

Astronauts Not Discouraged by Recovery Failure

Editor's Note: The Air Force's failure to recover space capsules from Discoverer satellites has not discouraged the seven U.S. astronauts. In the following exclusive interview they tell why.

By DARRELL GARWOOD
Langley Field, Va. — America's seven astronauts are convinced that if they were launched in a space capsule now they could bring it back safely from an orbit around the earth.

They are not worried about failure of efforts to recover capsules from orbit but feel success will be attained once man is shot into space in such a vehicle.

These space pioneers involved in "Project Mercury" say you can't rely on automatic devices alone to do the job and that man himself will provide the reliability that has been lacking.

Every one of the astronauts is confident that even if all the automatic devices should fail he could operate manual controls to slow down the orbiting vehicle and bring it back.

Man Gives Reliability
"It's a misconception that you have to build a system that is perfect automatically before you can put a man in space," Air Force Capt. Donald K. Slayton told United Press International. "Actually, it's the man aboard that gives you reliability."

Slayton pointed out that automatic instruments are available to fly planes but that no commercial airline would think of relying on the instruments to the exclusion of human pilots.

It is no secret that each of the astronauts, who have been training at this base for six months, hopes he will be the first man rocketed into orbit.

But they are trying to de-emphasize "firsts." Each is training either to support in some special way the man who is selected for the space attempt.

Slayton believes that reliability in manned space flight may be about doubled as compared to all-automatic orbital recovery operations.

99 Per Cent Reliable
"I don't know just what the figures would be," he said, "but I can easily imagine that if a system were 50 per cent reliable automatically it might be 99 per cent reliable when you add a human pilot at the controls."

Slayton's statements were made in an interview with four of the astronauts, all test pilots, who were picked from the military services by the Civilian National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Backing his views were Air Force Capt. Gordon Cooper, of Shawnee, Okla.; Navy Lt. Comdr. Walter M. Schirra, of Hackensack, N.J.; and Navy Lt. Comdr. Alan B. Shepard Jr., of East Derry, N.H.

Two others, Air Force Capt. Virgil I. Grissom of Mitchell Ind., and Marine Lt. Col. John H. Glenn, of Cambridge, Ohio, were in St. Louis for tests of a new pressure suit. The seventh, Navy Lt. Scott Carpenter, of Boulder, Colo., was unavailable.

Thanksgiving Program Scheduled Wednesday

Griffin Creek school will have an assembly Wednesday, Nov. 25, at 10 a.m., presented by the two fourth graders.

The Thanksgiving program, planned by pupils and teachers will illustrate the many things associated with Thanksgiving. Scenes will show freedom of worship, education and democratic living. Several appropriate songs will be sung by the group.

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