

SPACE

*L.T. - Buick, Fisher. Thurs, June 3, 1965.
Gemini - Four.*

There's just one story today - and it's still up there - up there in space. Astronauts Ed White and Jim McDivitt - going round and round our planet - at better than seventeen thousand miles an hour. Another series of miracles - right out of Buck Rogers. Miracles - that are no longer miracles at all. But rather are ~~so~~ epic milestones - in the march of science - as man goes on and on with the conquest of space.

The flight of the Gemini-Four from Cape Kennedy so far seems perfect - in every detail. First the spacecraft bursting from its pad - in that volcanic flash of fire and smoke, at eleven-sixteen this morning - Eastern Daylight time.

First came word from Jim McDivitt - describing the ~~lift~~ lift-off as "beautiful - just beautiful". Then added seconds later - "it looks great from up here."

As the Gemini Four quickly headed off into space, into successful orbit, from Gemini ground control

came the announcement that "we're right on the money."

Early in the flight the Gemini Four did fail in history's first attempt - to achieve a rendezvous in space, with Command pilot McDivitt - trying to close with the spacecraft's booster rocket - during their first tandem orbit. However, they were unable to get any closer than three or four hundred feet when at their closest approach to the earth. The booster then pulling away to about half a mile -- at their ~~far~~ farthest point out.

When the spacecraft high over New Mexico was on its second orbit, they were told they had already used up - about fifty percent of their maneuvering fuel. Said McDivitt - "I think we ought to knock it off." After a hurried conference at Gemini ground control - the decision crackled back through space -- "okay - forget it!"

Then at last - on the third orbit - the moment we were all waiting for. Astronaut Ed ~~White~~ White taking that long step into the black void of space. And having a

ball. During this both astronauts - abandoned the clipped and technical tone of their earlier conversations. Now they were fooling around like a couple of fellows on a space picnic. White - ~~the world's first~~ the world's first self-propelled spaceman - trying to maneuver himself into position so McDivitt could take his picture. In fact, he accidentally fired a jet of compressed oxygen - at the Gemini Four. Whereupon, said McDivitt: "You're smearing up my windshield - you dirty dog."

Later, White so intoxicated by the raptures of space - that he stayed out far longer than the scheduled nine to twelve minutes, a total of twenty three minutes - in all. Then McDivitt firmly ordered his gay partner - back from space. But he only did this when he was given his final command from here on Earth - the command: "Get him back in - you have twenty seconds."

The order - obeyed. Both men back in the spacecraft tonight - the toast of the nation - the toast

of the world. Maybe - even the universe.

As for the rest of the mission, if all goes as well as it has so far - the two astronauts will fly a total of one point seven million miles through space, sixty two revolutions of the earth, before they splash down in the Atlantic - off Bermuda, Monday afternoon.

More than that - they hope to have provided a wealth of new information that may help pave the way - to the moon - to Mars and maybe beyond.

FAMILIES

They also serve -- who only sit and wait. Among those waiting today at Seabrook, Texas -- the wives and children of Ed White and Jim McDivitt, who live about five miles -- from the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston.

At the White household -- the alarm clock was set for five-thirty -- but ~~it~~ never got a chance to go off, ^{for} Pat White was up at the crack of dawn -- the children shortly thereafter -- to watch the count-down at Cape Kennedy.

Then -- a pleasant surprise. A telephone call -- from husband-and-father Ed White. The conversation -- strictly private, of course. Except for Mrs. White's last words -- to her husband. Said she -- "have fun!" *Little did she know how much fun he'd be having.*

For the other Pat -- Pat McDivitt -- it was up and off to church early this morning. Followed by a family breakfast -- of pound cake and orange juice. Then the long wait -- broken again only by a brief personal phone call -- from Cape Kennedy.

FAMILIES--2

At last -- blast-off. Whereupon eight-year-old Mike McDivitt looked up and shouted -- "Hey, look -- Daddy's in there." A short distance away -- eleven-year-old Eddie White -- summed up the sentiments of a nation. Said he -- "It's great!"

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MIRROR FOLLOW PRESIDENT

Incidentally, three times during the ~~task~~
telecast of the event - President ^{L.B.J.}~~Johnson~~ found himself
looking at - President ^{L.B.J.}~~Johnson~~. The result of live
television coverage - from the White House itself.

But after the President had left - an assistant
Press Secretary told photographers not to use photographs
of the electronic coincidence. Asserting, in effect, that
the President is not so vain - that he has to watch himself
on television. And he doesn't want anyone to get the idea
that he is.

DEFENSE

After Gemini-Four = what next in space?

One possible answer - suggested today by the House

Government Operations Committee. That body proposing immediate development - of manned orbital laboratories.

More commonly called - space stations. To cost anywhere from five to ten billion dollars - a piece.

America's paramount mission at this time -

said the House Committee - "is to land a man on the moon -

before the Russians." (Beyond this - manned space nations

are essential to the security of the United States - said

the committee report. So we can "catch up with the

Russians - in technology which may have vital military

significance.")

One more reminder - if any were needed - that

there can be no peace even in space ^{Dieke} - until there is peace

on earth.

EYES

Today's take-off was broadcast live by television to Europe -- via The Early Bird Communications Satellite. And carried by virtually every major television network -- on both sides of the Iron Curtain; but not in Russia. On Soviet radio and television -- no mention at all of plans for the flight. And from the Soviet news agency TASS -- only the barest description of the launching; along with an abbreviated flight plan.

The fact that the Americans would attempt to top the Soviet space walk of last March? That was ignored -- completely

The space schedule today -- included no spectacular stunts; merely photograph cloud formations, squall lines and other weather phenomena; plus huge sections of the earth's surface. Then, as pretend -- that they were on their way back --