

STAMP

L.T.-Olds. Tues. Feb. 20 - 62

America made history - today. You've heard that ~~said~~ - over and over[?] But I'm referring to something you may have missed - in the hurly-burly surrounding John Glenn's orbital flight.

The moment our astronaut was recovered from the Atlantic - the Post office took the wraps off a dramatic secret. Putting on sale a special stamp - commemorating the flight.

Blocks of the stamps went out to local post offices - weeks ago. The order - "keep them confidential, Until the mission is completed." And not a word leaked out - during all the postponements.

Today, success. The stamps - brought out of hiding - and put on sale. Each one, showing - a capsule flying through space. In the left hand corner, a globe - inscribed with the phrase "U.S. man in space." ^{Across} ~~XXXXXX~~ the bottom - the words "project mercury."

What's so historic - about it? This is the first time in history that a commemorative stamp has ever been issued - simultaneously with the event it commemorates.

And what an event!

ASTRONAUT

The flight of Astronaut John Glenn - did you watch his blast off this morning? Did you follow anything else? Most Americans were glued to a TV or radio. Including President Kennedy at the White House. The first American astronaut to rocket around the earth.

John Glenn the coolest man at Cape Canaveral - as the count down proceeded. The others at Cape Canaveral, and the rest of us following it, tense with excitement. Especially the climatic moment, when the count-down reached ten - and then ticked off to zero, when the officer in charge - pressed the launch button and John Glenn at last was on his way - to outer space. To a permanent niche - in the annals of science. And - in the history of America.

The Mercury rocket engines, thundering into action - a thrust of three hundred and sixty thousand pounds. The familiar cloud of white smoke and orange flame -

erupting. The rocket, rising slowly from its launching pad - gleaming in the sunlight of the Cape, gathering speed - zooming up into its flight arc; thundering faster and faster - for the brief time that it remained visible. The, it was - gone. Into Orbit? The world wondered.

There was only one man - who could tell us exactly what was happening. Back from the space capsule came the voice of John Glenn - strong, clear, confident. Reporting - everything A-okay. The Mercury rocket - performing perfectly.

FLIGHT FOLLOW ASTRONAUT

Thirteen minutes later - ~~he went~~ into orbit.

Among his first words - "the view is tremendous, beautiful."

The whole panorama of our planet - spread out beneath him,

as he went around three times ^{at a} ~~his~~ speed of almost eighteen

thousand miles an hour, ~~allowing him to complete~~ each orbit -

in about eighty-eight minutes.

Over Australia, Glenn ~~he~~ picked out - the lights of Perth. It being night - Down Under. To the Aussies, he radioed - "thank everybody for turning them on." During his second orbit, he noticed thousands of luminous particles outside his capsule. These particles - one of the mysteries of the flight.

Glenn asked to be permitted - a third orbit.

And - no one at Cape Canaveral was about to refuse. They were elated, as their astronaut went around for the last time.

Then, the descent - after a flight of four-hours-and-fifty-six ~~minutes~~ minutes. John Glenn, fished from the Atlantic - by the destroyer "Noah". Taken aboard the carrier

"Randolph" - with everything indicating that he came back
in fine shape. "In astronaut terminology - A-okay'".

REACTION

The reaction to John Glenn's historic flight into space - is symbolized by President Kennedy. The President, making a special statement - at the White House. His theme - "the new ocean". Meaning - the ocean of space. President Kennedy, thanking John Glenn - for becoming the first American to voyage out onto that ocean. Astronaut Glenn heralding - American pre-eminence in space exploration. And the President added - that the men behind our space program handled this flight in precisely the right way.

The rest of the country - agreeing with the President. One of the common reactions - concerns all the publicity surrounding the flight. The fact that we made public - the ten postponements. Our policy, now considered - vindicated. ~~Spak~~ Speaker McCormack of the House, backing up President Kennedy with the words - "our preference for frankness has paid off." Then the speaker added "no one can doubt that John Glenn made the flight." This, a reference to Soviet ~~secrecy~~ secrecy - which has caused much skepticism about

~~about~~ whether the Russian cosmonauts really did orbit the earth.

But most Americans aren't worrying about - comparisons. They ^rre simply overjoyed - ~~with John Glenn.~~
~~The astronaut who gave us all a thrill we've never had before - Rocketing into space - and coming back to tell us ~~what it was like.~~~~

From the rest of the free world - the same kind ^d of jubilation. Said astronomer Sir Bernard Lovell of Jodrell Bank Observatory in England - "a wonderful scientific achievement". An official of the French government commented: "a triumph of the human spirit." West Germans are shouting, "Wunderbar!" Italians - "Bravo! Bravo!"

And the Russians are sending their felicitations. They allowed the news of the flight to be heard in Russia - without jamming.

~~Incidentally, the U N was practically immobilized~~
^{K.N.}
~~by the flight. Many delegates, skipping today's session - to stay on ~~front~~ front of the TV screen.~~

WILLIAM LAURENCE

A group of us, including William Laurence, science editor of the New York Times, were together for an hour or so while Glenn was in orbit. Laurence made some comments that I unexpectedly found rather useful some minutes later when I jumped into a cab. The taxi driver, like everyone else in New York wanted to talk about the space flight. Turning to me he asked a question that I suppose was asked, hundreds, perhaps hundreds of thousands of times, today.

What good will come from this? What possible benefit to us, to anyone?

As an answer to that, science editor Bill Laurence had just told us the following story. He reminded us that back in 1831, Michael Faraday, in England, ushered in the age of electricity, with his invention of the magnetic induction coil. The Prime Minister of that day visited Faraday in his laboratory and said: 'What good is it?'

Faraday shrugged his shoulders and replied:
"What good is a baby?" And then answered by saying,
"maybe some day we'll tax it!"

To which the New York Times atomic expert added:
"And how we have taxed electricity since then!"

Faraday ushered in one era, these space flights
are ushering in another.

As President Kennedy put it, this is the new
ocean, and we must sail on it and be in a position
second to none.

What next? Editor Laurence points out that
Gemini will be coming up soon, Gemini meaning twins.
This will be when two astronauts are sent up together.
Then, Project Rendezvous, when small loads will be sent
rocketing into space. Somehow these loads will be
brought together, in space, to form a real space ship
large enough to provide us with observatories in space,

observatories from which it will be possible to take a real look at the universe as we have, not yet seen what is around us. He likened us to fish that only live at the bottom of the sea. That if fish on the ocean floor were able to think they naturally would wonder, what it's like on top? The inhabitants of this planet are at the bottom of a sea, the earth's atmosphere, a sea approximately one hundred miles deep. Now, we will be able actually to see the stars.

He then prophesied that by 1967 we will be landing a man on the moon. Remarked Bob Considine - the Hearst columnist: "We don't know whether the moon is good or bad, or cheese."

Before long we'll know. What will that mean to mankind? No one can answer. But, we hope, Dick, it will mean that all-out war will become impossible - unthinkable.