

State

Shuttle crew home, pleased

Young, Crippen pass 'key' to successors

United Press International
HOUSTON — Space shuttle pilot John Young said Thursday America's new space truck operated much more smoothly than expected on its first orbital flight test and said the mission was more than nominal — it was "study hearer."

At their first news conference since the mission, Young and his copilot, Robert Crippen, who launched April 12 from Cape Canaveral, Fla., and after 36 orbits landed April 14 at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., presented the jury the cardboard shuttle "key" to the public next flight crew — Joe Engle and Richard Truly — with their highest recommendations.

"What a machine," Young said. "She is a beauty. It was smooth. The vehicle is very easy to control. I handled superbly."

"My personal opinion is it is very much more hypersonically able than we thought. I would have felt comfortable flying it (manually) all the way down."

"I expect it won't be too much longer when the shuttle gets operated that we'll carry a lot of people up there that never dreamed of doing it. I think it'd help if you had a lot of money."

Young and Crippen said they felt less of a "kick in the pants" than they expected from the rockets during liftoff. They also said re-entry went more smoothly than anticipated, with temperatures on the cool side of the heat-shielding tiles about 100 degrees lower than predicted. They expected temperatures of about 300 degrees Fahrenheit but the highest was 250. The hot side of the tiles on the bottom endured 2,300 degrees

during re-entry.

On orbit, Crippen said, "We had been preparing for all these disasters and we really didn't have anything to do but sit back and enjoy it."

The astronauts said the shuttle's big windows — unlike the tiny portals on previous spacecraft — gave them a startlingly clear view of what was happening around them, including the spread of a pink glow up the nose and around the windows from the friction heat of re-entry.

"I think you can call it (the mission) phenomenal," Young said. "It was more than nominal — it was superb. We enjoyed every minute we were up there."

"We have an anomaly (problem) list that, when I looked at it, was about 50 items long. And mostly it's nothing to worry about. We had 130 flight objectives. As I read it, except for the loss of some data due to the (balky) recorder, I think we got them all."

Problems previously disclosed included the balky data recorder, which refused to operate automatically; the cabin heating system, and the loss of 16 pieces of heat-shielding tiles from the orbital maneuvering rocket pods.

Young and Crippen said they were never worried about missing tiles after visual confirmation that

no other tiles were missing from the wings and tail, although they could not see the underside.

"Both John and I thought there was the potential of losing a few tiles, but it really didn't bother us," Crippen said.

Young said tests had been run indicating a mission could be saved even if a tile were lost on a critical part of the underside. He said his inspection of the underside immediately after landing disclosed no missing tiles.

"Everybody said it was impossible that some of those critical tiles on the bottom would not fall off," Young said. "None of those tiles fell off. NASA was wrong again. I can't tell you what a tribute that is to the American working man."

Crippen added with a laugh: "The American working woman does a good job, too."

Young, a Navy captain, said he was not concerned the military

would take too much of a role in the development and use of the space shuttle. He said only 25 percent of scheduled payloads are from the Defense Department.

"I don't see any extra defense payloads going up in the 1980s because of the shuttle, but I wish there were," he said.

Crippen revealed a previously undisclosed problem with the toilet on board the shuttle. He said the vacuum pump that eliminates waste gradually deteriorated and finally failed four hours before landing.

"It would be nice if they would fix that," Crippen said. "We actually had very little to recommend with respect to improvements."

Crippen, 43, who was making his first space flight, experienced a heart rate of 130 beats per minute on liftoff, while Young, 50, making his fifth space flight, had a heart rate of less than 80. Crippen blamed the thrill of it all.

"You betch'em, I was excited," he said. "I was surprised it (heart rate) wasn't higher than that."

"What you don't understand," Young said, "is that I was excited too. I just can't make it go any faster."

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Control grain price, Brown encourages

United Press International
AUSTIN — All future foreign grain sales should be subject to more stringent price structures when an embargo on sales to the Soviet Union is lifted, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Reagan Brown said Thursday.

Brown said all grain sales — "especially those to unfriendly countries" — should be negotiated on a cash basis, and the price should be high enough to cover the cost of production and assure a profit for Texas farmers.

"Agricultural producers deserve the best efforts of our leadership in helping to make American farming profitable," Brown said. "He said the domestic prices for corn, grain sorghum and wheat all under the cost of production in Texas."

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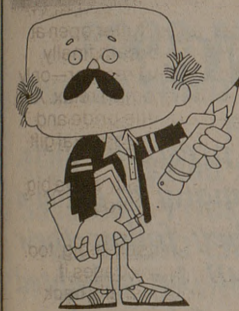
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