

Astronauts Give Selves Good Chance Of Safe Return In 'Project Mercury'

Langley Research Center, Va. - (UPI) - America's Astronauts say "hog wash" to a high-level claim that the first space will have a better chance of landing safely than pioneer aviators had in their early craft.

"We know that the stakes are high," said Lt. Col. John Herschel Glenn Jr., a Marine Corps jet ace who at 38 is the oldest of seven military pilots training for a trail-blazing flight into orbit around the earth.

Glenn, who used the term "hog wash" was one of the four "Project Mercury" Astronauts interviewed here during

a lull in their rigorous program of physical, technical and psychological conditioning.

They had been asked about a comment made some time ago by Dr. Hugh Dryden, deputy chief of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which is in charge of their project. Dryden said the first man in orbit will be safer "than almost anybody in an airplane prior to 1910."

The Astronauts, in Glenn's view, feel they have "better than an 80 per cent chance" of returning alive from their rocket-powered journeys into the unknown.

"We're willing to take that chance," added the sandy-haired holder of a transcontinental speed record.

Lt. Cmdr. Alan B. Shepard, 35-year-old Navy test pilot, was less skeptical than Glenn about comparing their odds

with those of the earliest aviators. They were asked, for example, if they thought they would be safer than Col. Charles A. Lindbergh when he made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927.

"We have more engineering and mechanical skill behind us than Lindbergh had," Shepard said.

"But we're in a different ball park," Glenn countered, and Shepard agreed.

Not Taken Lightly
Air Force Capt. Donald K. Slayton, 35, said that the question of coming back is something he and the other Astronauts have not taken lightly, but it does not frighten them.

"We know we are going to have to take a few calculated risks," he said. "There are calculated risks in driving from home to the airport."

"If I had my own way about it, I'd go tomorrow," Slayton said. "But we all know there is still a lot to be done. This is no stunt. There's no point if we don't gain the maximum amount of knowledge."

Would Be Faster

Lt. Malcolm S. Carpenter, 35, and another of the three Navy men on the team, said that the seven Astronauts would be even faster to raise their hands now than they were in April when newsmen asked how many expected a safe return from space.

No one will know who will make the first trip into space until the morning of the journey. It will probably take place in a year and will be a test flight to an altitude of 100 miles for a distance of 140 to 150 miles in the nose of a short-range Redstone artillery missile.

The pioneer spaceman will be chosen on the basis of which of the Astronauts happens to be in the best mental and physical shape at the time. But all of them will take part in subsequent flights including the big one in perhaps two years, when an Astronaut riding a capsule six feet wide will be rocketed out of gravity's range and into an 18,000-mile-an-hour orbit around the earth.

The first flight will take about four and a half hours, with future flights increasing to about 26 hours. Retro-rockets will slow the capsule down to the point where gravity and parachutes can take over.

To Become Expert
In preparation, each of the Astronauts has been assigned to become expert in one special feature of the forthcoming flights and to brief the others on details. Their full-time devotion to this duty is symbolized by the 24-hour-dial wrist watches they wear (on Greenwich time) so that they can become accustomed to telling time instantaneously with such devices. Their capsules will have this type of time-piece.

The Astronauts admit that some griping is inevitable in a program as arduous as theirs. For example, they would like to be able to spend more time with their families - each is married and has one or more children - than their frequent travel schedules will allow.

But there is a happy-go-luckiness mirrored in a sign at the front of their study room. The sign is a jocular reference to the Navy psychologist, Lt. Robert Voas, who has been testing their reflexes and mental processes since training began five months ago.

Posted above a toy replica of a shrunken head, the sign declares: "Astronauts beware! This is the product of the Voas treatment."

Parents' Week End Planned at College

Salem-Parents of six Willamette university students from Jackson county plan to attend the university's ninth annual Parents' week end Oct. 9-11.

They are Mr. and Mrs. G. Ross Adams, parents of Nancy Adams, a sophomore majoring in business education; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Olson, parents of Rodney W. Olson, sophomore majoring in liberal arts; Mr. and Mrs. Emil Peterson, parents of Sonja Peterson, senior in music; Mrs. Horace Doolen, mother of Rosemary Doolen, freshmen in music; and Mr. and Mrs. Victor Milnes, parents of Greg Milnes, junior, all from Medford; and Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Minshall, Jacksonville, parents of Marsha, freshman majoring in liberal arts.

While at Willamette, the parents will attend several events including the all-campus sing, a football game, a talent show, barbeque and meetings with professors.

The Government of Tanganyika recently introduced legislation to curb the hunting of lions and rhinoceroses because of the danger that they might become extinct in the territory.



GUARDS POSTED - National Guardsmen were posted throughout the Charleston, S. C. area to prevent looting of wrecked homes and buildings as a result of Hurricane Gracie. Here a Guardsman watches over the area around Folly Beach resort where several homes were destroyed.



FATAL WRECK-Twisted metal is all that remains of a school bus after a truck loaded with salt smashed into it near Cooper, Texas. Four students, a teacher and the school principal died in the crash, which also injured the other 22 students and the truck driver. The students, members of the Pep Club from Mt. Vernon High School, were on their way to a football game.

NEED TAME BEAR

Hollywood-UPI - A major Hollywood studio is looking for a big, tame brown bear to wrestle with actor Robert Ryan in the filming of an

Alaskan novel. "Unless they find a bear tame enough to satisfy me, they're going to have to get a man in Bob Ryan's skin for this fight," the actor said.

A tungsten rod five feet long and the thickness of a pencil can produce a strand of wire extending from New York to Montreal, 470 miles, in modern manufacturing.

LOSES LEAGUE MONEY
London-UPI - Accountant Francis G. Swain pleaded guilty Wednesday to embezzling \$8,500 in funds from "Our Dumb Friends League," an animal protection society and was sentenced to two years in prison. Swain told the judge he lost most of the money betting on dog and horse races.

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