

PROJECT MERCURY: U.S. SENDS SECOND MAN INTO SPACE

With the drama and excitement of the first American manned space flight still hovering over the sunny sand spit of Cape Canaveral, the United States has sent its second astronaut on an equally important, though somewhat less momentous, journey. There were three general objectives in this flight, the major one being confirmation of the findings of the first flight with regard to the capabilities of the man and the spacecraft. The second objective was to test some minor modifications in the craft. The third was to test the astronaut's performance under a less stringent workload than Alan Shepard had on May 5. Under the scheduling of the Project Mercury manned space flight program, this launching is one of the final steps before an American astronaut is put into an Earth orbit. The orbital flight is planned for late this year or early in 1962.

This view of a Mercury spacecraft shows the blunt end with its heat shield, postgrade rockets, and retro-rockets. The postgrade rockets, inside the three smaller holes, blast the spacecraft free of the main Redstone rocket after it burns out. Once free, the craft is turned around so that the blunt end leads, and when it is ready to return to earth the retro-rockets, contained in the three humps, are fired in order to slow the craft a small amount.

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