

X15 Rocket Ship Blows Apart; Test Pilot Has Narrow Escape

Edwards AFB, Calif. — (AP) — Stately test pilot Scott Crossfield took a stride Wednesday night's narrow escape when an X 15 experimental rocket ship blew apart while he sat in the cockpit ground testing its new 60,000-pound thrust rocket engine.

"You have to expect to take risks in my profession," he said.

The explosion ripped through the back part of the 50-foot craft, tore the 30-foot front section out of its steel frame moorings and hurled it about 20 feet—with Crossfield sitting helplessly inside.

The craft's volatile rocket fuel burst in flame and the 39-year-old pilot quickly scrambled out of the way. Firemen, who had been standing by with technicians in three concrete block houses, soon put out the fire.

Trousers Got Wet

"I'm all right," shrugged Crossfield. "But the darn firemen ruined a pair of my trousers by squirting me with water."

It was the second close call for veteran test pilot Crossfield in an X15. Last Nov. 5 he had to bring one of the three X15s in for an emergency landing. The stubby-winged craft came down hard and bent like a banana, but Crossfield walked away uninjured.

North American Aviation, employer of Crossfield and builder of the X15s, had just installed the big XLR99 rocket engine in the craft last week and was conducting ground tests in an isolated area when the explosion occurred.

Cause of the blast was undetermined, but it seemed clear that one result would be a delay of possibly months in the \$170 million program.

The extensively damaged craft was the only one of the three X15s equipped with the powerful and unique 60,000-pound thrust engine. Unlike most rocket power plants,

which burn full blast until their fuel is gone, it has a throttle which will allow a pilot to govern its speed.

Salvage Considered

The big engine and back 20 feet of the plane where it was located were destroyed, North American Aviation said, however, it would take a detailed inspection to determine whether the front section—which included the wings—could be salvaged.

First test flight with the big engine was planned for some time this month preparatory to a final assault on space late in the year. The X15 is designed to fly up to

100 miles high at speeds of 4,000 miles an hour.

The two other crafts have been propelled by 16,000-pound thrust dual rocket engines. But North America said a second X15 had been in the workshop for the past two weeks being refitted with a big engine, a job that will take at least several more months.

Explosion in the big-engined X15 was the second setback for X15s yesterday. Earlier in the day a third attempt to fly one of the X15s with the small engines to a new world speed record had to be canceled because of a fuel leak.

Nixon Builds Lead Of 100,000 Votes Over Gov. Brown

San Francisco — (AP) — Nearly complete returns from California's primary election showed Vice President Richard M. Nixon stumped the experts by outpolling Gov. Edmund G. Brown.

Nixon built up a lead approaching 100,000 votes, and it stayed there today through the counting of the last results from California's 28,783 voting precincts.

Before the election Tuesday, even the Brown forces admitted that Nixon had to do two things to beat the Democratic governor in the popular vote.

He had to get a higher percentage of Republicans out to vote or gain an advantage through a stronger vote against Brown by the governor's Democratic opponent, pension promoter George McLain.

Nixon did both.

McLain Shows Strength

The need was obvious. There were 1,156,520 more registered Democrats than Republicans in California.

A higher percentage of Republicans did turn out. Election figures showed that Nixon tallied three Republican votes for every four Democratic ballots cast. Registration figures showed a margin of two GOP voters for every three Democratic.

McLain, who attacked Brown on his old age pension accomplishments, polled unexpectedly strong against Brown. McLain got close to one-third of the Democratic votes.

No Head-on Meeting

Brown and Nixon did not meet head-on in the election. Nixon won the 70 Republican National Convention votes unopposed while Brown, though hurt by McLain, won control of the state's 81 Democratic National Convention votes.

Returns from 24,533 of 28,783 precincts gave Nixon 1,155,309 votes, Brown 1,057,580, McLain 498,056.

Although outpolling Brown, Nixon trailed the combined vote for the two Democrats by 400,927.

Copco to Build Line to Reston

A 23 mile power line from Dixonville, Ore., to the Bonneville Power administration Reston substation should be completed by late summer, the California Oregon Power company reported today.

Bonneville Power announced the award of a \$50,428 contract to Lebanon Electric company for construction of a 230,000 volt switchyard at the Reston site about 17 miles west of Roseburg.

