Space Shuttle: A Key to NASA’s Space Transportation System

Following the spectacular successes of the Apollo program, NASA designed the Space Transportation System (STS), including the crew-tended Space Shuttle orbiter, to provide a reusable vehicle for launching heavy payloads, maintaining low Earth orbit, and returning to ground with a runway landing. The Shuttle made its first orbital flight in April 1981 and its last flight in July 2011. The manifests for the 135 flights were very diverse, from deploying planetary spacecraft and servicing the Hubble Space Telescope to construction of the International Space Station in low Earth orbit. The Shuttle program is centered at NASA’s Johnson Space Center and Kennedy Space Center, but it has important NASA Goddard Space Flight Center contributions.

Mary Cleave
Astronaut & Environmental Engineer
Mary Cleave twice flew on the Space Shuttle Atlantis, completing the mission on the orbiter in 1998 and deploying the Hubble Space Telescope to its final orbit in 1999. She was the Project Manager for the highly successful Earth-observing SeaWiFS satellite instrument.

Melissa Blizzard
Human Spacelight Manager
Melissa is responsible for providing technical and management of the Goddard Human Spacelight program for all phases of Space Shuttle missions.

Elizabeth Clark
Network Support Specialist
Ensures for each Shuttle mission that all requirements for radio-frequency, communications, and tracking data communications through the Tracking Data Relay Satellite (TDRS) and the Ground Network are met. She monitors communications data from the Mission Control Center, ensuring technical assurance.

Ruth Cholvbul
Aerospace Engineer
Worked on the Shuttle’s Training and Mission Operations Control Center in Houston. She also worked with Shuttle astronauts during their training for the Hubble missions.

Adriana Apolito-Bevis
Systems Engineer
Began her aerospace career as a systems engineer developing and integrating secondary payloads onto the Shuttle. She works on the Get Away Special and Hitchhiker programs. Her work involves planning and project management to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of secondary payloads.

Barbara Lambert
Technical Photographer
Supported payload processing operations at Kennedy Space Center for the Shuttle’s Hubble Servicing Missions and maintained a close working relationship with the Payload Processing Team at the Goddard Space Flight Center. She also worked with Shuttle astronauts during their training for the Hubble missions.

Some of the Women of Goddard Involved in the Space Shuttle Missions

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