

## ASTRONAUTS AT LEWIS

Two Project Mercury astronauts, Virgil I. Grissom and Alan B. Shepard, Jr., arrived at Lewis Tuesday, February 16 to train in the Multiple Axis Space Test Inertia Facility (MASTIF) in the Altitude Tunnel. During the following three-week period, all seven astronauts will experience disorientation, or "spin" tests designed to simulate what will take place when they enter orbit aboard the Project Mercury Capsule.

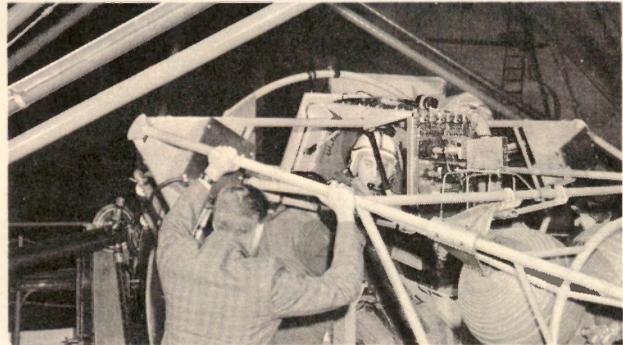
All possible attitudes of space flight are duplicated by MASTIF's three gimbal cages. Each astronaut will "fly" the rig as it simulates the Mercury capsule's flight in space. With the astronaut strapped in a life support couch mounted in the inner of the three cages, his reactions to spin tests about all axes at speeds from two to 50 revolutions per minute will be tested. He will control his mockup capsule by emitting spurts of nitrogen gas through small reaction jets.

Astronaut Grissom, 33, is a native of Mitchell, Indiana. A 1950 graduate of Purdue University, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with cluster for Korean missions. An Air Force test pilot with over 2,000 hours of jet flying, he is married and has two sons. He delights in driving his 1926 Prinz, one of the few in this country.

Astronaut Shepard, 36, was born in East Derry, N.H. Graduating from the Naval Academy in 1944, he served in the Pacific in World War II. Shepard has over 3,600 hours of test pilot time, 1,700 in jets. He is married and has one son. It is said he owns one of the hottest Corvettes in Virginia.



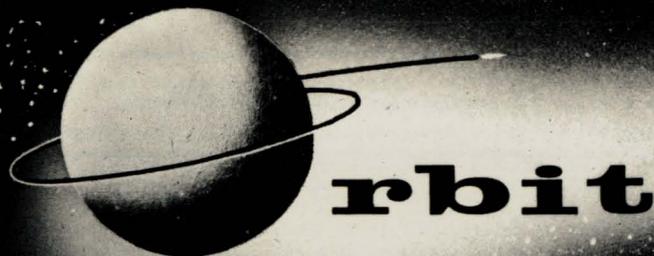
Astronauts Shepard (left) and Grissom in front of the gimbal rig in the AWT.



Grissom is strapped into couch.



Shepard (left) & Algranti discuss rig.

