

Space News Roundup

Two down, an era to go

Second test flight, while shortened, accomplishes many objectives

At 400,000 feet, all sails crowding, *Columbia* tore into the atmosphere at a speed of Mach 26, feet enough to travel four and a half miles in a second, as fast as any winged craft was ever flown.

Columbia, named for an 1836 sailing frigate which was one of the first U.S. Navy ships to circumnavigate the globe, layed a ground track from the vicinity of Guam to the California desert in approximately 30 minutes.

With the vessel's reaction control thrusters firing, Commander Joe Engle and Pilot Richard Truly punched up the aerodynamic stick inputs and preprogrammed test inputs which maneuvered *Columbia* along three axes, and Engle radioed Houston, "This bird is really solid." The induced perturbations continued throughout the hypersonic, supersonic, transonic and subsonic speed regimes.

At 300,000 feet, the operational limit of the X-15s Engle flew 16 times in the 1960s, the Reaction Control System (RCS) roll thrusters were deactivated, and the spaceplane began to turn airplane. As *Columbia* penetrated deeper into the swiftly thickening atmosphere, dynamic pressure began to build, and the rudder, elevons and body flap had something to push against, after 54 hours in orbit as useless appendages.

At Mach 19, Engle initiated the first roll reversal, and as *Columbia* exited the entry blackout, he initiated another. Fifty seconds later the speedbrake was deployed to 100 percent, and *Columbia* regained communications with the Buckhorn, California tracking station.

Three minutes later the third roll reversal in the ambitious entry

flight dynamics test procedure was begun, followed one minute later by speedbrake retraction to 65 percent and the deployment of two streamlined probes near the nose cap to take air data. The computers began accepting that data later at Mach 2.5.

At Mach 3.5, the rudder was activated, but the RCS yaw thrusters remained active until Mach 1, giving *Columbia* two sources of directional stability.

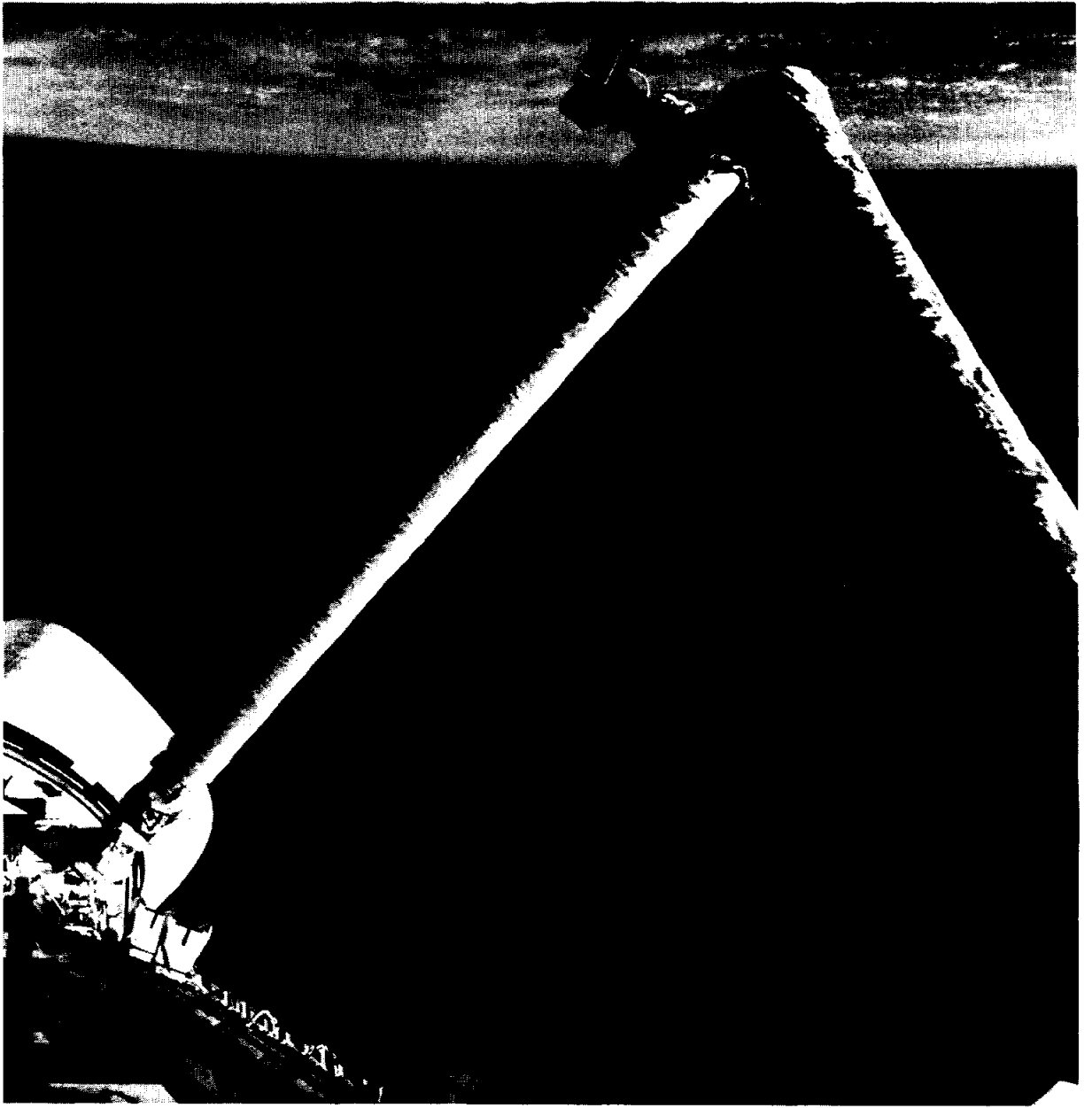
The Shuttle's lift over drag coefficient began to rise, from about 1:1 at entry to around four feet forward for every one foot decrease in altitude by the time Engle executed the pre-flare maneuver.

