

STARLINER'S IN HIS EYES

The Boeing Crew Space Transportation (CST)-100 Starliner spent six days in space during Starliner Orbital Flight Test-2 (OFT-2). The spacecraft autonomously docked with the International Space Station for the first time, orbited the Earth 94 times and covered a total distance of 2,467,406 miles (3,970,905 kilometers).

BY TODD KELLEY, BOEING WRITER

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Boeing firefighter Jon Riggsby stands just steps away from the Starliner minutes after it landed in the New Mexico desert in May.

PHOTO: ERIC SHINDELBOWER/BOEING

LANDING AND RECOVERY TEAM HONES TALENTS DURING OFT-2

Boeing Fire Assistant Chief J.R. Hudgins says his team is ready for astronauts to be on board.

Hudgins has been working for more than six years to recruit, prep and train select members of the Boeing Fire Department to be part of the Starliner Landing and Recovery Team that greets astronauts returning aboard the space capsule from the International Space Station (ISS).

OFT-2 gave Boeing firefighters real-world practice before the first crewed flight recovery.

This is a special duty for the firefighters, one with a rich history. The team follows in the footsteps of U.S Navy SEALs, who recovered returning Mercury, Gemini and Apollo astronauts as they splashed down in the ocean in the 1960s and '70s.

"Boeing firefighters were chosen for this duty because they possess the skills to handle hazardous materials situations and provide emergency medical support," Hudgins said. "Astronauts will be returning after long stays at the ISS. As a result of being in a weightless environment so long, they may need assistance exiting the spacecraft."

CST-100 STARLINER

LEAK CHECK

Four firefighters are the first to approach Starliner after it lands at White Sands Space Harbor in New Mexico. The first four firefighters, in hazmat suits, test for hydrazine leaks before they approach the capsule to prepare for astronaut extrication.

PHOTO: BILL INGALLS/NASA



FUNCTIONAL FLAG

The American flag on the access platform not only is patriotic but also gives teams an indication of wind direction in the event of a hydrazine leak.

PHOTO: ERIC SHNDELBOWER/BOEING

TEAM WILL BE FIRST 'EARTHLINGS' ASTRONAUTS SEE UPON RETURN

After the Starliner lands on Earth, a team of four firefighters in hazmat suits first test the capsule for hydrazine leaks. Hydrazine is part of the crew module propulsion system that feeds the thrusters and poses an extreme exposure risk.

Once it is safe to approach the Starliner capsule, additional members of the Landing and Recovery Team, which includes members of the Boeing Fire Department, move in to stabilize the capsule, place the mobile access platform up against the spacecraft and assist the returning astronauts out of the capsule.

CST-100 STARLINER

SELECT GROUP

The Boeing firefighters chosen for astronaut extrication represent sites from all over the United States.

PHOTO: ERIC SHINDELBOWER/BOEING



"Being a part of this team is a great honor," said Boeing firefighter Ivan Stephenson. "We've put a lot of sweat equity into this, and OFT-2 was a huge win for our team and the company as a whole. We're ready!" **IQ**

READY TO RECOVER

The broader team includes three rotating subteams from the Boeing Fire Department: X-Ray, Yankee and Zulu. Two teams are on duty when and where the Starliner lands. The third team supports a predetermined backup landing site in the event the spacecraft needs to divert to another location.

Members of the Boeing Starliner Landing and Recovery Team:

LEADER

J.R. Hudgins, Renton, WA

TEAM X-RAY

Rodney Profit, Charleston, SC
Ryan Elter, Renton, WA
Scott Holmes, Philadelphia, PA
Lacey Crick, Frederickson, WA
Javier Vasquez, St. Louis, MO
Jon Riggsby, Renton, WA

TEAM YANKEE

Jason Kestle, Everett, WA
Derek Hanson, Seattle, WA
Ivan Stephenson, El Segundo, CA
Shawn Tobias, St. Louis, MO
Genevieve Cox, Everett, WA
Marquise Hardin, Mesa, AZ

TEAM ZULU

Thor Petersen, Seattle, WA
Cory DeMarco, Charleston, SC
Todd Bark, St. Louis, MO
Gordon Wallace, Renton, WA
Gabe Moss, Philadelphia, PA
Cole Williamson, El Segundo, CA

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Video: Experience Orbital
Flight Test-2, launch to landing.