

Manned Space Exploring To Gain Under LBJ

Cape Marker Honors First U.S. Astronauts

By Sentinel Services

CAPE KENNEDY — A leading space expert yesterday criticized those who underrate the U. S. space program and declared that this nation, under President Johnson, is dedicated to gaining preeminence in manned exploration of the universe.

Dr. Edward C. Welsh said that Russia's recent three-man Voskhod flight gave that nation a clear lead which "we must strive energetically to overcome."

Welsh is acting chairman and also serves as aeronautics and astronautics advisor to President Johnson.

WELSH SPOKE at dedication ceremonies here for a stainless steel monument erected to honor America's pioneering Mercury man-in-space program, the nation's seven original astronauts and the two million persons in government, industry and the military services who contributed to the success of the project.

The gleaming memorial is a 13-foot-tall replica of the astronomical symbol for the planet Mercury. Incorporated in the symbol is the number "7" representing the seven Mercury astronauts — Alan B. Shepard, John H. Glenn, L. Gordon Cooper, M. Scott Carpenter, Donald K. Slayton, Virgil I. Grissom and Walter M. Schirra.

Buried beneath the concrete base of the monument is a time capsule to be opened 500 years from now. It contains reports, tape recordings, still and motion pictures and other records of the Mercury program.

THE MEMORIAL is located 2,000 feet from Atlas Launching Complex No. 14, from which four astronauts vaulted into orbital flight. It is along a road which visitors use each Sunday when Cape Kennedy is open for public drive-throughs.

Welsh, speaking to an audience that included Astronauts Schirra and Grissom, the only two who could attend, and several key U. S. space officials, declared:

"This Mercury project was truly a national one and one of which this nation is justifiably proud. . . I know that we still have widespread public support of our nation's space program, in spite of the criticism of some short-sighted individuals."

WELSH SAID, "As we know, the USSR is carrying out a vigorous manned space program. The recent three-man Voskhod flight is additional evidence of such a program and emphasizes that we are behind in this important aspect of the space race. As such, it should be a stimulus to greater effort without prompting a major revision of our existing program."

He said that the President is one of the chief architects of the space program "and he wants no less than first place for the United States in this great race."

Welsh urged the country's space leaders to work together "to clarify the thinking of those who would substitute instruments for men rather than combine instruments with men; to clarify the thinking of those who would employ mechanical computers to rule out the greatest of all computers, man himself; and to clarify the thinking of those who would make our space future primarily a series of short-run fiscal decisions rather than long-term investments in our country's greatness."

REP. CARL ALBERT, D-Okla., a member of the House Space Committee, gave a brief talk before Welsh's principal address and said the monument "represents the first milestone in a great American crusade into technology."

Lt. Gen. Austin Davis, vice commander of the Air Force Systems Command, said Project Mercury's success set a precedent for future space programs.

"The results of Project Mercury will be of great significance for future military space programs," he said.

President Johnson was one of more than a score of persons who were awarded gold medallions in recognition of their contribution to the Mercury project. Welsh accepted for the President.



Mercury Monument Dedicated

Astronaut Walter Schirra (right) receives from Roger Lewis, president of General Dynamics Corp., medallion commemorating his service to Project Mercury, America's first man-in-space program.

Looming above is monument dedicated yesterday to Mercury program. Marker incorporates number "7" for original astronauts in planetary symbol for Mercury.

In background is gantry from which Schirra and three other astronauts vaulted into orbit atop Atlas rockets made by General Dynamics. (AP Wirephoto to The Sentinel last night)