



Editors Blog

An open forum to discuss everything Space related

File

Edit

Post

Comment



The Way it is

Mike Howard Editor-in-Chief
michael.howard@smdc-cs.army.mil

Join the Discussion

<http://armyspacejournal.blogspot.com>

28 July 2009

“And that’s the way it (was).”

I think the good Uncle Walter would excuse a young editor for using his signature sign off to start the blog for this summer edition of the ASJ. Watching the CBS Tribute to Walter Cronkite that aired in prime time on July 19 shortly after his death, I was struck by two Space-related historical events: The Explorer Satellite launching into orbit and men landing on the moon. These are appropriate events to think about while considering how integrated Space is to military operations – and, therefore, “Space, the best job in the Army” – not so much for the occurrences themselves, but for what they teach us about what we do.

CBS aired the footage of the Explorer Satellite launch in 1958 upside down. Yes, there was black-and-white footage of Walter talking about how the Defense Department entered the Space effort by putting Explorer into orbit. And, as the news anchor spoke in the grainy clip of the original newscast, there was the upside down launch of the modified Jupiter C Rocket with Explorer on its tip showing in a window above Walter’s head in the newsroom. Apparently unaware, Walter spoke on for a few moments about the brilliance of this before acknowledging the mistake with the promise that they’d get it turned right side up soon.

The second event goes beyond the nation’s fascination with men landing on the moon in 1969 and planting a U.S. flag there. Here was Walter who himself was fascinated with the idea and prospect of Space exploration – perhaps planted or encouraged by the Explorer launch – putting his heart into the story. When he announced that President John F. Kennedy was dead, he did it with an understandable emotion that cannot be contrived. Equally when he announced that Apollo 11 had landed on the moon, Walter was clearly moved over what had been achieved. In fact, Walter’s passion was extremely evident as he communicated the many events that moved our nation.

Until I watched the tribute to Walter Cronkite, I did not really see the connections. I was born a few months after Explorer went into orbit January 31, 1958 – wasn’t even aware of the historic launch until Scientist Ed Kiker drug a surplus Explorer Satellite into my office in 2001 for display in the Command’s operational hub in Colorado Springs, Colo. When the President was shot on November 22, 1963, I was a toddler and vaguely aware. But I remember watching the Apollo 11 footage while in the fifth grade shortly after the Spacecraft landed on July 20, 1969.

To me, it is too overwhelming to fully comprehend the impact of Space on our world today. Yet these iconic events – a rocket launch with America’s first satellite, the assassination of a US president who had the vision for Space exploration and US men walking on the moon – clearly lay the foundation. Today, astronauts travel to Space riding on rockets and the military uses capabilities tied to important data that travels through satellites.

I am not a Space expert. I am a journalist. There’s a parallel here that I am making from the tribute to Walter Cronkite. It has to do with capacity of calmness in dealing with mistakes while exploring new things – upside down footage. It has to do with the reality of passion and human courage. Space is definitely different today, intimately and silently inlaid into the nerve center of human activity. The challenge to the military Space community is to intensify the connection to help national security. The challenge to journalism is to inform understanding. The calmness and passion of Walter Cronkite are necessary ingredients for both.

Posted by Mike Howard at 12:37 PM

 Comments



Follow the Editor
<http://twitter.com/theASJeditor>

What are you doing?

29

The Army Space Journal link will be working later today ... check it out ...
<http://smdc-armyforces.army.mil/ASJ>

Latest: Answering the question ... Why does Space matter to the Army. Hope to have the Army Space journal url up and running tomorrow.

Update

Home



theASJeditor Answering the question ... Why does Space matter to the Army. Hope to have the Army Space Journal url up and running tomorrow
about 20 hours ago from web



theASJeditor I see Army War College classmates Michael Baker, Richard Kaley, Thomas Lewis, Marshall Michels and Michael Wells made the Colonel's list!
8:04 AM Jul 2 1st from web



theASJeditor Interesting from the CBS Walter Cronkite Tribute Sunday night ... when Explorer Satellite went up in 1958, CBS ran the footage upside down.
7:55 AM Jul 2 1st from web



theASJeditor More on Symposium ... to be held 3-7 Aug in Colorado Springs Theme is Space - Best job in the Army
2:51 PM Jul 20th from mobile web



theASJeditor

11 Following 6 Followers 6 Tweets

JOIN THE DISCUSSION
 ON TWITTER

Home

<http://twitter.com/theASJeditor>

Direct Messages

Favorites

ASJ Archive
smdc-armyforces.army.mil/ASJ

USASMDC/ARSTRAT
smdc.army.mil

Search



Contact the Editor
space.journal@us.army.mil

Photo Updates

Minnesota Educators watch launch of U.S. Army Astronaut Tim Kopra on STS-127, July 15. The group watched the launch from U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command operations Headquarters, Building 3, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. Photos by DJ Montoya, 1st Space Brigade

