

WORLD LAUDS GLENN

Once more Colonel John Glenn was all set to journey into space. He showed no signs of tension, despite previous frustrations and delays. This time, all America hoped the flight really would be on. What tremendous preparation and cost had gone into the whole man-in-space programme. After this attempt the bill for the tax-payer would amount to nearly £14,3 million pounds.

The imperturbable astronaut lowered himself into the Mercury capsule "Friendship" Seven", in which he would have to wait for the long count-down. He had been this far before, only to have the attempt postponed. Now everybody understand why astronauts have to be so carefully selected and trained.

This time conditions were perfect; the launching itself without fault.

All went well with the giant Atlas Rocket and at 17,545 miles an hour Colonel Glenn went into orbit. As he was completing the third orbit he began his descent, opening the parachute, and then inflating the huge air chsion to break the impact on the water.

About 200 miles north of Puerto Rico, the capsule was sighted and the destroyer Noa came alongside to hoist it aboard. What a thrilling moment for the crew, that theirs should be the ship to retrieve the capsule and the heroic John Glenn after the space flight of 4 hours, 56 minutes.

To get out, Glenn blew open the side-hatch and his ordeal was over. He told the crew of the destroyer he felt fine. Afterwards President Kennedy telephoned to say, "We are proud of you; you did a wonderful job". The Queen added her congratulations. As the first American to orbit the earth, brave John Glenn is sure of a lasting place in his country's history.