

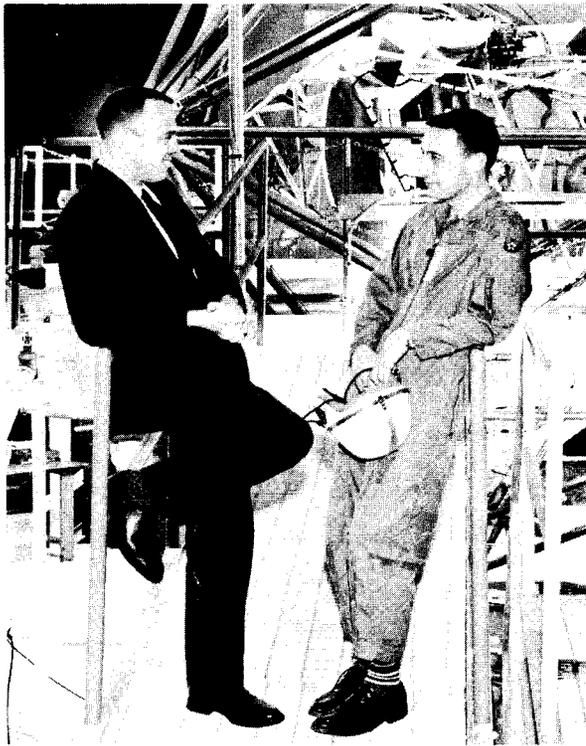
ASTRONAUTS AT LEWIS

Two Project Mercury astronauts, Virgil I. Grissom and Alan B. Shepard, Jr., arrived at Lewis Tuesday, February 16 to train in the Multiple Axis Space Test Inertia Facility (MASTIF) in the Altitude Tunnel. During the following three-week period, all seven astronauts will experience disorientation, or "spin" tests designed to simulate what will take place when they enter orbit aboard the Project Mercury Capsule.

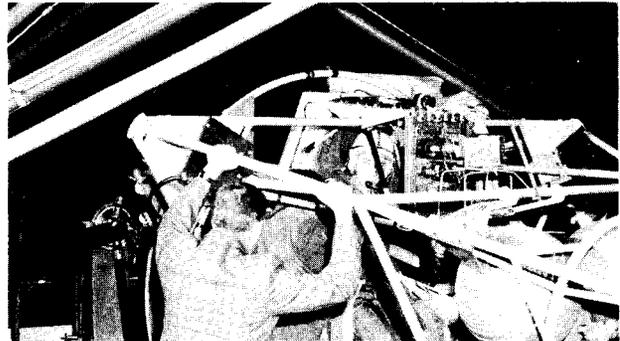
All possible attitudes of space flight are duplicated by MASTIF's three gimbal cages. Each astronaut will "fly" the rig as it simulates the Mercury capsule's flight in space. With the astronaut strapped in a life support couch mounted in the inner of the three cages, his reactions to spin tests about all axes at speeds from two to 50 revolutions per minute will be tested. He will control his mockup capsule by emitting spurts of nitrogen gas through small reaction jets.

Astronaut Grissom, 33, is a native of Mitchell, Indiana. A 1950 graduate of Purdue University, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with cluster for Korean missions. An Air Force test pilot with over 2,000 hours of jet flying, he is married and has two sons. He delights in driving his 1926 Prinz, one of the few in this country.

Astronaut Shepard, 36, was born in East Derry, N.H. Graduating from the Naval Academy in 1944, he served in the Pacific in World War II. Shepard has over 3,600 hours of test pilot time, 1,700 in jets. He is married and has one son. It is said he owns one of the hottest Corvettes in Virginia.



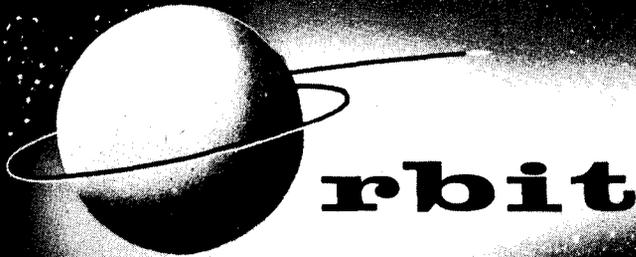
Astronauts Shepard (left) and Grissom in front of the gimbal rig in the AWT.



Grissom is strapped into couch.



Shepard (left) & Algranti discuss rig.



