

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Honorable James H. Douglas

Deputy Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary

In order to reach you, this letter will have flown a distance of almost one-half million miles both within and without the earth's atmosphere, travelling over 17 times around the world at speeds greater than 18,000 miles per hour. Contained in the DISCOVERER satellite, it will have been launched by the United States Air Force into an orbit about the earth from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and recovered in the mid-Pacific.

This is the first time that letters have been sent by a satellite and is in the tradition of airmen who less than thirty years ago pioneered in the first use of airmail.

This remarkable achievement could not have been accomplished without the dedication of a great many people from Congress, from science, from industry, from the Services, and from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. We are grateful to all who have had a part in bringing this Nation one step nearer to man's transcendence over the limits of the earth.

Sincerely



THOMAS D. WHITE  
Chief of Staff

15633 AC - SPACE MAIL --- Shows here is a letter  
Deputy Secretary of Defense, James H.  
Douglas received which was delivered  
to him by Air Force Chief of Staff,  
General Thomas D. White, following a  
recently one million mile trip through  
space in a capsule aboard the Air Force  
DISCOVERER XVII. The satellite was  
successfully launched from Vandenberg  
Air Force Base at 12:43 PM, PST, on  
November 15, 1960. The capsule was re-  
leased during the 31st pass around the  
earth and was successfully retrieved  
at 3:05 PM, PST, by a C-119 flown by  
Captain Gene W. Jones from Wallops  
Station. (Contents of letter).

PLEASE CREDIT: "OFFICIAL U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO".

AIR FORCE PHOTO

United States Air Force

160 7004-139  
RETURN TO  
HQ, USAFPRC  
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

66-D70  
White



16457) A.C.

**SPACE MAIL.....Secretary of the Air Force, Dudley G. Sharp, receives a letter delivered to him by Air Force Chief of Staff, General Thomas D. White, following a nearly one million mile trip through space in a capsule aboard the Air Force ~~RECOVERED XVII~~. The satellite was successfully launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base at 12:43 PM, PST, on November 15, 1960. The capsule was returned during the first pass around the earth and was successfully retrieved at 3:05 PM, PST, by a C-119 flown by Captain Gene W. Jones from Walla Walla, Washington.**

**OFFICIAL U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO, RELEASED BY THE DEPT. OF DEFENSE.**

16457004-139	RETURN TO HQ, USAFHRC MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112
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CG-D70  
White

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



VIA  
DISCOVERER XVII  
LAUNCHED FROM VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE

Honorable James H. Douglas  
Deputy Secretary of Defense  
Washington 25, D. C.