Copco is constructing a 230,000 volt line to Reston to increase the power transfer capacity between the two systems. C. C. Archibald, Copco construction superintendent, is in charge. The construction also will include a large transformer to reduce Copco voltage to 120,000 volt lines from the 230,000 BPA line.

The new Copco line is an addition to an older line of lower voltage from Dixonville to Reston and "firms up the connection so more power can flow in both directions," Copco officials said.

The BPA job is expected to start by June 15, with energization scheduled in October.

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Chilean Residents Flee Flood Threat

Valdivia, Chile — (AP) — Ships, planes and helicopters had joined the race today to clear residents out of low-lying areas of this earthquake-wrecked city before potentially-disastrous floods strike.

By nightfall Wednesday, an estimated 24,500 persons had left Valdivia to seek safety on higher ground. Hundreds more were preparing to leave.

The largest number of refugees took the highway north, traveling in trucks, in carts or on foot.

In the mountains engineers teams raced against time to provide a safe spillway for millions of tons of water backed up in the San Pedro river by landslides resulting from last month's quakes.

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Audio-Visual Aids Course Scheduled

Ashland — An audio-visual aids course designed specifically to assist teachers in the use of instructional materials will be offered in a summer workshop at Southern Oregon college June 13 to 24.

Instructor Lawrence Butler, AVA director at the college, reported that the class will survey the development and use of visual and auditory aids in teaching and answer individual problems of the class members.

This is a course, he said, planned primarily to discover and solve the AVA problems teachers confront in the field with the use of classroom films, slides, radio, electrical transcriptions, and other instructional aids.

Three quarter college credit will be granted for successful completion of the workshop, which may be taken along with regular summer session classes or individually.

Inquires concerning the special summer session workshops may be sent to Dr. Bill Sampson, director of summer session, Southern Oregon college.

Deer Reported in Downtown Salem

Salem — (AP) — A deer showed up in the heart of downtown Salem just before the noon rush hour Wednesday was struck by a startled motorist and police last saw the animal heading out of town.

The police switchboard was flooded with calls from shoppers and drivers reporting the deer. Police gave chase but failed to corral the terror-stricken beast.

Officers were particularly concerned because the deer raced down several one-way streets — going the wrong way.

Accident Reported On Highway 62

A two-car accident on Highway 62 near Shady Cove was reported about 1 o'clock this morning, according to state police.

Involved were cars operated by Robert Charles Sharp, 24, Shady Cove, and Donald L. Myers, 24, Elk Creek-Trail.

Officers said Myers attempted to pass the Sharp vehicle, while Sharp was attempting to turn left on to Williams lane. Police said charges would be filed against Myers for passing at an intersection.

Pathfinder Group To March in Parade

Members of the Medford Pathfinder club will join the Pathfinders from all the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Oregon to form a marching unit in the Junior Parade of Portland's Rose Festival Friday, June 10, at 2 p.m.

Forrest Bluger is in charge of the Medford unit, and Prince Baker is director of the marching band from the local club.

Following the parade, all the Oregon Pathfinders with their leaders will meet at Gladstone park for a Missionary Volunteer Rally Friday.

The annual Pathfinder fair the park Sunday. A trophy is awarded to the club winning the most honors. The Medford club has won the trophy the past three years and gained permanent possession of it. Oral Tucker is the local club director.

Ruling Sought on Modified Vehicles

Salem — (AP) — The Oregon Traffic Safety Commission today recommended legislation dealing with modified vehicles.

The proposed bill would make any lowering or modifying of cars illegal if it brings the undercarriage below the rims of the vehicle. Purpose is to reduce chances of a driver losing control in case of a flat tire.

Police Union To Appeal Authority

Portland — (AP) — An attorney for the Multnomah County Policemen's Union said today the union will appeal to the State Supreme Court a Circuit Court ruling regarding the authority of Sheriff Francis Lambert.

The appeal is being made against the ruling of Circuit Judge James W. Crawford which upheld Lambert's authority to transfer command personnel at his own discretion.

The question of Lambert's authority arose last November when he switched Capt. Gordon Auburn from the uniform division to the detective division.

Prineville Editor Joins Paper Firm

Portland — (AP) — Jack R. Brown, editor of the Prineville "Central Oregonian," has been appointed as public relations assistant for the Northwest division of Crown Zellerbach, Corp.

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