

Saturn V . . .

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When the Saturn V vehicles were no longer needed after Skylab was launched in 1973, records were deposited in national archives facilities. Although paperwork exists to accompany each piece of the hardware, much of it is inaccessible because of the volume of material it was deposited with. Hardware was in such demand after the success of the program that it wasn't uncommon for components to be split up and sent to different locations.

Although the Smithsonian representatives have been able to piece together details on the origins of the KSC vehicle, they are eager to receive any additional information to better document where the pieces came from.

They have been able to provide this accounting of each of the stages and its known history:

Stage 1 — The S-IC-T first stage booster is a ground-test vehicle. It is believed to have come from the Marshall Space Flight Center. NASM is interested in finding out what happened to this stage between the time the testing program was completed and its arrival at KSC in the mid-70s.

Stage 2 — NASM believes the second stage (S-II) was from the vehicle intended to launch Apollo 18, which was cancelled. They have had difficulty in confirming this, however, because there is no evidence of a serial number.

Stage 3 — The third stage (S-IV-B-500F) was originally manufactured as the third stage for the Saturn 1B vehicle and was used in facilities tests in the Vehicle Assembly Building and at the pad. The stage was later modified to meet the Saturn V third stage configuration. It was further modified for use in the Skylab program and NASM would like to learn more about some of those other uses.

The command module revealed a little more of its history — Wirz spotted a serial

number immediately upon poking his head into the doorway. NASM believes the module was originally part of boilerplate series 18, created for swing arm and umbilical tests at KSC. That boilerplate was taken apart and used as part of boilerplate series 30 which was created as a backup for Apollo 6.

The first step in the preservation is a pressure cleaning with a disinfectant and a general cleaning solution to remove mold and mildew. The next step is to spray the rocket with a baking soda mixture — a method known as Armex. Bachmeier said it is the first time the Smithsonian has used such a method for a museum object but that it seems to work well except for the extremely damaged areas.

Most of the damage appears to be corrosion of the aluminum skin from salty air and humidity. But paintings every three years with oil-based enamel have provided some protection from the elements, he said.

Once the pressure cleaning and the Armex process are complete, the vehicle will be cleaned with deionized water to remove chlorides and contaminants. The cleaning, which began in the middle of January, was expected to last three weeks. Then the vehicle will be painted with an industrial quality polyurethane paint to match the Apollo 11 color scheme which was selected for the project by NASA and NASM. The Saturn V will be transported to the new facility sometime this spring and final touch-ups will be completed in the new building.

The 363-foot-tall vehicle is the largest artifact ever restored for NASM and the only Saturn V rocket to be placed in a controlled environment for preservation. Anyone with any information on the vehicle is encouraged to contact Scott Wirz at 301-238-3149; Frank Winter at 202-357-2828; or Carol Cavanaugh, the KSC project manager for the Saturn V rocket preservation and stabilization, at the Public Affairs Visitor Center Branch, 867-2363.



KSC HOSTED its first Community Involvement Expo, sponsored by KSC Public Affairs, the Brevard Community Center and the Brevard Retired Senior Volunteer Program Jan. 19 in the Operations and Checkout Building Mission Briefing Room. Thirty one exhibitors from across the county displayed their services and gave employees the opportunity to match their skills with community needs.



KSC EMPLOYEES, guests and community leaders enjoy a preview of Spaceport USA's Payload Processing Exhibit and Launch Status Center during opening festivities Dec. 14. The exhibit features video of KSC employees talking about their payload processing roles as well as what working for the space program means to them.



John F. Kennedy Space Center

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