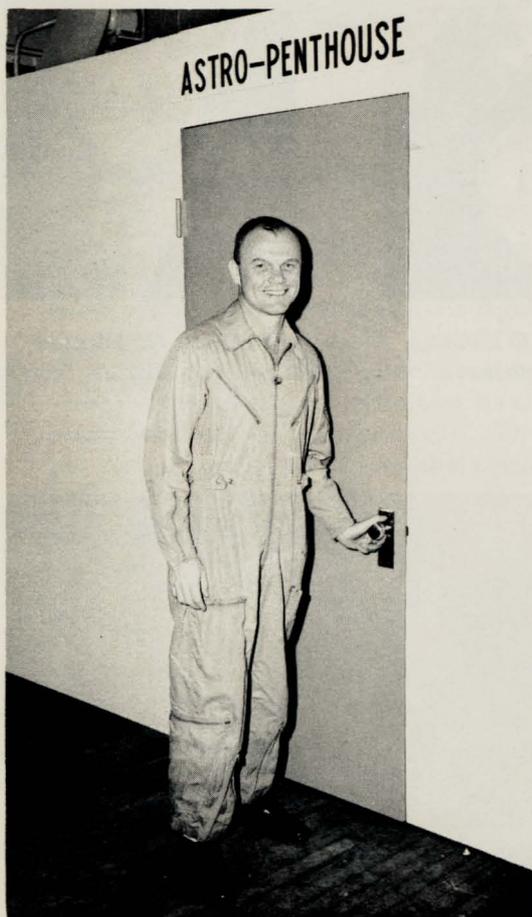


**ASTRONAUTS CONTINUE TESTS IN MASTIF**

Continuing in the disorientation program in the Multiple Axis Space Inertia Test Facility (MASTIF), Astronauts John H. Glenn, Jr., Donald K. Slayton, Malcolm S. Carpenter, and Walter M. Shirra, Jr., have flown in the gimbal rig within the last ten days. As Orbit goes to press Astronauts Slayton, Carpenter, and Shirra are in the midst of their check-outs.

An all-day press conference is being held at Lewis today. The Cleveland press corps along with representatives from Chicago, Buffalo, Washington, and New York City, and many areas of Ohio and Indiana were introduced to the astronauts. Presentations were made by Bruce T. Lundin, R. R. Miller, and John Powers, Space Task Group.

In the spin-test program, each astronaut experiences 4½ to 5 hours of flight time in the MASTIF. During this time they learn to orient the simulated space capsule while rotating in each of the three axes individually and in combination.



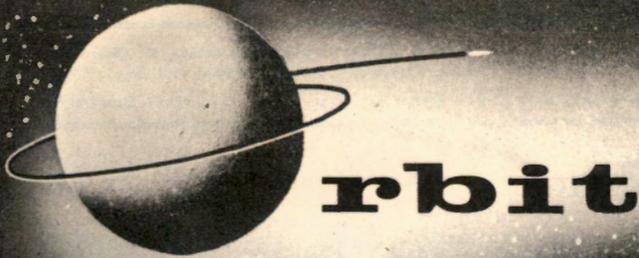
Astronaut John H. Glenn, Jr. leaving the ready room for disorientation tests in the gimbal rig.



Astronauts Malcolm S. Carpenter (left) and Donald K. Slayton (right) get check-out of control board by Lewis pilot Joe Algranti.



Astronaut Walter M. Shirra, Jr. climbing out of the gimbal rig couch after spin tests.



## HEALTH BENEFITS FOR LEWIS EMPLOYEES

"Health benefits" for Lewis employees will become a reality on July 10, 1960. Beginning on that day the Federal government will pay part of the bills for hospitalization and medical insurance for you if you wish to be included in the Federal "health benefits" program. The present Blue Cross-Blue Shield plan now in effect will be replaced by several government-wide plans providing different kinds and degrees of health benefits, partially paid for from government funds.

In the time between now and the end of June, much information will be generated and distributed to employees on the different health benefit plans available, and how they apply to you as an individual. In return, you will have to weigh the facts, discuss them with your family and others, and decide what plan, if any, is best suited to your needs. To help you get acquainted with the provisions of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Act of 1959 (Public Law 86-382) and what this act means to your personal security, ORBIT will carry a series of articles about the new health benefits program. The first article of the series is presented on pages 3 and 4 of this issue.

## ASTRONAUT PRESS MEETING

In spite of heavy winter snows, many members of the working press, radio and TV gathered at Lewis for the Astronaut Press Meetings on Friday, March 4. Six Astronauts were on hand to meet the battery of questions and flash bulbs. Astronaut Scott Carpenter flew the simulated space capsule in the gimbal rig as photographers gathered footage for national coverage (which most of you caught on TV or in the newspapers).

Shown here are two scenes of the day's activities. The six Astronauts were Scott Carpenter, Deke Slayton, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Wally Shirra, and Al Shepard.

The seventh Astronaut, Gordon Cooper checked in for his training last week. Accompanying him was Warren North, formerly of Lewis. Warren received flight training in the rig also.



Cooper in gimbal rig.

Press meeting.

Action in AWT.

MEC 02/17

# LEWIS LETTER

FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

February 10, 1960

The following items have been prepared for your interest by the Office of Public Information. No part of the Lewis Letter is to be distributed externally for publication or similar use since frequently certain NASA events will be announced in advance of their happening.

Your wholehearted cooperation in the restricted use of this information is necessary if we are to fulfill our specific objective of "relaying phases of important NASA news to you before it appears in public print."

