

National/Regional

After causes of disaster found, astronauts say they want to fly

SPACE CENTER, Houston (AP) — Members of the nation's astronaut corps, speaking for the first time publicly about the Challenger disaster, say they are looking forward to getting answers on what caused the shuttle explosion and then resume the flights.

NASA needs "to have an opportunity to find out what the cause of the accident was, any potential problems and how they can be fixed, implement them and go fly again," astronaut Joe Engle said Monday in an interview.

The space agency was allowing Engle, Charles Gordon Fullerton, Vance Brand and Hank Hartsfield to be interviewed at Johnson Space Center.

Engle said his confidence in the shuttle program was not shaken by the disaster, but he did expect changes to be made in the decision-making process. That process has come under close scrutiny by a special commission investigating the Challenger disaster, in which six astronauts and a teacher were killed.

Asked about the commission hearings and statements from chairman William Rogers, who said the launch decision was flawed, Engle said he was no less confident.

He said astronauts probably will become involved in some areas of the decision-making process, but, "There are a lot of decision-making

areas, and it's impossible for the crew to cover all of them, and somebody has to make those decisions."

Engle also said there have been discussions for some time on a system that would allow astronauts to escape in case of an emergency. The proposals range from a total escape capsule to a system that allows each individual to eject.

"It's still theoretically possible but whether or not it's practical I don't know," he said.

The astronauts felt a loss after the explosion, Engle said, but he did not believe there was a morale problem. Astronauts have continued their training program and he has been doing some flying, he said.

In an interview published today in USA Today, Fullerton said he wants to know what happened to the Challenger flight.

There seems to be some disagreement over who should have done what, Fullerton told the newspaper. "All of that seems to be secondary. I'd like to know what really went wrong."

The newspaper said Fullerton, Loren Shriver, Frederick Hauck and Don Williams spoke over the weekend. All but Fullerton were scheduled for missions this year.

The astronauts said they watched last week's investigative commission hearings closely and noticed conflicting statements, but their concern is finding the explosion's cause.

Reagan intensifies campaign to give Contras \$100 million

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan, battling for congressional approval of \$100 million for Nicaragua's anti-government rebels, warned Monday that defeat of the package would trigger a "strategic disaster" that could lead to the establishment of Soviet military bases "on America's doorstep."

Intensifying his campaign to renew military aid to the rebels, Reagan met in the Oval Office with three leaders of anti-government forces.

The president said defeat of the rebels, known as Contras, "would open up the possibility of Soviet military bases on America's doorstep, threaten the security of the Panama Canal, inaugurate a vast migration march to the United States of hundreds of thousands of refugees."

"Those who would invite this strategic disaster by abandoning yet another fighting ally of this country in the field will be held fully accountable by history," the president vowed.

Reagan faces a long-odds battle to win approval of the aid package, and he used a long list of arguments to defend his proposal.

"Defeat for the Contras would mean a second Cuba on the mainland of North America," he said.

"It would be a major defeat in the quest for democracy in our hemisphere. It would mean consolidation of a privileged sanctuary for terrorists and subversives just two days' driving time from Harlingen, Texas," Reagan added.

"I've asked for \$100 million in assistance and we'll fight for it," he vowed. "Simple humanitarian aid is not enough."

Reagan met with three leaders of the Unified Nicaraguan Opposition, UNO. Aides said he had no plans to meet with leaders of other rebel factions also in Washington.

The Contras are in Washington for what is expected to be their most extensive congressional lobbying offensive to date.

Search for bodies in Columbia resumes following accident that sent car over rail

PORTLAND (AP) — The search resumed Monday for a car that plunged off the Glenn Jackson Bridge and into the Columbia River on Saturday.

Police say as many as six people were in the car, but the exact number of missing people remained uncertain. A Vancouver, Wash., man has been charged with vehicular manslaughter in connection with the crash.

The body of Lisa Lovell, 22, of Aloha, surfaced about an hour after the accident occurred, but no other bodies have been recovered.

Portland police Sgt. Ed Freeman said relatives of Lovell believe there were five adults and a child in the vehicle.

The Multnomah County medical examiner's office released Lovell's identity Sunday after releasing an incorrect name for the victim several hours earlier.

"The family came in to view the body and it turned out it wasn't her — it was her cousin," assistant medical examiner Terry Sparks said. "The family suggested strongly that there may have been several other occupants in the car, none of which have been recovered."

Lovell's father, David Frank Lovell of Scappoose, said relatives believe there were three women, two men and a child in the car as it headed toward Orchards, Wash., for a birthday party for Lovell's uncle.

Witnesses had said they saw two people in the car before it was forced over the bridge's 32-inch high guardrail, Sparks said authorities were unsure if the woman whose name was incorrectly released as the victim had been in the car. She was a roommate of Lovell.

The accident occurred when a car driven by James D. Walston,

23, of Vancouver, Wash., struck another vehicle, then struck a third car, forcing it over the bridge's guardrail.

Walston was taken to St. Joseph Community Hospital in Vancouver, where he was treated for minor injuries. He was charged with vehicular homicide, a Washington crime, and held in the Clark County Jail in Vancouver.

Freeman said Walston was charged under Washington law because he was taken into that state before being arrested. The bridge carries Interstate 205 over the Columbia and is on the state line between Oregon and Washington.

Portland police Sgt. Al Akers said a bottle of beer and cups that smelled of liquor were found in Walston's car.

Officers said there were about a dozen minor accidents caused by drivers who slowed to view the accident scene Saturday.



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