**FIRST AIR MAIL**  
**- OUTER SPACE -**

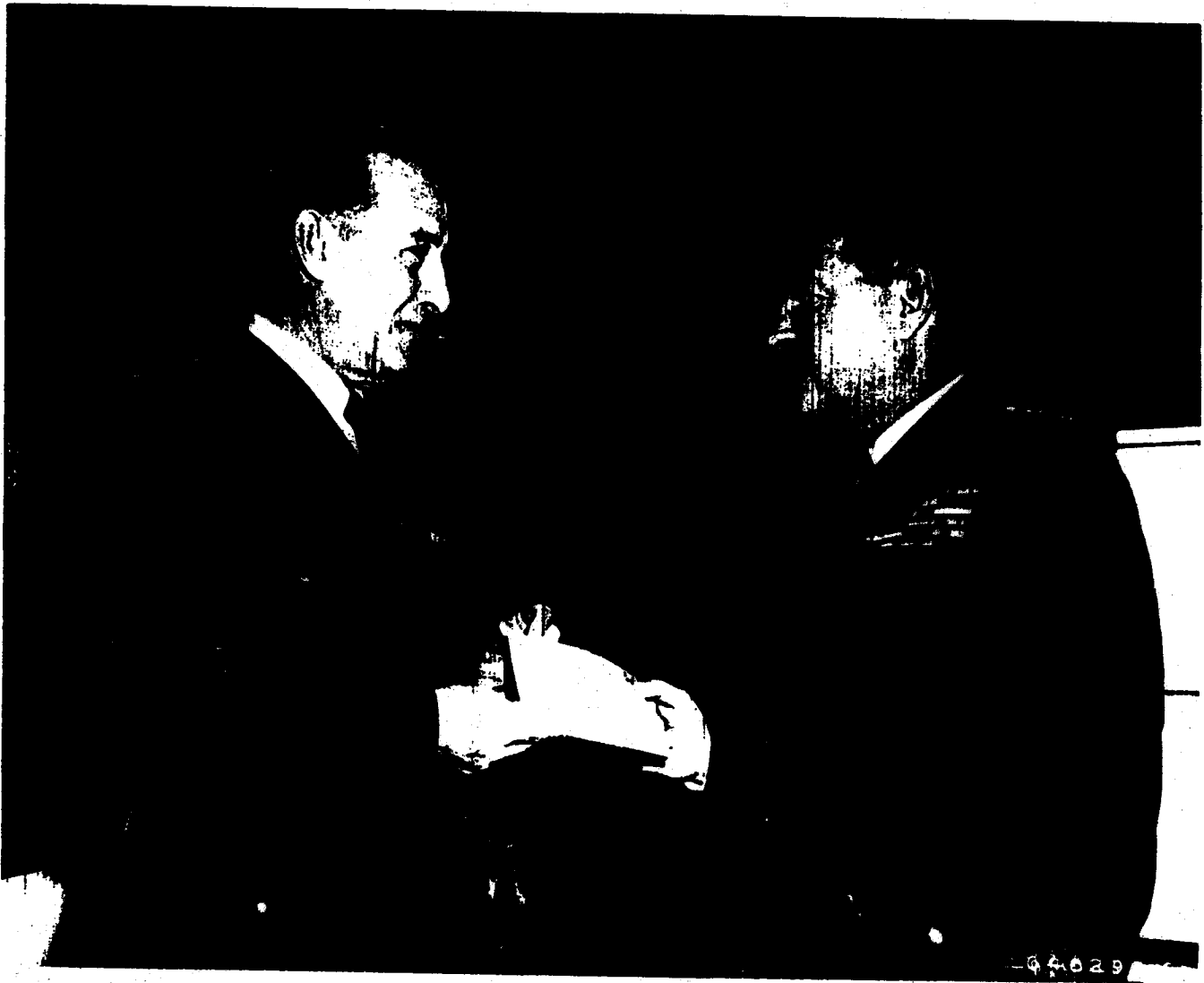
1111  
68-77

A-16633 A.C. - Shows here is the envelope of a letter Deputy Secretary of Defense, James H. Douglas received, delivered to him by Air Force Chief of Staff, General Thomas D. White, following a nearly one million mile trip through space in a capsule aboard the Air Force MESOSOMER XVII. The satellite was successfully launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base at 12:43 PM, PST, on November 15, 1960. The capsule was released during the 31st pass around the earth and was successfully retrieved at 10:05 PM, PST, by a C-119 flown by Captain Gene W. Jones from Walla Walla, Washington.

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United States Air Force  
AIR FORCE PHOTO

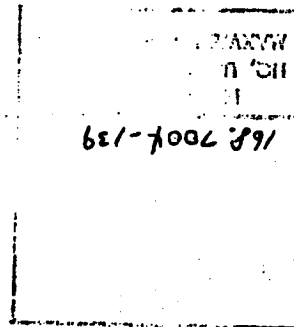
MAXWELL AFB, TX 76712	RETURN TO
HO, USAF-RDC	160700Y-139



94029

164629 AC - Space Mail.....Vice Chief of Staff, General  
Curtis E. LeMay, receives a letter delivered  
to him by Air Force Chief of Staff, General  
Thomas D. White, following a nearly one  
million mile trip through space in a capsule  
aboard the Air Force DISCOVERER XVII. The  
satellite was successfully launched from  
Vandenberg AFB at 12:43 PM, PST, on Nov. 15, 1960.  
The capsule was released during the 31st pass  
around the earth and was successfully retrieved  
at 3:05 PM, PST, by a C-119 flown by Capt.  
Gene W. Jones from Walla Walla, Washington.

"U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO"



65-7006