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## ASTRONAUTS ARRIVE FEBRUARY 15

The complement of Astronauts will arrive at Lewis Monday, February 15, to begin a week's workout on the MASTIF training device in the Altitude Wind Tunnel. The much-publicized NASA spacemen-to-be will be accompanied by aerosurgeons, as well as other representatives of the space task group. The Astronauts will be with us until early March, at which time they will move to another NASA training location. During their stay here, many of us will have an opportunity to meet and work with the Astronauts. To acquaint you with them and their respective backgrounds the Lewis Letter includes a group photo plus thumbnail biographies.

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## NASA SEAL

Headquarters passes its compliments to Louise Fergus of Lewis for her excellent bas-relief reproduction of the NASA seal. The seal will be made available both in plastic and white metal shortly. More about this later.

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### GALLUP POLL

Washington reports findings of a recent Gallup Poll which asked this question: "Which country, the United States or Russia, will be first to send a man into outer space?" Answers were: Russia, 44 per cent; United States, 34 per cent; no opinion, 22 per cent.

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### BROOKS SPACE COMMITTEE

Again from Washington- - the following interesting highlights reported from Capitol Hill:

Top NASA management spent most of the last week before various Committees of Congress. The Brooks Space Committee of the House heard eight NASA witnesses: Glennan, Dryden, Horner, Silverstein, Abbott, Tepper (on meteorological and communications satellites), Finger (on space propulsion technology), and von Braun.

The latter, while not yet technically NASA, made clear he is ready, willing, and able. "We have the technical know-how," he said, "while NASA seems to have the know-how to get funds." The latter referred to the \$113 million supplemental for super-booster work announced the day before by the President from Denver.

There have been many satisfying points in our relationship with NASA, von Braun said; he mentioned specifically the work of the Silverstein-chaired Saturn Vehicle Team which reached final determination on Saturn upper stages shortly after the intended transfer was announced.

A day later, the Brooks Committee unanimously voted out the Sisk Resolution to speed up ABMA transfer.

At mid-week, the NASA presentations literally petered out. A heavy schedule of witnesses left the Committee no time to schedule the remaining witnesses: Hyatt (on launch vehicles), Low (on Mercury), Hammond (racking), and Rhode (structures and materials). It is not clear whether these presentations will be given before the Brooks Committee at all.

Meanwhile, the Thomas Independent Offices subcommittee of House Appropriations was hearing NASA in closed sessions. Criticisms of the staff size of NASA OPI, Congressional Relations, and General Counsel's office were heard.

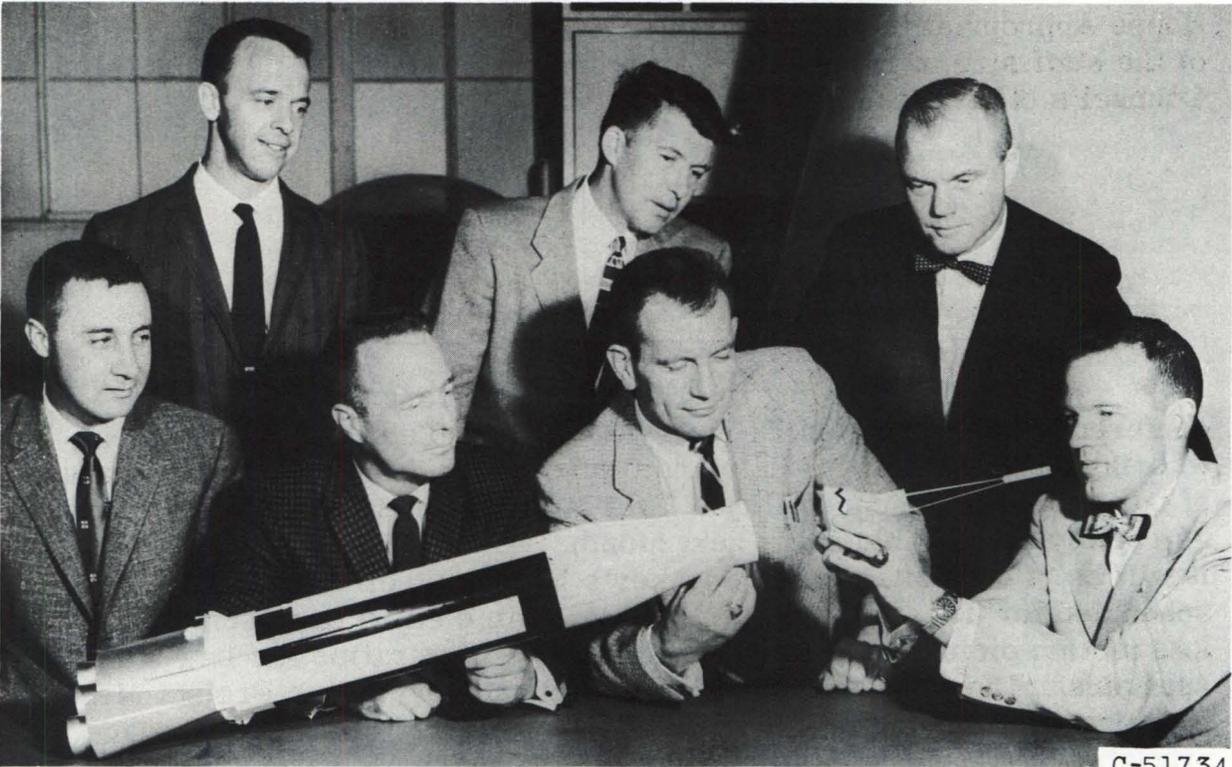
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PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS CONFERENCE