At Mach 2.5 the Terminal Area Energy Management (TAEM) guidance system took over. At 50,000 feet *Columbia* was traveling subsonically, and Engle shortly thereafter steered the Orbiter onto the heading alignment circle, a maneuver which involved a 180-degree left bank and the highest G forces (about 2 Gs) that the crew would experience on entry.

At Mach .6 the wings began to level out relative to the ground, and as Engle executed the pre-flare, *Columbia* was in view of Runway 23 at Rogers Dry Lake, Erds Air Force Base. *Columbia* had gone from a 20-degree glideslope to one of three degrees in this time, and as the craft lined up for the final flare and touchdown, the speed had decreased to about Mach .5.

At two days, six hours and thirteen minutes into the mission, *Columbia's* main landing gear raised puffs of dust on Runway 23, and the most ambitious flight of an Orbiter to date was complete. After a

(Continued on page 2.)



The star of day two was clearly the Remote Manipulator System (RMS), the arm which will be used to hoist payloads when the shuttle fleet becomes operational. Built by Canada under an agreement with NASA, the RMS, according to Richard Truly, flew like a charm.

"A national treasure"

Reagan, Bush visits mark firsts at JSC



JSC Director Christopher C. Kraft Jr. explains the ground tracking map in Mission Control to a "visiting CapCom" during the flight of STS-2. President Reagan was the first Chief Executive to visit the floor of the JSC landmark during a mission. Also accompanying the President were NASA Administrator James Beggs, Deputy Administrator Hans Mark, and White House Aide James Baker.

President Ronald Reagan emerged from a freight elevator, and amid a phalanx of Secret Service agents and top NASA officials, became the first sitting Chief Executive to step onto the floor of Mission Control during a flight.

Two days later, on Nov. 15, JSC played host to Vice President George Bush, who ate breakfast with the STS-1 and STS-2 crews at the Gilruth Recreation Center. It was the first back-to-back visit of the nation's two highest officials to JSC.

The Presidential visit came during the second day of the STS-2 mission, a few hours after Pilot Richard Truly had successfully completed tests of the Canadian-built Remote Manipulator System.

JSC Director Christopher C. Kraft, Jr., flanked by NASA Administrator James Beggs and Deputy Administrator Hans Mark, pointed out functions of various consoles and screens within the Mission Operations Control Room (MOCR). The President shook his head with a smile of amazement, and sat down at the CapCom position to speak with Astronauts Engle and Truly:

"Joe, Dick — this is Ronald Reagan."

"Hello Mr. President."

