



With its new tank, Discovery rolls to pad early next week

Space suits found from abandoned AF program

▲ **Shuttle Update:** Orbiter Discovery was mated with its new External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters Wednesday. That tank was originally scheduled to fly with Atlantis on the second Return to Flight mission, STS-121. A new heater was added to the tank's feed-line bellows, part of the pipeline that carries the liquid oxygen to the orbiter's main engines, to minimize the potential for ice and frost buildup. After the remate, technicians will work final closeouts on the fully assembled Space Shuttle stack, and perform liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen electrical mates and an interface verification test. Discovery is scheduled for rollout to Launch Pad 39B early next week.

▲ **“Lost” Space Suits Found:** A recent venture into a long-locked room at CCAFS uncovered artifacts of a bygone era: retired space suits from Americans who trained in the 1960s to be astronauts aboard an Air Force orbiting reconnaissance laboratory. Two security officers were doing a check of a facility at the Launch Complex 5/6 blockhouse. NASA Special Agent Dan E. Oakland and Security Manager Henry Butler, with Delaware North Parks and Resorts, which oversees the museum, discovered a locked room. Space suits from the Air Force's planned Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) program were found in the room.

Begun in 1964, the MOL program was an Air Force initiative that would have sent Air Force astronauts to a space station in a Gemini capsule. After spending a few weeks in orbit, the crew would undock and return to Earth.

A test launch from Complex 40 on Nov. 30, 1966, of a MOL was conducted with an unmanned Gemini capsule. The MOL was constructed from tankage of a Titan II rocket. The operational MOL was planned to be launched into a polar orbit from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The Air Force abandoned the program in 1969, but the program produced a great deal of technological development, and three groups of military officers trained to be MOL astronauts.

When the program was cancelled, seven of the younger astronauts were transferred to the Agency's human space flight program and went on to have standout careers. Among them were Robert Crippen, pilot of the first Space Shuttle mission, and Richard H. "Dick" Truly, who later became NASA Administrator.

■ **NASA's Phoenix Mars Mission Gets Thumbs Up for 2007 Launch** — NASA has given the green light to a project to put a long-armed lander onto the icy ground of the far-northern martian plains. NASA's Phoenix lander is designed to examine the site for potential habitats

for water ice and to look for possible indicators of life, past or present. In an announcement June 2 the Phoenix mission is allowed to proceed with preparing the spacecraft for launch in August 2007. This major milestone followed a critical review of the project's planning progress and preliminary design since its selection in 2003. Phoenix is the first project in NASA's Mars Scout Program of competitively selected missions. Scouts are innovative and relatively low-cost complements to the core missions of the Agency's Mars exploration program.

■ **Did You Know?** Through Labor Day, Sept. 5, all KSC and CCAFS badged employees may receive one complimentary Maximum Access Admission to the KSC Visitor Complex. Also, employees may purchase up to six additional Maximum Access Admissions at 50 percent off. Badged employees must purchase tickets in person between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at ticket windows #1-4 at the Visitor Complex. Please present your badge at time of purchase. This offer is not transferable and cannot be combined with any other discount. Maximum Access Admission includes all exhibits, Astronaut Encounter, IMAX® space films, the KSC bus tour and Astronaut Hall of Fame. For more information, call 449-4444 or visit

<http://www.KennedySpaceCenter.com>.