

June 15

June 15, 1215 - King John set his seal to Magna Carta, the first charter of English liberties, guaranteeing basic rights that have since become the foundation of modern democracies around the world.

June 16

June 16, 1963 - Valentina Tereshkova, 26, became the first woman in space as her Soviet spacecraft, Vostok 6, took off from the Tyuratam launch site. She manually controlled the spacecraft completing 48 orbits in 71 hours before landing safely.

Birthday - American author and photographer John Griffin (1920-1980) was born in Dallas, Texas. He darkened his white skin using chemicals and ultraviolet light, then kept a journal on his experiences posing as an African American traveling through the deep South. The journal was published as the book, *Black Like Me*.

June 17

June 17, 1972 - Following a seemingly routine burglary, five men were arrested at the National Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington, DC. However, subsequent investigations revealed the burglars were actually agents hired by the Committee for the Re-election of President Richard Nixon. A long chain of events then followed in which the president and top aides became involved in an extensive coverup of this and other White House sanctioned illegal activities, eventually leading to the resignation of President Nixon on August 9, 1974.

June 18

June 18, 1812 - After much debate, the U.S. Senate voted 19 to 13 in favor of a declaration of war against Great Britain, prompted by Britain's violation of America's rights on the high seas and British incitement of Indian warfare on the Western frontier. The next day, President James Madison officially proclaimed the U.S. to be in a state of war. The War of 1812 lasted over two years and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium on December 24, 1814.

June 18, 1815 - On the fields near Waterloo in central Belgium, 72,000 French troops, led by Napoleon, suffered a crushing military defeat from a combined Allied army of 113,000 British, Dutch, Belgian, and Prussian troops. Thus ended 23 years of warfare between France and the other powers of Europe. Napoleon was then sent into exile on the island of St. Helena off the coast of Africa. On May 5, 1821, the former Emperor died alone on the tiny island, abandoned by everyone.

June 18, 1983 - Dr. Sally Ride, a 32-year-old physicist and pilot, became the first American woman in space, beginning a six-day mission aboard the space shuttle Challenger, launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Birthday - English explorer George Mallory (1886-1924) was born in Mobberley, Cheshire, England. When asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, he simply answered, "Because it is there." He disappeared while climbing through the mists toward its summit on the morning of June 8, 1924. His body, perfectly preserved due to the cold conditions, was discovered by climbers in 1999, just 600 meters (2,030 feet) from the summit.

June 19

June 19, 1953 - Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed by electrocution at Sing Sing Prison in New York. They had been found guilty of providing vital information on the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union during 1944-45. They were the first U.S. civilians to be sentenced to death for espionage and were also the only married couple ever executed together in the U.S.

Birthday - Baseball great Lou Gehrig (1903-1941) was born in New York City. He played in 2,130 consecutive games and seven World Series for the New York Yankees and had a lifetime batting average of .340. He contracted the degenerative muscle disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, now called 'Lou Gehrig's disease,' and died on June 2, 1941.

June 20

June 20, 1782 - The U.S. Congress officially adopted the Great Seal of the United States of America.

Birthday - American military hero and actor Audie Murphy (1924-1971) was born in Kingston, Texas. He was the most decorated American soldier of World War II, awarded 37 medals and decorations, including the Medal of Honor for single-handedly turning back a German infantry company by climbing on a burning U.S. tank destroyer and firing its .50-cal. machine gun, killing 50 Germans. He later became an actor in western and war movies and made 45 films including; The Red Badge of Courage (1951), Destry (1954), and To Hell and Back (1955), based on his autobiography. He died May 28, 1971, in a plane crash near Roanoke, Virginia.

June 21

June 21, 1964 - Three white civil rights workers - James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner - left Meridian, Mississippi, at 9 a.m. to investigate a church burning. They were expected back by 4 p.m. When they failed to return, a search was begun. Their murdered bodies were discovered on August 4.

Birthday - French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) was born in Paris. Dubbed the "father of existentialism," in 1964, he rejected the Nobel Prize for Literature when it was awarded to him.