We will be attending the NASA public information officers conference in Washington February 23 through February 26, and hope to bring back much up-to-date and future information covering all areas of our research responsibility. This information will be made available as rapidly as possible early next month. Also, it is hoped that much of it will be of use for the first Speaker's Bureau meeting which has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 15. Our prime effort has been to obtain late motion picture and still film for use as illustration for Lewis speakers. The latest contribution in this category is the Project Mercury film produced primarily for viewing by Congress. This will be made available to all speakers following the Congressional review. But this is only the beginning. Before too long I anticipate we will be receiving from Headquarters a copy of all newsreel footage made available to television. All of this will be interesting and much of it highly useable for Lewis speakers and for other purposes.

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## PROJECT MERCURY ASTRONAUTS



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Malcolm S. Carpenter, lieutenant, U. S. Navy, native of Boulder, Colorado, married, father of four children. Graduate of University of Colorado, where he received a degree in aeronautical engineering in 1949. During the Korean conflict, he was engaged in anti-submarine patrol, shipping surveillance, and aerial mining activities.

Leroy G. Cooper, Jr., captain in the U. S. Air Force, is a native of Shawnee, Oklahoma, married, has two daughters. Attended University of Hawaii, and received a degree in aeronautical engineering through the Air Force Institute of Technology. He has 2,300 flying hours, including 1,400 in jets.

John H. Glenn, Jr., lieutenant colonel, U. S. Marine Corps, married, has two children. Native of Cambridge, Ohio. Flew 59 combat missions during World War II, 63 missions during Korean conflict, and 27 while an exchange pilot with the Air Force. He set a transcontinental speed record from Los Angeles to New York in 1957, spanning the country in three hours, 23 minutes.

Virgil I. Grissom, captain, U. S. Air Force, native of Mitchell, Indiana. Married, has two sons. Graduate of Purdue University, receiving a degree in mechanical engineering. He flew 100 combat missions in Korea, and has flown more than 3,000 hours, over 2,000 in jets.

Walter M. Schirra, Jr., lieutenant commander, U. S. Navy, native of Hackensack, New Jersey. Married, has two children. He flew 90 combat missions in Korea as an exchange pilot with the Air Force. Also took part in development of the Sidewinder missile at China Lake, California.

Alan B. Shepard, Jr., lieutenant commander in the U. S. Navy, native of East Derry, New Hampshire. He is married, and has two children. Graduate of Annapolis and the Naval War College. He saw service on the destroyer Cosgrove, in the Pacific during World War II. Took part in experiments in test and development of Navy's in-flight refueling system and trials of the first angled carrier deck. He has 3,600 hours of flying time, 1,700 in jets.

Donald K. Slayton, captain, U. S. Air Force, married, has one son, native of Sparta, Wisconsin. Graduate of University of Minnesota with a degree in aeronautical engineering. He flew 56 combat missions in Europe and seven missions over Japan during World War II. He has been an experimental test pilot at Edwards, where he has flown all jet fighter type aircraft built for the Air Force.