

Atlantis Awaits Launch

(Photo by NASA)

### The Cosmic Reporter

"Atlantis Crew To Study Sun and Earth"  
by Tim Linder

At this writing the Space Shuttle Atlantis was being prepared for an 8:01 a.m. lift off Monday morning, March 23rd.

However bad weather was threatening to delay Atlantis' departure from the Kennedy Space Center's launch pad 39A for a day or more. With a little luck and barring any unforeseen mechanical problems, Atlantis and her crew should now be in Earth orbit on an 8-day mission to study the sun and the Earth's atmosphere.

During this mission, designated STS-45, Atlantis will carry in its payload bay an international array of 12 instruments designed to study solar radiation, the chemical composition of the Earth's atmosphere and astronomical objects in the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum. The payload, called the Atmospheric Laboratory for Applications and Science, or ATLAS-1 for short, is sponsored jointly by the United States, Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Several other experiments will also fly aboard Atlantis. The Shuttle Solar Backscatter Ultraviolet (SSBUV) Instrument will provide accurate measurements

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of Earth's ozone while an experiment called CLOUSE-1A will measure apparent cloud cover at varying angles for the Department of Defense. Atlantis' crew members will also converse with school students as part of the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment.

Atlantis' seven-member crew will consist of Commander Charles Bolden, Pilot Brian Duffy, Mission Specialists Kathryn Sullivan, David Leestma and Mike Foale and Payload Specialists Byron Lichtenberg and Dirk Frimout.

Bolden, a native of Columbia, South Carolina will be making his third spaceflight as will Sullivan and Leestma. Lichtenberg will be making his second spaceflight while STS-45 will be the first mission for Duffy, Foale and Belgian scientist Dirk Frimout.

Atlantis' crew will operate the ATLAS-1 payload around the clock in two 12-hour shifts. Leestma, Foale and Lichtenberg will make up the Red Team while the Blue Team will consist of Duffy, Sullivan and Frimout. Bolden hours will vary as required during the flight.

Provided launch takes place as scheduled Atlantis will land on the concrete runway at the Kennedy Space Center at 6:08 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, March 31st.

STS-45 is the 46th Space Shuttle mission and the 11th flight for the Orbiter Atlantis.

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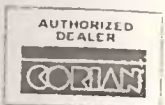
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