"Hello. I just wanted to make a

request," Reagan said. "I wondered if when you go over Washington before your landing at Edwards Air Force Base, could you pick me up and take me out? I haven't been to California since last August."

Amid chuckles from the crew and laughter on the ground, Engle said, "We'll be proud to, sir."

"Okay, thank you very much," Reagan said. "Let me just say, I'm sure you know how proud everyone down here is and how this whole nation, and I'm sure the world, but certainly America, has got its eyes and its heart on you."

"Well, thank you very much, Mr. President," Engle said. "We're awfully honored that we've got the opportunity to take part in this, and we're very glad that you're getting a chance to meet all the people there in Houston that are making it happen."

"Well, I've enjoyed meeting them. I told them when I came in this was a rare experience for an old horse cavalry officer," Reagan said.

"We certainly do appreciate you taking the trouble to show all the people working on the Space Shuttle how much you care, and it makes us mighty proud," Engle said.

(Continued on page 2.)

Orbiter update

About 40 miles from where *Columbia* has landed on Runway 23 at Edwards Air Force Base sits a building where the next vehicle in the Space Shuttle fleet is steadily taking form, with scheduled delivery to NASA in mid-summer 1982.

This is Rockwell's Palmdale assembly facility, where Nov. 2 the Orbital Vehicle (OV) 099, *Challenger*, was powered up for the initial subsystems checkout. If all goes according to schedule, *Challenger* could be transported overland to NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards and then ferried to the Kennedy Space Center atop the 747 carrier aircraft by June.

Work crews at Palmdale have installed *Challenger's* vertical stabilizer, and by the end of this month will have begun to mate the payload bay doors and the body flap, one of the Shuttle's primary flight control surfaces. More than half of *Challenger's* 30,553 thermal protection system (TPS) tiles have been bonded to the spacecraft.

In September, OV 101, *Enterprise*, was moved from its berth at Palmdale to make room for components of the third flightworthy shuttlecraft, OV 103, *Discovery*.

Enterprise was towed overland to Dryden, where it now awaits possible use by the Air Force for form and fit test checks to launch facilities under construction at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Bay 2 of the Orbiter Processing Facility, and could fly by the end of 1982 or early 1983. L. Michael Weeks, Acting Associate Administrator for Space Transportation Systems, said OV 099 could possibly fly the first operational mission, STS-5.

Between STS-4 and STS-5, *Columbia* is scheduled for a relatively lengthy modification overhaul at Palmdale. The crew ejection seats and associated pyrotechnics will be removed, as well as several thousand pounds worth of developmental flight instrumentation (DFI). For the initial test program of four flights, *Columbia* has been and will be flying with hundreds of sensors aboard. These include accelerometers, strain gauges, thermal sensors under various critical tile locations and myriad other devices to assess operational parameters. During overhaul, *Columbia* will be fitted with a galley and sleeping berths for a crew of seven.

Challenger will be delivered with those systems already aboard, and will not operate with a crew ejection system. In addition, *Challenger* will have 254 less TPS tiles than *Columbia*. This is due to the installation of Advanced, Flexible Reusable Surface Insulation (AFRSI) blankets which will be affixed to *Challenger's* Orbital Maneuvering System (OMS) pods.

The AFRSI plan is eventually to replace the majority of low temperature tiles on the orbiters. The blankets are in three layers, closed with quartz thread and produced in approximately one meter squares. The thickness of the blankets varies from .45 to .95 inches. The blankets can be cut to fit, and are attached using the same room temperature vulcanizing (RTV) adhesive now employed on *Columbia*.

The blankets basically consist of standard TPS material sandwiched between an outer waterproof woven silica high temperature fabric and an inner layer of lower temperature glass-based fabric. The flexible blankets are directly bonded, without the need to use strain isolation pad material. The blankets also will be attached to the aft OMS/RCS pods on OV 099.

