

From the desk of Lt. Gen. Jefferson D. Howell Jr.

Director's Message



A Tribute

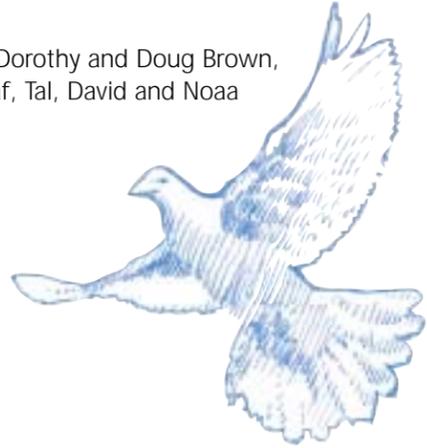
DURING THIS TIME OF REMEMBRANCE I would like to pay tribute to a group of wonderful individuals I have gotten to know over the past year. They are the immediate families of the *Columbia* crew. Not only have they suffered incredible personal tragedy, grief and loss, they have also been thrust into the spotlight of public scrutiny and celebrity, an additional burden that was not their bidding or desire.

From the day of the accident through the present time, all of them, in their own individual styles, have set an example of courage, dignity and spiritual strength that is awe inspiring. On several occasions I have personally witnessed them giving encouragement and support to others in grief although it is they who have suffered the greatest loss. They are indeed very, very special people whom I feel honored to know.

So, to Evelyn, Matthew and Laura Husband, to Lani, Sean, Christopher and Cameron McCool, to Paul, Dorothy and Doug Brown, to Jean-Pierre Harrison, to Sandy, Sydney and Kaycee Anderson, to Jon and Iain Clark, and to Rona, Asaf, Tal, David and Noaa Ramon, I say thank you for who you are and what you do.

I and the entire JSC Team salute you.

Beak sends...



APPEARING THIS MONTH IN OUR

Guest Space

Kent Rominger

Chief of the Astronaut Office



On February 1, 2003, the world lost seven heroes – we lost seven family members. Coping with our tragic loss has been very difficult, but I think that the STS-107 crewmembers would be very proud of NASA's commitment to continued human spaceflight and to the support given to their families.

The legacy of the STS-107 crew will never be forgotten. The crewmembers worked together as a team to perform flawlessly. Individually, they were not concerned with their own accomplishments, even though each one was extremely capable and talented. They didn't look for

fame or to be in the limelight. Each one was committed to being a member of the most capable seven-person team possible.

This past year I have been extremely impressed by the STS-107 families. Their strength, courage and leadership have been a great inspiration to all. Their positive attitude toward continued human spaceflight truly honors their loved ones. I can only imagine just how proud the STS-107 crew would be of their families.

The STS-107 crew also would be comforted by the way NASA is providing care and support for their loved ones. NASA's commitment to the crewmembers' families begins at the top with our Administrator and continues down through the astronauts who personally support each of the STS-107 families. I must take this opportunity to thank these dedicated astronauts for the caring and compassionate support that they have provided to the STS-107 families through this year. The families of these dedicated astronauts should also be recognized for their understanding and unselfish support during these challenging times.

It has been said that we learn more from our failures than from our successes. Clearly, NASA is learning from the *Columbia* tragedy. The Shuttle, International Space Station and other advanced programs made significant accomplishments in pursuit of human spaceflight this past year. The astronaut corps is not only dedicated to supporting these programs, but is honored to work with the talented individuals in these programs

The international cooperation in support of the Space Station demonstrates the robustness of global teamwork. The Space Station program and the entire human spaceflight community should be commended for maintaining a continued human presence in space in spite of the temporary Space Shuttle grounding.

The folks in the Shuttle Program are working extremely hard to address the problems that surfaced as a result of the *Columbia* accident. They are methodically addressing difficult challenges and are dedicated to safely returning the Space Shuttle to flight. I know the STS-107 crew would be proud of these folks and their efforts.

At this moment, a plaque honoring the crew and bearing their mission patch is now on Mars, carried there by the Spirit lander. We see the STS-107 logo in pictures being beamed down to Earth. It's a marvelous tribute to the crew's own spirit of exploration and demonstrates how deeply each member of the NASA family cares, and remembers, the dedication of these amazing human beings.

The very spirit, teamwork and commitment demonstrated by the STS-107 crew are what I have witnessed in the NASA team. I feel we will have a bright and rewarding future ahead of us as we strive to continue the STS-107 legacy.

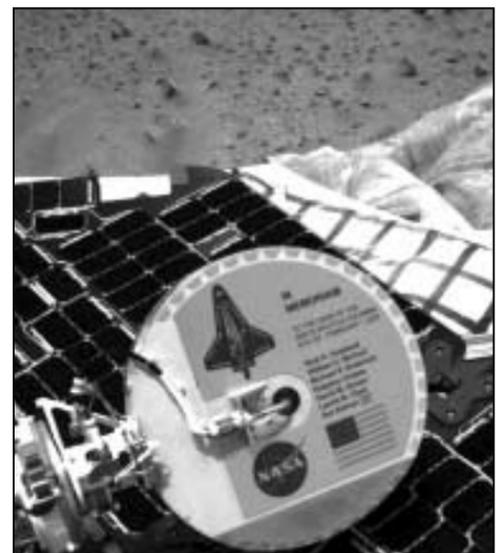
Columbia crew remembered with plaque on Mars Spirit Rover

NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe recently announced plans to name the landing site of the Mars Spirit Rover in honor of the astronauts who died in the tragic accident of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* in February 2003. The area in the vast flatland of the Gusev Crater where Spirit landed in early January will be called the Columbia Memorial Station.

Since its historic landing, Spirit has been sending extraordinary images of its new surroundings on the red planet. Among them is an image of a memorial plaque placed on the spacecraft to *Columbia*'s astronauts and the STS-107 mission.

The plaque is mounted on the back of Spirit's high-gain antenna, a disc-shaped tool used for communicating directly with Earth. The plaque is aluminum and approximately six inches in diameter. The memorial plaque was attached March 28, 2003, at the Payload Hazardous Servicing Facility at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla. Chris Voorhees and Peter Illsley, Mars Exploration Rover engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., designed the plaque.

"During this time of great joy for NASA, the Mars Exploration Rover team and the entire NASA family paused to remember our lost colleagues from the *Columbia* mission. To venture into space, into the unknown, is a calling heard by the bravest, most dedicated individuals," O'Keefe said. "As team members gazed at Mars through Spirit's eyes, the *Columbia* memorial appeared in images returned to Earth, a fitting tribute to their own spirit and dedication. Spirit carries the dream of exploration the brave astronauts of *Columbia* held in their hearts."



A plaque honoring the fallen heroes of *Columbia* is mounted on the back of Spirit's high-gain antenna.

Jsc2004e00070 Photo Credit: NASA/JPL