

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **RETURN TO FLIGHT A TRIBUTE TO DEDICATION OF SPACE SHUTTLE TEAM**

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FL (July, 2005) -- With the launch of Discovery just days away, the entire United Space Alliance team takes great pride in its contribution to getting the nation back to safe and successful human space flight.

"This is a story of human perseverance and triumph, and of the determination of the working women and men who have dedicated themselves to making it happen," said USA President and Chief Executive Officer Mike McCulley. "It is also a story of leadership and teamwork at all levels of the NASA/Industry team. The volume of work that has been accomplished these last two years is tremendous. Our people have put their hearts and souls into getting it all done as safely and as efficiently as possible so that we can return to the International Space Station and complete the first step of the Nation's Vision for Space Exploration."

That effort started in the fields of east Texas in February of 2003, where 526 USA employees spent three months combing through forests and fields to recover as much of the Orbiter Columbia as possible. Working with a search force that totaled more than 25,000 people and included more than 130 federal, state and local agencies, teams of USA employees were rotated to the recovery sites for weeks at a time, spending almost every waking hour helping to find, identify, catalogue and ship the debris. In the end, 38 percent of the vehicle (by weight) was recovered from an area covering about 2,400 square-miles.

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“We had no trouble finding people to go to East Texas,” said Larry Ostarly, who headed up the recovery effort for USA. “We did have trouble getting them to leave. Columbia and her crew were very important to our folks, and that showed in how hard they worked to bring as much of Columbia home to KSC as possible.”

Meanwhile, the Space Shuttle work force, led by NASA and made up of USA, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Rocketdyne, ATK-Thiokol, Hamilton Sundstrand and dozens of other companies got to work to analyze and address the Shuttle fleet concerns, fix the problems, and get the Orbiters back into space.

“Included in that team are thousands of USA employees who played a wide variety of roles in returning this nation safely to space,” said Howard DeCastro, USA Vice President and Program Manager for Shuttle and International Space Station. “For example, USA employees were instrumental in re-designing certain components of the Space Shuttle, making tiles for the Orbiter, building software, providing information management support, assembling and processing the Solid Rocket Boosters, training the Shuttle crew, preparing the astronauts’ food and packing their clothing, planning the mission, preparing the launch pads, refurbishing the crawler-transporter and preparing landing equipment to ensure a safe return of the Shuttle.”

USA employees also helped to develop the rendezvous pitch maneuver that the Orbiter will perform at the International Space Station (ISS) so that station crewmembers can view the underside of the vehicle to look for damage. They helped to develop new imagery techniques to better capture photos and video of the External Tank after separation, and also defined launch parameters that meet new constraints to ensure proper lighting for capturing imagery. USA workers were part of the

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team that developed Shuttle crew procedures for inspecting and repairing thermal tile and reinforced carbon-carbon on orbit. They also helped define the Shuttle and ISS robotic arm profiles used to support inspection and repair of the Thermal Protection System.

United Space Alliance, established in 1995, is a leader in space operations offering extensive experience in space launch and recovery operations; mission planning and control; flight hardware processing; space flight training; on-orbit assembly, payload deployment and servicing; rendezvous/proximity operations and docking; large-scale integration and sustaining engineering. United Space Alliance serves as NASA's prime contractor for the Space Shuttle and provides operations services for the International Space Station, and employs more than 10,000 people in Texas, Florida, and Alabama.

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