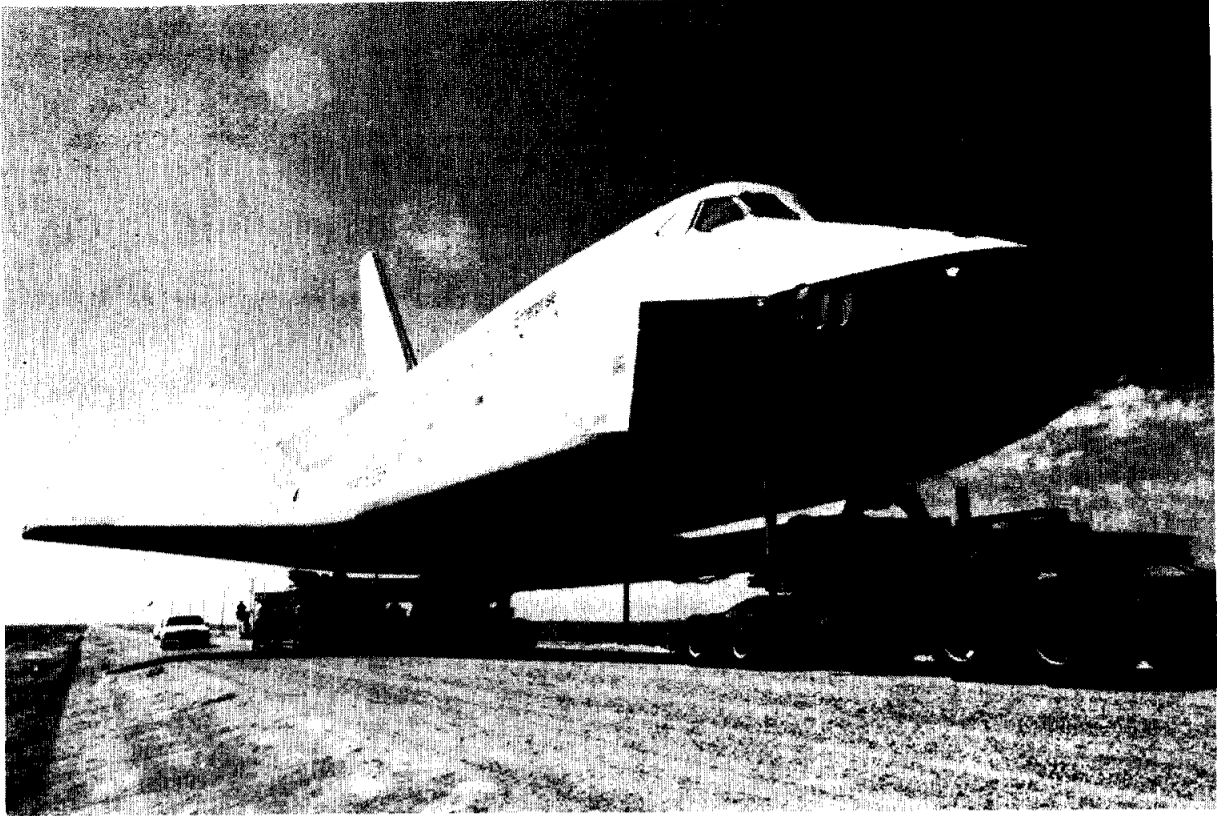
Challenger also will be structurally strengthened, although a detailed weight control program will have reduced its dry weight by about 2,000 pounds less than *Columbia*.

The AFRSI blankets may also replace the majority of low temperature tiles on *Discovery*, which is scheduled for delivery in the fall of 1983. Major components of *Discovery* will begin arriving at Palmdale for assembly early in 1982. Both the lower forward fuselage and the wings are scheduled to be on hand in April, and the upper forward fuselage, vertical stabilizer, payload bay doors, aft fuselage and crew module for OV 103 will all be ready for installation by this time next year.

Long lead items are in the procurement process for the last currently planned orbiter, OV 104, *Atlantis*. Major work schedules on *Atlantis* will not begin until 1983, and delivery is scheduled for 1985. By that time, two launch facilities, pads 39A and 39B, will be available at KSC, and the Air Force launch facility should be operational at Vandenberg.

