

- [WIRELESS ALERTS](#)
- [E-MAIL ALERTS](#)
- POD** [PODCASTS](#)
- XML** [RSS - ALL FEEDS](#)

Interactive



Human Space Exploration

Human fascination with the heavens pitted two world powers in a race for space exploration. Follow Yuri Gagarin's historic first orbital flight and learn more about the pioneers of space travel.

Interactive

[E-MAIL THIS STORY](#) [PRINTABLE VERSION](#)

The Real First Man In Space

(Page 2 of 2)

April 13, 2006



The Early Show co-anchor Harry Smith speaks with Joe Kittinger (CBS/The Early Show)

1 2

[PREVIOUS IMAGE](#) [NEXT IMAGE](#)

(CBS)

On that 483rd mission, flying at twice the speed of sound, "The world's greatest fighter pilot on the other side shot me down ... and I ejected at Mach-1, at about 18,000 feet," he said. "I landed and was immediately captured, and I spent the next 11 months at the 'Hanoi Hilton,'" the infamous torture chamber that housed dozens of American POWs, including Sen. John McCain.

After retiring from the Air Force, Kittinger went back to flying balloons. In 1984, he became the first person to fly

a balloon solo across the Atlantic, going from Maine to Italy in 83 hours and setting four world records in the process.

Advertisement



Bush's Space Boost

Details of the president's plan for a new American campaign in space.



RELATED STORIES & LINKS

NASA Marks Shuttle's 25th Anniversary

First Columbia Liftoff Celebrated As Chief Predicts New "Space Race"



NASA OKs Asteroids Study, After All

Just Weeks After Killing Project, Space Agency Relaunches Mission



NASA Launches Three 'Microsatellites'

55-Pound Devices Will Study Earth's Magnetic Fields



Discovery Launch Delayed Until Summer

Fuel Tank Sensor Problem Forces NASA To Postpone From May To At Least July



NASA To Retire Space Shuttle

Atlantis Will Be Retired First; Others To Be Scrapped By 2010



French adventurer and retired paratrooper Michel Fournier is trying to break Kittinger's longstanding record for heights from which someone fell safely to Earth. He's been preparing for 20 years.

Two other jumpers have died trying to break Kittinger's record. Some people think Fournier is crazy. He sold everything he owns and spent \$10 million — and has failed twice.

While Kittinger's record is important, Fournier also wants to prove something: that an escape system on the space shuttle would have been able to save the lives of the Columbia astronauts.

Says Fournier, "When you present the project and present the scientific aspect, that this project is for the rescue of astronauts, we start to see, 'OK, this project is not that crazy. It's doable, and Joe Kittinger did it.'"

Kittinger has been waiting for someone to break his record. "I really thought that somebody would go higher than that pretty soon," he said with a chuckle. "It's been 46 years. It's not easy to do."

For complete details about Fournier's project, [click here](#).

1 | 2

©MMVI, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.

INSIDE The Early Show



Summer Strawberries In Yummy Desserts

Tori Ritchie Serves Up Recipes For Delicious Treats

- Anderson Cooper: Coping With Grief
- On Tape: SUV Rolling Over And Over
- From LSU To DJ To GIs
- [More](#)

TOP STORIES

- Bush, Blair Admit 'Missteps' In Iraq
- Treasury Secretary Poised To Resign
- Senate Approves Immigration Bill
- Ex-Enron Execs Found Guilty

MOST POPULAR STORIES

- Enron's Snakes Finally Snared
- Moms Rally Around Britney
- A Real Invisibility Cloak
- Taylor Hicks Basks In 'Idol' Win

[Back To Top](#)

CBS NEWS VIDEO

EARLY SHOW VIDEOS [All Early Show Videos](#)

['The Early Show' Online](#) | E-Mail

[Derby Winner's Recovery](#) | E-Mail

[Taylor Hicks: 'American Idol'](#) | E-Mail

[McCain On Immigration Bill](#) | E-Mail

TOP VIDEOS [All Videos](#)

[Ex-Enron Execs Are Guilty](#) | E-Mail

[Ex-Enron Employees See Justice](#) | E-Mail

[Vets Agency Head 'Mad As Hell'](#) | E-Mail

[Online Identity Theft](#) | E-Mail

[More Video](#)

[Advertising Links](#) | [What's This?](#)

Save on All Your Calls with Vonage

Save 50% on your bill with Vonage unlimited local/long distance - \$24.99/mo.

www.vonage.com

Auto Insurance: Save with Unitrin Direct

Excellent coverage at low rates. Get a fast, free online quote.

www.unitrindirect.com

2.75% Fixed Student Loan Consolidation

70% lower student loan payments - fixed rate, no fees, qualify in one minute.

www.nextstudent.com

Wireless Alerts: [CBS News To Go](#) **E-Mail Sign-Up:** [Breaking News](#) | [Today On CBS News](#) | [60 Minutes](#) | [48 Hours](#) | [The Early Show](#) | [CBS Sunday Morning](#) | [News Summaries](#)

Recommended Sites: [CBS Corporation](#) | [CBS.com](#) | [CBS SportsLine](#) | [UPN.com](#) | [CBS Store](#) | [CBS Careers](#) | [CBS Cares](#)

[Site Map](#) | [Video Site Map](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [CBS Bios](#) | [Internships](#)



SEARCH

[CBS News Text](#)

[Videos](#)

[The Web](#)

Powered by
YAHOO!

©MMVI, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.

