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13th January 2021  
Recount

I woke up from a dreamless sleep feeling refreshed. It was the day that I made my attempt to break the women's air speed record and hopefully the sound barrier in the process. I remember feeling a mixture of anxiety and excitement as I made my way to the airfield. Once there I went straight to the locker room at the hangar to change into my air suit. I zipped up my boots, I took my aerodynamic gloves out of the locker and put them on and then, nervously, I picked up my flight helmet from the old wooden bench.

I came out of the locker room and there it was the plane that I would be using to attempt to break the sound barrier. The plate paint glistened in the sun as it gently rolled into place. The plane was stunningly placed on the apron (the area where the plane stands before going to the runway). The workers, the technicians, and the mechanics were all busy completing the final pre-checks on the plane. The bright cobalt sky with some thin clouds, I could tell it was clear for take-off. The mechanic straps me in as I get comfortable in my seat and gives me a friendly smile as he clips my helmet strap into place. No words needed. He closed the canopy and the engine sprouted to life.

I was feeling in awe of the great engine that progressively roared after I had pressed the ignition button. As it came to life, so did I. The strong smell of oil gave me a feeling of nostalgia for the first time I had flown with Raymond Guillaume, when my journey really began. I had moments of feeling isolated when I could see the workers outside talking to each other but I could not hear them. I wondered what they might be saying, were they happy with the plane? Did they discover a last minute problem? These thoughts quickly went away, I already knew everything about the newborn, its qualities and its flaws.

I carefully removed the plane from the hanger onto the runway, this was no time to rush. I got the all clear and pushed on the throttle, the plane accelerated and so did my heart, the adrenaline overcame me. It was thrilling, this was it, i'm about to start my attempt to break the sound barrier, then ZOOM up I went into the sky I thought to myself 'i can't believe i'm about to do this. I haven't flown for some time. It's wonderful, it's wonderful. I was dancing smoothly in the air, threw the fluffy clouds and sawing threw the pink sky. I do a couple of barrel rolls to express my happiness and joy and i'm euphoric with the sense of feeling free. Then I put the plane into a vertical climb when I suddenly felt something go wrong.

The plane stuttered and I found myself upside down with the clouds now above not below and that's when the blackness descended on me and I felt disoriented. I was scared and I was frantically pushing and pulling buttons to regain control. I was trying to workout what went wrong but nothing worked. Is this supposed to happen? Can I get out of this? I had so many questions to ask myself what went wrong... and then I was calm, I felt like I was floating and I couldn't move or do anything. Suddenly I felt a kick of life and sprouted back to reality and I restarted the engine, using the bend radius, reducing the motor speed then regaining control....

I could see the ground below me, the shadow of my plane. I knew I did it. I landed the plane to the safety of the ground, and seeing the architect and mechanic lifted my spirits and brought a smile to my face. As I stepped out of the plane, I felt unstable and it felt like the plane was shaking. Eventually I stood in front of them in triumph. As quick as a flash the mechanic ran over to me and congratulated me for my achievement. The day after that I was awarded with the title of 'the first women to break the sound barrier.' Despite my incident from the sky I was determined to carry on flying for the military. That was the time I was the first woman to break the sound barrier.

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