

New Question Now Raised About Orbit Flight of Cooper

By ALVIN B. WEBB JR.
United Press International
Cape Canaveral—A new question is raised about the upcoming 22-orbit space flight of U.S. astronaut L. Gordon Cooper Jr. Is this trip really necessary?

There is no simple answer because there is no simple formula for weighing scientific merits against propaganda values in such undertakings.

Besides which, the administrative officialdom of the federal space agency shudders at the word "propaganda," despite the fact that it is, deliberately or not, a part of every U.S. shot into space.

The cold fact is that, if Cooper's voyage is a success, it will provide a shot in the "image" arm that the U.S. manned space-flight program needs—or thinks it needs—on two counts:

—To partially deaden the bad taste of scientific inferiority left by the spectacular Soviet "space brothers" flights of cosmonauts Adrian Nikolayev and Pavel Popovich last August.

—To keep the whole business of manned conquest of

space in the public eye. When money-seeking time comes around again next January, the space agency will have to have something to show for it.

Has Some Merit

But from a purely scientific viewpoint, the question about the necessity of Gordon Cooper's mid-May flight appears to have merit. It flirts

with a lot of interesting possibilities—but only flirts.

For instance, probably the most intriguing aspect of the mission—aside from its length—is the plan to have Cooper depressurize the cabin. He would be protected only by his spacesuit, a situation that astronauts of the future presumably will have to face regularly.

But, disappointingly, it stops there. This situation can be duplicated fairly simply in a ground-based pressure chamber. Still untouched will be the true value of such an experiment—permitting the astronaut to unstrap himself and venture outside the capsule.

Some disgruntled experts

feel the depressurizing gimmick should have been tried earlier—perhaps on the orbital flights of astronauts M. Scott Carpenter or Walter M. Schirra Jr. last year. That would have paved the way for Cooper to carry it that one important step further.

Another important experiment will have Cooper taking a pair of four-hour naps in

space. Three Russians already have done it.

Beyond that, the value of the astronaut's actual presence on this particular flight becomes more questionable. Radiation experiments will be carried along, but there is doubt that these will add significantly to what unmanned satellites already have learned.

Employees Group Receives Gavel Set

Ashland—Glenn T. Matthews, president of the Southern Oregon college Oregon State Employees association chapter, has announced the receipt of a gavel set awarded for the best percentage of membership gain in the entire state.

Dr. Arthur S. Taylor, SOC professor of history, accepted

the gavel on behalf of the campus chapter from Cole Rivers, Grants Pass, director of district 3. The ceremony was conducted in the forestry building, north of Medford on Table Rock rd.

Other OSEA officers of the chapter are Dr. Donald E. Moore, vice president; and Edward C. Fitzpatrick Jr., secretary-treasurer.

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Tips on Painting Given by Experts

New York—If paint were intended to fill holes and gaps in the surfaces to which it is applied, spackling compounds, putty and caulking would never have been invented.

To assure a good job, cautions the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer association, fill all nail holes and cracks with the appropriate material before starting to paint. Let dry and then sand spackling and putty smooth.

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