

THE BATTALION DEBRIEFING

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Thursday • December 5, 1996



Proud Parents Mike Woolsey, father of Amber Woolsey, and Lee Robertson, father of Chandra Robertson, cheer on their daughters during a first round volleyball game against Arkansas Wednesday night.

► Campus

Holiday craft fair opens today in MSC

Merchants will be on the first floor of the MSC from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Friday for the Winter in Aggieland Craft Fair.

The fair is part of the week-long Noonday Programs festivities, sponsored by the MSC Hospitality Committee.

► Nation

Astronauts must return a day early

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — With bad weather in the forecast, a jammed hatch and trouble with the navigation equipment, NASA on Wednesday ordered space shuttle Columbia's astronauts to come home a day early.

Columbia was due to land at Cape Canaveral just after day-break Thursday.

Earlier in the week, NASA had granted the five astronauts an extra, 17th day in space. But the space agency took it back after the astronauts accomplished their final job in orbit Wednesday — retrieving the ultraviolet telescope they dropped off at the start of the flight.

Flight director Wayne Hale said the primary concern was a fog expected at the landing Friday and through the weekend. The shuttle was stuck in the hatch and the failure of a navigation unit contributed to the decision to return Columbia back as soon as possible.

"They certainly would have thought that you ought to button up and be prepared to come home at the earliest opportunity," Hale said. The shuttle has two navigation units aboard.

Two spacewalks considered a critical practice for building the shuttle's external tank and solid rocket boosters because of the shuttle's age. Engineers still have no idea how much weight the boosters can handle would barely budget.

Flight controllers spent the week devising ways for the shuttle to open the hatch just in case an emergency spacewalk was needed to close the cargo bay before Columbia's return to Earth.

"We don't expect to have any problems," Hale said. "But we want you to worry about things like that."

The concern was not getting the hatch open but ensuring it would seal after a walk. Without a decent spacewalker, Tamara Jernigan Thomas Jones would have to re-enter the pressurized cabin to re-secure the hatch. The cramped conditions between the cabin and cargo bay are not ideal for a long stay.

► This day in history

(AP) — Today is Thursday, Dec. 5, the 340th day of 1996. There are 26 days left in the year. The Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah, begins at sunset.

On this date:
In 1776, the first scholastic fraternity in America, Phi Beta Kappa, was organized at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

In 1792, George Washington was re-elected president; John Adams was re-elected vice president.

In 1848, President James Polk triggered the Gold Rush of '49 by confirming that gold had been discovered in California.

In 1901, movie producer Walt Disney was born in Chicago.

In 1932, German physicist Albert Einstein was granted a visa, making it possible for him to travel to the United States.

In 1933, Prohibition came to an end as Utah be-

came the 36th state to ratify the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, repealing the 18th Amendment.

In 1955, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations merged to form the AFL-CIO under its first president, George Meany.

In 1989, East Germany's former leaders, including ousted Communist Party chief Erich Honecker, were placed under house arrest.

In 1994, Newt Gingrich was elected the first Republican speaker of the House in four decades.

► Today's birthdays

Singer Little Richard is 64. Author Joan Didion is 62. Author Calvin Trillin is 61. Actress Morgan Brittany is 45. Actress Carrie Hamilton is 33. Country singer Ty England is 33. Rock singer-musician John Rzeznick (The Goo Goo Dolls) is 31.

► Weather

Today	Tonight	Tomorrow	Highs & Lows
			Today's Expected High: 70°F Tonight's Expected High: 46°F Tomorrow's Expected High: 77°F Tomorrow's Expected Low: 49°F
Skies clearing with winds shifting to the southwest.	Clear with light southwest winds.	Clear and warmer with light southwest winds.	

Information courtesy of TAMI

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