

CENTER SERIES

CAPSULE COORDINATION COMMITTEE - MINUTES

This subseries contains the minutes of the Capsule Coordinating Committee (CCC), which was charged with the design, development, and construction of the Mercury capsule. The minutes date from the inception of the committee in June 1959 and go through November 1960. The CCC was one of the major subdivisions of the Space Task Group (STG), which by 1961 had become a separate autonomous field element of NASA assigned to manned space flight programs. In 1961-62 STG was moved from Langley to its new headquarters in Houston, Texas, which was called the Manned Spacecraft Center and is now known as the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center. The provenance of this material is uncertain, but appears to be from the files of Gerard (Jerry) Pesman, since his stamp appears in the left hand corner on almost all of the minutes (Gerard J. Pesman, Space Task Group, Fli Sys Div). Mr. Pesman was one of the original members of STG, being one of ten members assigned to the new team from Lewis Research Center. According to CCC minutes and data obtained from "This New Ocean: A History of Project Mercury," Mr. Pesman was assigned to Group 2 of the CCC, under Pilot Support and Protection Equipment, and was instrumental in the development of the couch harness/contour couch in the Mercury spacecraft, and for the impact bags/flotation devices used for Mercury water landings. Mr. Pesman moved to Houston with STG in 1961, and was in the Space Medicine Branch through 1967, when he was assigned head of the Flight Experiments Control Office under the Biomedical Research Office. Between 1968 to 1969 he is not listed in the JSC phone directory, but from 1970 to 1972 he is listed as a consultant for the Medical Sciences Branch. He does not appear in JSC phone directories after 1972. According to "This New Ocean," he was interviewed and is referred to often in the footnotes of this book. The CCC, according to the minutes, was divided into four subcommittees: Group 1 = Structures, Aerodynamics, and Recovery; Group 2 = Control Systems, Cabin Displays, and Life Support; Group 3 = Communications, Instrumentation, and Sequencing; and Group 4 = GSE, Spares, Contract Status, and Specifications. These groups were rearranged sometime in September 1960 into three groups: Group 1 = Mechanical (Pesman in this group); Group 2 = Operations; and Group 3 = Electrical. Specific chairmen of each committee are never specified. The minutes indicate the group that met, meeting number, date of meeting, and minutes distribution date. The minutes have been arranged in chronological order by minutes distribution date. Often the minutes of two, three, or all four groups have been stapled together in weekly compilations, and these documents have not been separated or rearranged, but are filed by the distribution date of the minutes stapled first in the compilation. These particular minutes appear to have been routed through Group 2, according to the attached routing slip that appears on a number of the documents, and then ended up in Mr. Pesman's files. Besides the minutes of the meetings, three other papers appear frequently: 1) contract status sheets (see minutes of 9/17/59, 10/12/59, 1/19/60, 2/15/60, 3/21/60, and 5/17/60); 2) CCC Report Distributions, which usually contain publications received from MAC (McDonnell Aircraft Corporation) and other subcontractors; and 3) CCC Activity Reports, which are usually Changes to MAC Capsules information. Many of the minutes contain handwritten notes for Mr. Pesman, or indicate areas of special interest. The purpose of the minutes can be found in comments from 10/20/59 and 12/22/59. Other interesting parts of this subseries are five groups of papers from MAC and STG meetings in St. Louis on July 14-17, 1959 (including a preliminary capsule delivery schedule) and the September 16, 1960 memo on press comments from Gilruth quoted on p. 282 of "This New Ocean."

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