Challenger actually was built before *Columbia*, but because OV 099 was initially intended to be a structural test article, *Columbia* preceded it in orbital flight capability. The first orbiter built was OV 101, *Enterprise*. Then came 099, *Challenger*, followed by OV 102, *Columbia*. In the late 1970's, it was determined that *Challenger* was significantly closer to structural design specifications than *Enterprise*, so OV 099 became the designated second spaceworthy shuttle

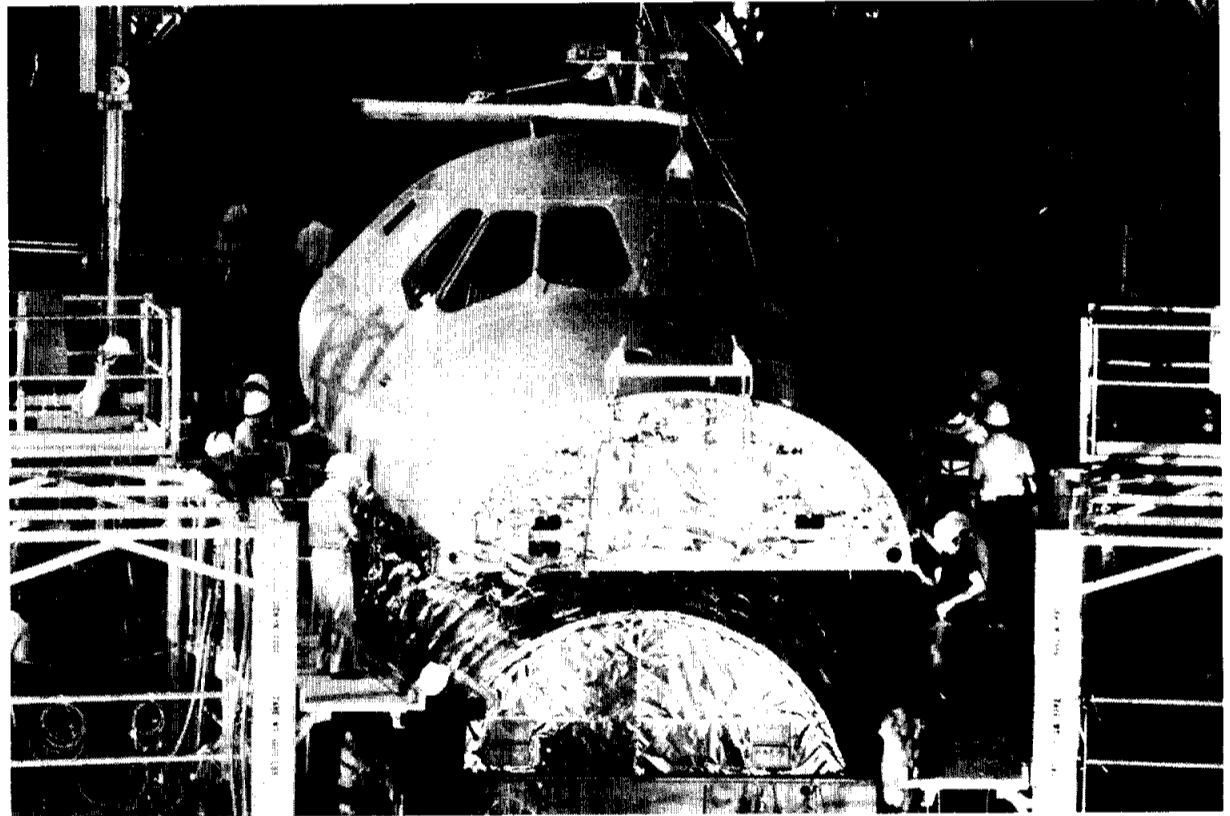
At KSC, *Challenger* will enter



OV 101

Enterprise

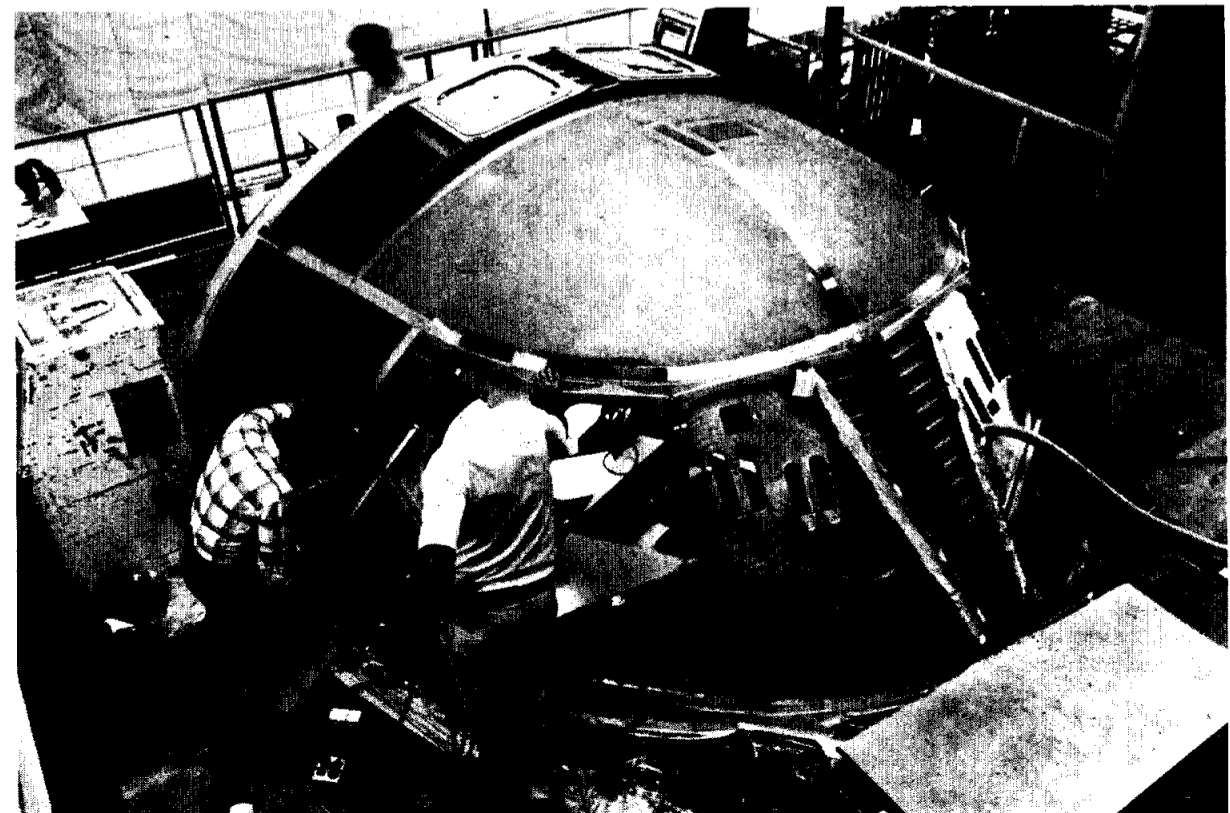
The Orbiter named by popular acclaim was mobile again in September as it was moved from its berth at Rockwell International's Palmdale assembly facility to Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base. *Enterprise*, which last flew during the Approach and Landing Tests in the late 1970s, may be used to help configure Air Force launch facilities at Vandenberg Air Force Base.



OV 099

Challenger

The upper forward fuselage was installed over the pressurized crew module on *Challenger* in late October. Work began this month on installing reinforced carbon carbon to the wing leading edges and nose cap. The spacecraft could be delivered to NASA as early as June. At that point it will enter the Orbiter Processing Facility at the Kennedy Space Center.



OV 103

Discovery

