

THE  
PROJECT MERCURY  
MONUMENT  
CAPE KENNEDY,  
FLORIDA

Miss Claire  
Reiney

Room 322 thru  
332

Ed Regan &  
James D. ...

**GI**

**GENERAL DYNAMICS  
ASTRONAUTICS**

Bickers

One Room, along  
322 thru 332

14TH



The Project Mercury monument, honoring the initial United States man-in-space program and marking the launching site of the nation's pioneering manned orbital flights, was dedicated at Cape Kennedy, Florida, November 10, 1964.

The dedication ceremonies were conducted cooperatively by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United States Air Force, and General Dynamics Corporation.

General Dynamics, builder of the U.S. Air Force Atlas space launch vehicles used for the manned orbital flights, erected the monument as a public service and donated it during the ceremonies to the United States government.

The purpose of the Project Mercury monument is to provide a lasting salute to our nation's pioneering man-in-space program and to inspire continuing achievements in our national space program.

It also is intended to "honor in their own time" the estimated two million men and women from government, military services, and industry whose courage, dedication and skills contributed to the success of Project Mercury.

From its inception, October 7, 1958, to its conclusion, May 16, 1963, Project Mercury accomplished six completely successful space flights — two suborbital missions and four orbital flights.

The monument is located near Atlas launch complex 14, where the astronauts began their orbital flights.

Principal feature of the monument is a 13-foot-high astronomical symbol for the planet Mercury. The number "7" in the center of the symbol signifies the nation's seven original astronauts — Carpenter, Cooper, Glenn, Grissom, Schirra, Shepard and Slayton. The symbol is one foot thick and six feet across at its widest point, and weighs 1,250 pounds. It was fabricated of the same type of stainless steel developed originally for the Atlas.

At the base of the monument is a bronze tablet with the dedicatory inscription and a massive medallion, 2½ feet in diameter, showing the faces of the seven astronauts in high relief.

Beneath the monument is a time capsule intended for opening in the year 2464. It contains reports, photographs, motion pictures and other memorabilia of Project Mercury.

Project Mercury has been acclaimed as one of the outstanding technical achievements of the United States. The late President John F. Kennedy called the achievement of manned orbital flight "... one of the most complex tasks ever presented to man in this country."

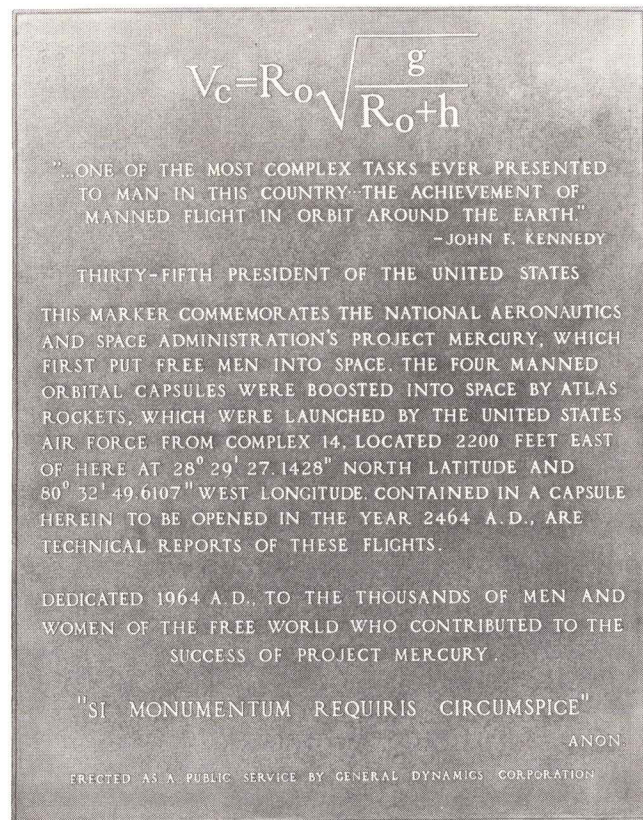
On October 7, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Project Mercury was organized. Its purpose was to orbit man around the earth and recover him safely.

Only 3½ years after the program's inception, astronaut John Glenn orbited the earth and was recovered safely.

In four years, eight months and one week, six U.S. astronauts were successfully rocketed into space and safely returned to earth — two on suborbital flights powered by Redstone rockets

and four on orbital missions boosted by the U.S. Air Force Atlas.

During those short, eventful years NASA had to select and train its Mercury team, establish and perfect operational procedures, establish and perfect a global tracking system and recovery methods, and produce and perfect the required ground and airborne equipment — truly a monumental achievement.



The mathematical formula,  $V_c = R_o \sqrt{\frac{g}{R_o + h}}$ , on the dedicatory tablet expresses the factors that must be satisfied to balance a space vehicle between the centrifugal force of its own outward momentum and the downward pull of earth's gravity.

The Latin inscription, "Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice"—"If you seek a monument, look about you," is the epitaph on the tomb of English scientist Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

It was inscribed on the Project Mercury monument because it aptly expresses the monument's real significance. The monument itself stands as a salute to Project Mercury and as a historical marker identifying the site of the first U.S. manned orbital missions. But the famed quotation serves also as a reminder that all of Cape Kennedy is, in fact, a monument to national space achievements.



The 2½-foot medallion at the base of the Project Mercury monument shows the faces of the nation's seven original astronauts in high relief. The seven astronauts were Malcolm Scott Carpenter, Leroy Gordon Cooper, Jr., John Herschel Glenn, Jr., Virgil Ivan Grissom, Walter Marty Schirra, Jr., Alan Bartlett Shepard, Jr. and Donald Kent Slayton.

