

Space shuttle lifts off

Craft designed to make flight routine

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — So what's the big deal?

What's so different about the space shuttle?

Well, for one thing, they won't stick it into a museum after its first flight. It will be used again and again. In fact, the idea is to make trips into space as routine as an airline flight from Milwaukee to Denver.

For another, while it's only carrying two men on the first test flight, the shuttle is designed to take up to seven people and 65,000 pounds of cargo. The passengers won't have to be medically perfect humans, either.

The shuttle's engines are fueled by the same liquid hydrogen-oxygen combination used in the Saturn rockets that launched the Apollo spacecraft. But the shuttle also has two solid-fuel rocket boosters that drop into the Atlantic after

they are spent, to be taken in tow by two recovery ships.

Speaking of recovery ships, the huge U.S. Navy fleets deployed to fish out astronauts can anchor aweigh. The space agency has two ships, one for each rocket.

The reason the Mercury and Gemini capsules were fished out of the water was mainly that there were astronauts aboard — and in the case of Apollo, there were moon rocks too. But the only thing a capsule was good for was show. Its plumbing and electronics were shot by salt water.

The space shuttle, on the other hand, has wings to let it glide to earth and wheels to ease it down. Astronaut Robert Crippen says that's a lot more dignified than being retrieved from the water like a piece of driftwood.

Shuttle will launch defense satellites

WASHINGTON (AP) — Although U.S. officials stress civilian aspects of the space shuttle, the launch of the winged Columbia is vitally important to America's security network.

By the mid-1980s, defense officials predict, the United States will be nearly totally dependent on the manned

shuttle for placing satellites into orbit to spy on military developments inside the Soviet Union, for early warning against surprise missile attack, for military communications, navigation and weather forecasting.

No longer will such military satellites be sent aloft aboard rockets fired from Earth. How-

ever, as a hedge against possible further slippages in the shuttle program, the Pentagon has ordered some additional Titan III rockets to serve as backup boosters.

In a summary of the Pentagon's expectations of dividends from the space shuttle, former Defense Secretary Harold Brown told Congress last year that scientists forecast "reduced launch costs, increased reliability, increased weight and volume for our payloads," and greater flexibility.

"We are going to be able to recover our spacecraft from low orbit, and to exploit man's capabilities in space for conducting experiments, and perhaps in interacting with operational systems," Brown said.

"Eventually, we may perform on-orbit servicing of spacecraft and assemble large structures in space."

The first defense-related experiments aboard the space shuttle are not due until the fourth mission next April, according to present planning.

One key experiment will relate to American research looking toward development of laser weapons in space.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency reported to Congress last month that these experiments, code-named "Talon Gold," will be pointed toward achieving significant improvements in precise direction of laser beams so that they will be effective in space.

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

PORTLAND — Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., is upset with a contest designed to produce letters in support of the Reagan administration's budget recommendations.

The contest — which provides 55 winners with a free boat trip down the Willamette River — is sponsored by CTL Management of Portland, a firm that manages about 6,000 rental units in Oregon and Washington.

Fliers announcing the contest were sent to about 2,000 tenants of the company. The contest, scheduled to end Friday, is open to anyone who submits a letter in support of the administration's budget plan.

AuCoin says the contest is an improper attempt by a special-interest group to influence public events.

The Oregon Democrat said Wednesday he had received several complaints from tenants who received the flier.

SALEM — Gov. Vic Atiyeh opposes amending one of his energy conservation bills to prevent Alumax from building a plant in Umatilla, the Senate Energy Committee was told Thursday.

Gubernatorial assistant Pat Amedeo testified that the bill (SB111) was designed to encourage efficient use of energy in commercial buildings through on-site energy audits and financing.

Sen. Ted Hallock, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, wants to put into the bill a clause designed to prevent construction of an aluminum plant. The proposed amendment sets a limit on how much energy a new manufacturing plant can consume and requires a certain number of workers in relation to energy consumption.

The exact figures that would specifically prevent Alumax from building a plant in Oregon have not been worked out yet and so the amendment has blanks where the figures belong.

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