

Three Graduates Aboard Shuttle's Longest Flight

Three of the seven crew members on the longest shuttle mission ever which blasted off on June 20th of this year were Air Force Academy graduates. Columbia's mission commander was Col. Terence "Tom" Henricks, '74; the pilot was Kevin R. Kregel, '78; and the payload commander was Lt. Col. Susan J. Helms, '80.

The other crew members were mission specialists Richard M. Linnehan and Charles E. Brady Jr.; along with two payload



The three Academy graduates who flew on Columbia shuttle mission STS-78 earlier this year, from left are payload commander Susan J. Helms, '80; mission commander Terence "Tom" Henricks, '74; and pilot Kevin R. Kregel, '78. The shuttle landed on July 7 bringing to a close the longest shuttle mission to date, with a mission elapsed time of 16 days, 21 minutes and 47 seconds.

specialists, Jean-Jacques Favier, representing the French Space Agency; and Robert Brent Thirsk of the Canadian Space Agency.

The orbiter Columbia touched down on Runway 33 of the Kennedy Space Center's Shuttle Landing Facility at 8:36 a.m. EDT on July 7, successfully completing a 16-plus-day flight. During the mission, the crew conducted extensive research in the primary payload, the Life and Microgravity Spacelab (LMS).

Within an hour of touchdown from the seven-million-mile flight, the four payload crew male astronauts who had endured medical poking and prodding in orbit were in a clinic undergoing painful muscle biopsies and other follow-up tests. NASA doctors wanted to examine the men before their bodies readapted to gravity, in hopes of benefiting future space travelers.

"This payload crew that's given so much during the flight is ready to go to work here," commander Henricks announced upon landing. "I'm sure they're just waiting eagerly to go," Mission Control replied.

Henricks and Kregel had an easier post-landing task: taking part in a ceremony to salute runners carrying the Olympic torch through Kennedy Space Center. The seven U.S., French and Canadian crew members had carried an Olympic torch in orbit—minus the flame—as well as an Olympic banner. The torch was presented to Olympic organizers after the flight.

Columbia almost didn't land on time. Less than two hours before touchdown, a critical cooling line jammed, but the astronauts quickly managed to flush ice from the system. The cooling problem was minor compared with leaks in Columbia's rocket boosters—"No. 1 on our agenda," said Ronald Ditemore, a shuttle manager.

Hot gas seeped into joints of both solid-fuel rocket boosters during liftoff June 20. Shuttle managers hoped to decide whether to replace the boosters on Atlantis and delay its launch which was scheduled for July 31.

Mrs. Donnelley Moller Earns Honorary AOG Membership

Mrs. Dorothy Donnelley Moller became the 20th individual in the history of the Association of Graduates (AOG) to be awarded an honorary membership in the association. The presentation took place at a luncheon ceremony at the Air Force Academy Officer's Club on May 28. Among the dignitaries in attendance was the first Academy graduate Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, Class of 1963.

An honorary AOG membership is the highest honor the graduate community bestows upon supporters of our institution. Honorary memberships are awarded only to those individuals who "...have rendered outstanding and conspicuous service to the Air Force and/or the Academy." Memberships are limited to 20 living persons and are highly selective. Each requires a nomination by an AOG board member and a unanimous vote by the sitting board. Honorary memberships are awarded for life.

Mrs. Moller was recognized for her longstanding, continuous and dedicated service to the Air Force and the Academy. Among her many contributions to the Air Force, she has sponsored an award for outstanding wing commanders and has participated in the creation and continuing support of several museums in the United States and Europe, thereby helping to preserve the heritage of thousands of airmen who fought and died in combat during WW-II.

An ardent supporter of the Academy, she established and annually supports a fund to meet Academy goals and objectives. As a founding patron member of the Academy's Sabre Society, she is

generous in her assistance to the association in its support of critical Academy needs.

Mrs. Moller joins 12 other current honorary AOG members who include, among others, Senator Barry M. Goldwater, and long-time dean of the faculty and former president and CEO of USAA, Brig. Gen. (Ret) Robert M. McDermott. Previous honorary members include Gen. James "Jimmie" H. Doolittle, for whom the association's building was named; Gail McComas, the Academy's first cadet hostess; and Col. (Ret) Joseph Moller, Mrs. Moller late husband.



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, '63, and Brig. Gen. (Ret) Jim Ulm, '61, chairman of the board of the Association of Graduates, congratulate Mrs. Dorothy Donnelley Moller at the presentation of an AOG Honorary Membership to Mrs. Moller on May 28.

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