Major components of the Orbiter *Discovery* are already taking shape around the country. Here technicians at Rockwell's Downey facility work on the upper forward fuselage of the third scheduled operational Orbiter. *Discovery* will sport new Thermal Protection System blankets, as opposed to individual tiles, in the low temperature locations, primarily on the upper wing surfaces and the OMS/RCS pods.



OV 102, Columbia

The first operational Orbiter on STS-1 ascent.

Components of *Discovery* taking shape at Downey include the forward fuselage, aft fuselage, pressurized crew compartment module and the forward reaction control system (RCS) structure. *Discovery* is scheduled for delivery to NASA in the fall of 1983.

Challenger, meanwhile, is now in the first phase of a five-part certification program. Plans call for completion of the Initial Subsystems Test early in 1982. Under that phase, various subsystems are activated and verified, gradually to be merged with other interactive subsystems.

During the early spring, those subsystems will be tested, working in conjunction with one another in the Subsystems Test, scheduled for completion around the end of April.

The Final Acceptance Test, the third phase of the certification program, involves verification of *Challenger's* many complex systems in integrated form.

In May and June, the Post Checkout phase will be underway, with even closer scrutiny of the Orbiter's integrated functions. Complete configuration inspection follows in June, just before preparation for overland transport to Edwards and the ferry flight to KSC.

At KSC, *Challenger* will enter