THE early show

- [Main Page](#) >
- [Living](#) >
- [HealthWatch](#) >
- [Leisure](#) >
- [Series](#) >
- [The Saturday Early Show](#) >
- [Contributors](#) >
- [Bios](#) >

> WIRELESS ALERTS

> E-MAIL ALERTS

POD PODCASTS

XML RSS - ALL FEEDS

Interactive



Human Space Exploration

Human fascination with the heavens pitted two world powers in a race for space exploration. Follow Yuri Gagarin's historic first orbital flight and learn more about the pioneers of space travel.

Interactive

> E-MAIL THIS STORY

> PRINTABLE VERSION

The Real First Man In Space

(Page 2 of 2)

April 13, 2006



Fournier (CBS/The Early Show)

1 2

< PREVIOUS IMAGE

NEXT IMAGE >

(CBS)

On that 483rd mission, flying at twice the speed of sound, "The world's greatest fighter pilot on the other side shot me down ... and I ejected at Mach-1, at about 18,000 feet," he said. "I landed and was immediately captured, and I spent the next 11 months at the 'Hanoi Hilton,'" the infamous torture chamber that housed dozens of American POWs, including Sen. John McCain.

After retiring from the Air Force, Kittinger went back to flying balloons. In 1984, he became the first person to fly a balloon solo across the Atlantic, going from Maine to Italy in 83 hours and setting four world records in the process.

Advertisement



Bush's Space Boost

Details of the president's plan for a new American campaign in space.



RELATED STORIES & LINKS

NASA Marks Shuttle's 25th Anniversary

First Columbia Liftoff Celebrated As Chief Predicts New "Space Race"



NASA OKs Asteroids Study, After All

Just Weeks After Killing Project, Space Agency Relaunches Mission



NASA Launches Three 'Microsatellites'

55-Pound Devices Will Study Earth's Magnetic Fields



Discovery Launch Delayed Until Summer

Fuel Tank Sensor Problem Forces NASA To Postpone From May To At Least July



NASA To Retire Space Shuttle

Atlantis Will Be Retired First; Others To Be Scrapped By 2010



French adventurer and retired paratrooper Michel Fournier is trying to break Kittinger's longstanding record for heights from which someone fell safely to Earth. He's been preparing for 20 years.

Two other jumpers have died trying to break Kittinger's record. Some people think Fournier is crazy. He sold everything he owns and spent \$10 million — and has failed twice.

While Kittinger's record is important, Fournier also wants to prove something: that an escape system on the space shuttle would have been able to save the lives of the Columbia astronauts.

Says Fournier, "When you present the project and present the scientific aspect, that this project is for the rescue of astronauts, we start to see, 'OK, this project is not that crazy. It's doable, and Joe Kittinger did it.'"

Kittinger has been waiting for someone to break his record. "I really thought that somebody would go higher than that pretty soon," he said with a chuckle. "It's been 46 years. It's not easy to do."

For complete details about Fournier's project, [click here](#).

1 | 2

©MMVI, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.

INSIDE The Early Show



Summer Strawberries In Yummy Desserts

Tori Ritchie Serves Up Recipes For Delicious Treats

- Anderson Cooper: Coping With Grief
- On Tape: SUV Rolling Over And Over
- From LSU To DJ To GIs
- [More](#)

TOP STORIES

- Bush, Blair Admit 'Missteps' In Iraq
- Treasury Secretary Poised To Resign
- Senate Approves Immigration Bill
- Ex-Enron Execs Found Guilty

MOST POPULAR STORIES

- Enron's Snakes Finally Snared
- Moms Rally Around Britney
- A Real Invisibility Cloak
- Taylor Hicks Basks In 'Idol' Win



[Back To Top](#)

CBS NEWS VIDEO

EARLY SHOW VIDEOS

[All Early Show Videos](#)

['The Early Show' Online](#) | E-Mail

[Derby Winner's Recovery](#) | E-Mail

[Taylor Hicks: 'American Idol'](#) | E-Mail

[McCain On Immigration Bill](#) | E-Mail

TOP VIDEOS

[All Videos](#)

[Ex-Enron Execs Are Guilty](#) | E-Mail

[Ex-Enron Employees See Justice](#) | E-Mail

[Vets Agency Head 'Mad As Hell'](#) | E-Mail

[Online Identity Theft](#) | E-Mail

[More Video](#)

[Advertising Links](#) | [What's This?](#)

Save on All Your Calls with Vonage

Save 50% on your bill with Vonage unlimited local/long distance - \$24.99/mo.

www.vonage.com

Auto Insurance: Save with Unitrin Direct

Excellent coverage at low rates. Get a fast, free online quote.

www.unitrindirect.com

2.75% Fixed Student Loan Consolidation

70% lower student loan payments - fixed rate, no fees, qualify in one minute.

www.nextstudent.com

Wireless Alerts: [CBS News To Go](#) **E-Mail Sign-Up:** [Breaking News](#) | [Today On CBS News](#) | [60 Minutes](#) | [48 Hours](#) | [The Early Show](#) | [CBS Sunday Morning](#) | [News Summaries](#)

Recommended Sites: [CBS Corporation](#) | [CBS.com](#) | [CBS SportsLine](#) | [UPN.com](#) | [CBS Store](#) | [CBS Careers](#) | [CBS Cares](#)

[Site Map](#) | [Video Site Map](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [CBS Bios](#) | [Internships](#)



SEARCH

[CBS News Text](#)

[Videos](#)

[The Web](#)

Powered by
YAHOO!

©MMVI, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.