ASTRONAUTS CONTINUE TESTS IN MASTIF

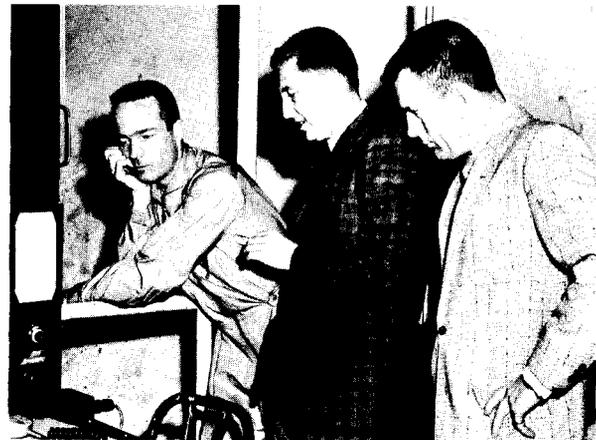
Continuing in the disorientation program in the Multiple Axis Space Inertia Test Facility (MASTIF), Astronauts John H. Glenn, Jr., Donald K. Slayton, Malcolm S. Carpenter, and Walter M. Shirra, Jr., have flown in the gimbal rig within the last ten days. As Orbit goes to press Astronauts Slayton, Carpenter, and Shirra are in the midst of their check-outs.

An all-day press conference is being held at Lewis today. The Cleveland press corps along with representatives from Chicago, Buffalo, Washington, and New York City, and many areas of Ohio and Indiana were introduced to the astronauts. Presentations were made by Bruce T. Lundin, R. R. Miller, and John Powers, Space Task Group.

In the spin-test program, each astronaut experiences 4½ to 5 hours of flight time in the MASTIF. During this time they learn to orient the simulated space capsule while rotating in each of the three axes individually and in combination.



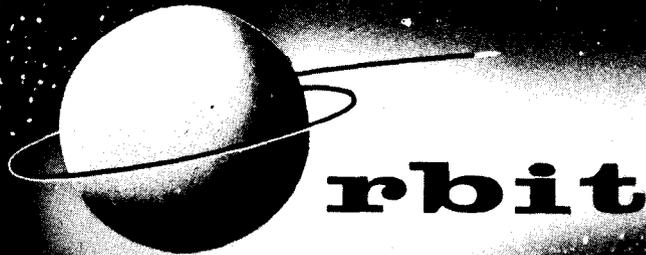
Astronaut John H. Glenn, Jr. leaving the ready room for disorientation tests in the gimbal rig.



Astronauts Malcolm S. Carpenter (left) and Donald K. Slayton (right) get check-out of control board by Lewis pilot Joe Algranti.



Astronaut Walter M. Shirra, Jr. climbing out of the gimbal rig couch after spin tests.



HEALTH BENEFITS FOR LEWIS EMPLOYEES

"Health benefits" for Lewis employees will become a reality on July 10, 1960. Beginning on that day the Federal government will pay part of the bills for hospitalization and medical insurance for you if you wish to be included in the Federal "health benefits" program. The present Blue Cross-Blue Shield plan now in effect will be replaced by several government-wide plans providing different kinds and degrees of health benefits, partially paid for from government funds.

In the time between now and the end of June, much information will be generated and distributed to employees on the different health benefit plans available, and how they apply to you as an individual. In return, you will have to weigh the facts, discuss them with your family and others, and decide what plan, if any, is best suited to your needs. To help you get acquainted with the provisions of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Act of 1959 (Public Law 86-382) and what this act means to your personal security, ORBIT will carry a series of articles about the new health benefits program. The first article of the series is presented on pages 3 and 4 of this issue.

ASTRONAUT PRESS MEETING

In spite of heavy winter snows, many members of the working press, radio and TV gathered at Lewis for the Astronaut Press Meetings on Friday, March 4. Six Astronauts were on hand to meet the battery of questions and flash bulbs. Astronaut Scott Carpenter flew the simulated space capsule in the gimbal rig as photographers gathered footage for national coverage (which most of you caught on TV or in the newspapers).

Shown here are two scenes of the day's activities. The six Astronauts were Scott Carpenter, Deke Slayton, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Wally Shirra, and Al Shepard.

The seventh Astronaut, Gordon Cooper checked in for his training last week. Accompanying him was Warren North, formerly of Lewis. Warren received flight training in the rig also.



Cooper in gimbal rig.

Press meeting.

Action in AWT.