Tragedies Of Space Flight

There are many benefits of space flight but unfortunately 21 people have died in the effort to go to space. These people were on Apollo 1, Soyuz 1, Soyuz 11, Challenger, and Collumbia. All which have sadly failed to safely return tis crew to Earth.

One of these failed missions was Apollo 1. Apollo 1 killed a crew of three including, Gus Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee on January, 27, 1967. Something that makes Apollo 1 different from other tragedies was that Apollo 1 failed during a practice launch. Things started to go wrong when the astronauts smelled something strange in their space suit. A high oxygen flow through the cabin also caught their attention. They thought they had fixed it. Other things started going wrong, including faulty communication which they fixed for the most part. But then suddenly an electric fault sparked and a fire swept through the cabin killing the entire crew of three.

Later, approximately 3 months after Apollo 1, tragedy struck again. The tragedy was Soyuz 1. Soyuz 1 killed Russian, Vladimir Komarov, on April, 24, 1967. Unlike Apollo 1, Soyuz 1 launched successfully on April, 23, 1967. Unfortunately, things started going wrong right off the bat. During launch, the left satellite did not come out cutting the power supply in half. Because of that one problem, things automatically started to go wrong. On April, 24, 1967, it was time to return to Earth. The return to Earth began well until the main parachute failed to come out. Without the main parachute the spacecraft came crashing down and hit the ground hard. The impact caused the solid fuel booster to blow up, killing Vladimir Komarov.

About 4 years later, tragedy struck a third time. This tragedy was Soyuz 11. Soyuz 11 carried aboard Georgi Dobrovolski, Victor Patsayer, and Vladislav Volkov. Like Soyuz 1, Soyuz 11 launched successfully June, 6, 1971. The point of the mission was to dock with Salyut 1 for three weeks. Everything went well until reentry. During reentry a valve opened causing a pressure leak through the cabin. Today during reentry people are more protected, but not in 1971. The capsule continued to fall towards earth staying on the right route. Back on earth the person communicating with the astronauts thought there was a communication problem, but only when the rescue opened the capsule did they find out the three of them did not make it.

For almost 15 years everything went well in the space program struck again. This time the disaster was the Challenger. The Challenger carried Mike Smith, Dick Scobee, Ron McNair, Ellison Onizuka, Christa McAuliffe, Gregory Jarvis, and Judith Resnik, on January, 28, 1986. Right from the start things looked wrong. On the day of the launch, it was 32 degrees fahrenheit, and footlong icicles hung from the launch pad. The cold temperatures caused the solid rocket boosters to allow air to enter. As the space shuttle rocked through the air, flames started making their way out of the boosters. The flames burned through the fuel tank and supports that held the boosters to the fuel tank, causing the boosters to fall. On the way down the boosters hit the fuel tank causing it to blow up 73 seconds after lift off.

NASA learned from these mistakes, but about 17 years another setback took place on February 1, 2003. On February 1, David Brown, William McCool, Michael Anderson, Kalpana Chawla, Rick Husband, Laurel Clark, and Lian Ramon lost their lives in the Columbia. During launch, a piece of foam insulation the size of a couch from the fuel tank hit a seal on the left wing. Surprisingly the Columbia was able to make it into space. During reentry through the small gap the seal left allowed hot gas inside the cabin. This caused Columbia to blow apart.

Although Apollo 1, Soyuz 1, Soyuz 11, Challenger and Columbia have failed to return their crew safely to earth, there are still many benefits of space flight. To this very day people still go to space. They just have to hope for the best.