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Space Shuttle: Developing An Icon 1972-2013



Synopsis

Due to this collection's heavy weight (18 lbs) non-standard shipping costs apply. See shopping cart for details. During 30 years and 135 missions, the U.S. space shuttle carried more crewmembers to orbit than all other launch systems, from all other countries combined, and carried more than 4.5 million pounds of payload to orbit. It was a staggering record of success. Unfortunately, it was accompanied by a tragic record of failure, with two accidents claiming the lives of 14 astronauts as well as other incidents claiming several ground personnel. But, as Richard Truly, an astronaut and NASA administrator, once said, "Flying in space is a bold business. We cannot print enough money to make it totally risk-free." This assertion was not meant as an excuse, simply a statement of fact regarding the physics of space travel and the dangers of chemical rockets. Because it flew for 30 years, most people alive today do not remember a time when the space shuttle was not in the news. The public was enthralled, the politicians somewhat less, and the armchair critics even less so. The space shuttle was meant as a stepping-stone to broader exploration. But the funding and political will never materialized, leaving the vehicle with little meaningful work for most of its flight campaign. Nevertheless, the space shuttle launched a variety of commercial and military satellites, planetary probes to Venus and Jupiter, and three of the four NASA Great Observatories, including the *Pierre de Césaire*, the Hubble Space Telescope. Only near the end was it able to demonstrate its intended purpose, building a space station. Even that, when finished, was only a shell of what had been envisioned when the space shuttle was approved. Unfortunately, having found its stride as the primary support vehicle for the International Space Station, the White House canceled the program, leaving the United States without the ability to launch people to orbit. All of this has left an uncertain legacy for one of the most visible engineering achievements of the 20th Century. This book is not meant to establish that legacy, but to thoroughly document the development, technology, and, to a lesser extent, the flight campaign. We will leave it to future historians to determine the ultimate worthiness of the program. What we can say for certain, though, is that it was one hell of a ride.

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Customer Reviews

"This is arguably the most outstanding space publication of the century so far and it is very hard to see it being eclipsed. In more than a million words it is a fitting tribute to an iconic winged vehicle and is the most outstanding publication on this remarkable flying machine yet published."

(Spaceflight magazine 2017-07-07)"Jenkins's latest--and finest--work is by far the best thing done on the Space Shuttle to date, and it will be difficult to match and, in my opinion, impossible to top in the future. This is one of those extremely rare cases where the importance of the task of matched by the author's ability to tell the true story from the insider's point of view." (Walter J. Boyne Aviation History 2017-06-15)

Dennis R. Jenkins was an engineer and project manager on the space shuttle program for 33 years. Arriving just prior to STS-1, he worked in engineering and operations at the Kennedy Space Center and Vandenberg Launch Site. Jenkins was an investigator on the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, senior technical staff to the Return-to-Flight Task Group, and the project manager that planned the delivery of the remaining orbiters to their various display sites at the end of the flight campaign. He sat as the Verville Fellow at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and is currently the project director for the Endeavour display, as well as facility construction manager at the Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center in Los Angeles. He splits his time between Los Angeles, California, and Cape Canaveral, Florida.

My copy arrived today as well. Amazing photography, lots and lots (and lots!) of text, and just an excellent reference overall. It's a shame that you have to go to China to get something like this printed. I'd wait and post a review after I've read the three volumes, but sheesh, that might take a while. One (purely personal) disappointment, in the table of contents and the index I see no mention of the Launch Processing System (LPS) that I and quite a number of people worked on and with. Maybe we can put that in the next book?UPDATE - I finally completed the first of the three volumes

and I can confirm that it is great reading, although pretty technical. The text is extensive and the photographs and illustrations are numerous and excellent. Some might take issue with the small size of some of the photographs but obviously this was a compromise to permit the inclusive of the great amount of text. Certainly this first volume must be considered the definitive history of the space shuttle development overall and some parts of it, for instance the history of the shuttle carrier aircraft (SCA), are some of the best information available today on these individual subjects.

The phrase "Ultimate Reference" just doesn't do this set any justice. If you want the be all end all for the Space Shuttle, this is it, ignore the price tag and just do it. You'll be like me, very glad you did.. and in my case, very glad my wife approved the purchase :-)

Beautiful volume. Previous editions were great, but this is the finest history of the shuttle you're likely to find. Well worth the money. Tons of information, wonderful images from every flight, and all kinds of details. Quality job of the printing. A handsome, useful set for any space enthusiast's home library. Dennis Jenkins has outdone himself!

The detailed reviews already presented should convince you to purchase this incredible compilation on the the entire Space Shuttle program. The NASA history office should simply adopt this effort as it's (has theirs ever been published?) official history because I doubt they can do better. If the price worries you realize that money is either paper or plastic but this masterpiece (although made of paper) will last for at least a generation. What a pleasure to be in possession of such a professional endeavor.

A lavishly illustrated, impressively detailed history of the Space Transportation System from concept to museum. Destined to be the authoritative history. If you are interested in space flight, you want this.

I doubt there will be a more complete history/reference of the Space Shuttle program than this three volume set. The orbiters, SRB's, the external tank, rescue ball, SLC-6, roll-out distances...its all here. Wow. Bravo Dennis Jenkins.

Wonderful production quality and detail for novices and space geeks alike. Hours and hours of detail and enjoyment.

A gold mine of technical information, the author deserves a great deal of credit for amassing in book form the three volumes I was very pleased with my purchase and recommend it highly.

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