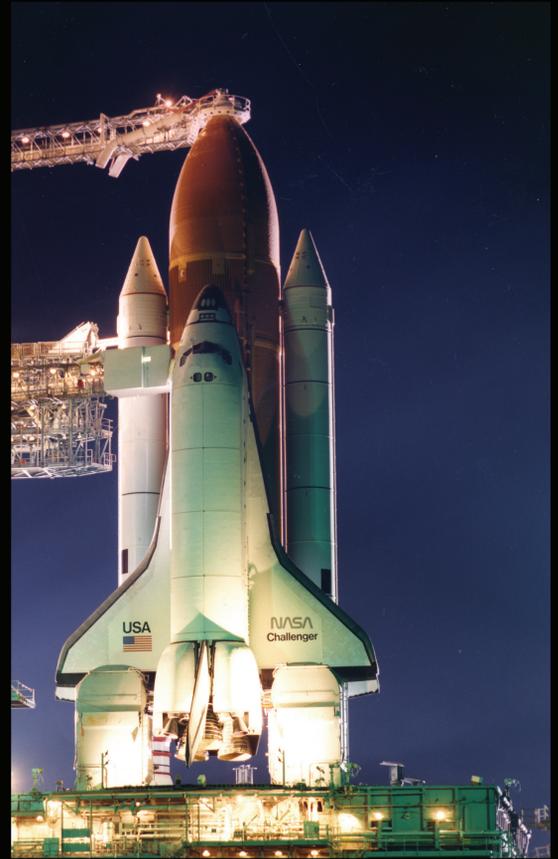
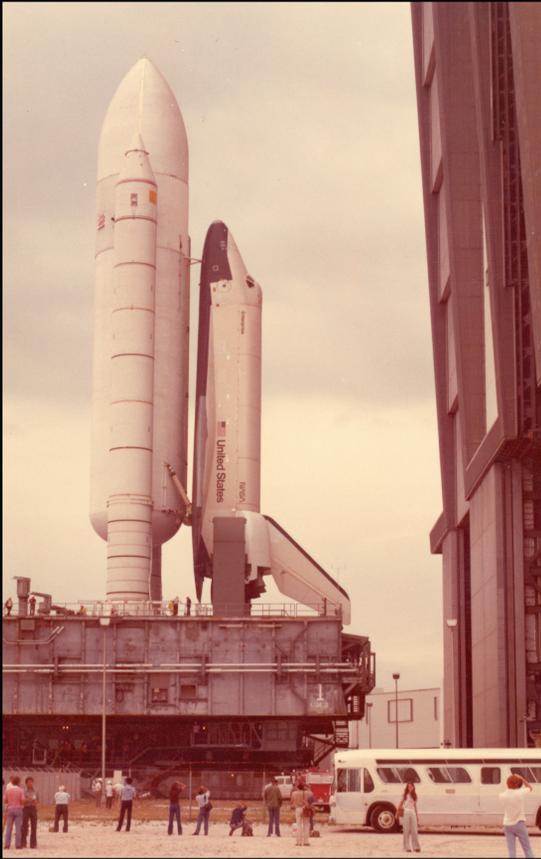


Celebrating KSC's 50th Anniversary



Space Shuttle Orbiters

From its establishment in 1958, NASA studied aspects of reusable launch vehicles and spacecraft that could return to earth. On January 5, 1972, President Richard Nixon announced that the United States would develop the space shuttle, a delta-winged orbiter about the size of a DC-9 aircraft. Between the first launch on April 12, 1981, and the final landing on July 21, 2011, NASA's space shuttle fleet -- Columbia, Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour -- launched on 135 missions, helped construct the International Space Station and inspired generations.

