WHAT'S GOING UP: ORBITAL FLIGHT TEST-2

The practice of carrying items aboard a spacecraft with the purpose of becoming meaningful souvenirs goes back to the early days of America’s space program. One example is Gus Grissom, who took rolls of coins with him on his 15-minute suborbital flight in July 1961. In the years that followed, astronauts routinely took small bags of souvenirs with them that became small trophies for family, friends and colleagues. Apollo astronauts even took items with them on their lunar missions. The practice was followed throughout the 30 years of space shuttle flights and is continued today by the crews of the International Space Station. In each case, the items from these missions are meant to evoke the value, meaning and reward of spaceflight even for those who did not make the trip themselves.

Boeing continues the tradition to reward the immense work and dedication required to develop, build, test and fly a spacecraft capable of safely, reliably and sustainably taking crews into orbit, to the space station and back to Earth.

Starliner will carry more than 800 pounds of cargo on the Orbital Flight Test-2 (OFT-2) mission, including about 500 pounds for NASA, such as food and crew preference items for the current Expedition crew members as well as a commemorative U.S. flag that will remain aboard the space station until it returns to Earth on Starliner's Crew Flight Test (CFT).

Following the completed OFT-2 mission, many commemorative items will be distributed by their sponsoring organizations to teams around the country that played a role in Starliner’s development and in NASA’s Commercial Crew Program. Along with a host of American flags and mission patches, several unique items will also make the trip into orbit, including items from 14 historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

BILL BOEING’S ID CARD FOR AIR TRAVEL

A card that Boeing’s founder signed and used to travel the United States by air will orbit the world in a spacecraft built by his company.

Boeing founder Bill Boeing was inspired to build aircraft long before there was a known market for them. From the start, he committed his company to “build it better,” and that high standard has guided the company’s thousands of employees for more than 100 years. With Starliner, that high bar prompted innovative designs that start with a proven foundation and then build extraordinary capabilities, such as autonomous guidance and docking systems along with a parachute-and-airbag landing and recovery approach that places astronaut safety and operability at the forefront.

This identification card is numbered “1” for Bill Boeing and carries his original signature. It was issued to him to use to board any flight by the United Airlines and Transport Corporation, the precursor of United Airlines. Normally stored in The Boeing Company archives, the ID card will travel inside Starliner on a mission that is the last major step before taking American and international partner astronauts to and from the International Space Station as part of NASA’s Commercial Crew Program.

Starliner’s flight test campaign also is setting the company on a path for commercial spaceflight similar to the path Bill Boeing began in 1916, when his aircraft company produced its first airplane and followed it up soon after with aircraft designed to meet the needs of the U.S. Air Mail service.
The deep legacy of 14 historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) will be aboard Starliner’s Orbital Flight Test-2 mission in the form of flags, small pennants and other items.

“Closing representation gaps in our company and our industry is a priority for Boeing, and inspiring diverse students to pursue careers in aerospace is an important part of that effort,” said Boeing President and CEO David Calhoun. “By representing HBCUs on our Starliner mission, we are demonstrating our commitment to working with these institutions to advance equity and inclusion and help ensure a bright future for their students.”

The universities, which Boeing also has recruiting relationships with, include Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College and Spelman College, part of the Atlanta University Center Consortium; Alabama A&M University; Florida A&M University; Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Morgan State University in Maryland; North Carolina A&T; Prairie View A&M University in Texas; Southern University and A&M College in Louisiana; South Carolina State University; Tennessee State University and Tuskegee University in Alabama. Allen University in South Carolina, which the company formed a partnership with in 2020 to establish the Boeing Institute of Civility, will also be represented. The institute will be a national hub for teaching and programming aimed at advancing civil discourse in America and across the globe.

A few additional universities Boeing has recruitment partnerships with also are represented.

**STARLINER SPACE SEEDLINGS**

A mix of tree seeds with a history that harkens back to the Apollo era will be among the commemorative items to fly to space in Boeing’s CST-100 Starliner.

In 1971, astronaut Stu Roosa took 500 seeds from five different species of trees around the moon with him on the Apollo 14 mission. His special cargo included 100 seeds each of loblolly pine, sycamore, sweetgum, redwood and Douglas fir. When the seeds were brought back to Earth, the U.S. Forest Service germinated them and sent them around the country to be planted, eventually becoming “moon trees.”

In honor of those first space trees, the Starliner will carry the same mix of seeds on its uncrewed flight test. When the seeds return, they’ll be distributed to Boeing sites, suppliers and other stakeholders across the country, growing the first generation of Starliner trees.

A “Moon Tree” planted at NASA’s Goddard Spaceflight Center in Maryland sprouted from seeds carried on Apollo 14. (NASA photo)

**SILVER SNOOPY PINS & ROSIE THE RIVETER COINS**

Symbols of human spaceflight safety and women in aerospace get special ride into orbit.

Dozens of Silver Snoopy pins will be packed inside Starliner’s cargo bags to orbit the Earth and return at the end of the mission. The small items depict the beloved American beagle happily wearing a spacesuit.

NASA’s missions have routinely included cargo space for the safety mascot that was designed by cartoonist Charles M. Schulz to highlight Snoopy’s special relationship with human spaceflight and the constant drive to do things safer and better than before. Boeing is honored to carry on this tradition by taking these meaningful items on a flight dedicated to making orbital spaceflight safer.

Rosie the Riveter commemorative coins also will make a trip to space. The coins were created to celebrate the passage of the Rosie the Riveter Congressional Gold Medal Act, which honors nearly 19 million American women who rose up and filled a critical gap in the aerospace industry as men went off to fight in World War II. The commemorative coins, which were designed to recognize the impact of Rosie Riveters and inspire future generations, will be used to celebrate student and employee achievements in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).