

Mr. Dale Hansen Receives Space Flight Awareness Program Award

by Lt. Col. M. Lloyd Blackmon, U.S. Air Force, Commander,
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Mr. Dale Hansen, program manager for the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Alliant Techsystems Inc. (ATK) Thiokol¹ Government Mandatory Inspection Point (GMIP), recently was awarded the Space Flight Awareness Program Award. Mr. Hansen is responsible for overall management of the Reusable Solid Rocket Motor (RSRM) safety of flight component of the GMIP program. For the past 15 years, he has managed the program at ATK Thiokol for the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC).

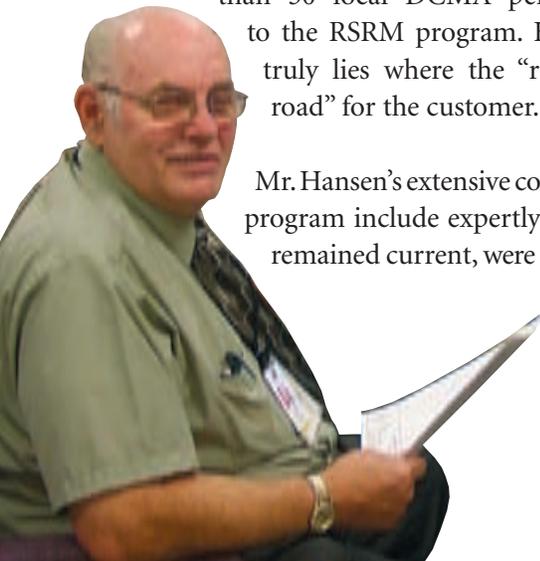


The GMIP program currently includes 267 flight-critical safety inspections, and Mr. Hansen completes Return to Flight (RTF) mission reviews and acts as the GMIP closed-loop database focal point for both NASA and DCMA. He also manages a “NASA-unique” training program for more than 50 local DCMA personnel assigned to the RSRM program. His responsibility truly lies where the “rubber meets the road” for the customer.

Mr. Hansen’s extensive contributions to the program include expertly ensuring GMIPs remained current, were implemented into

the contractor’s planning documents prior to proceeding with hardware processing and were properly completed prior to final acceptance of flight hardware by NASA Resident Management Office personnel.

Another contribution involved reviewing Space Shuttle Program Safety and Mission Assurance GMIP oversight for each major program element and developing a closed-loop accountability system in response to two Columbia Accident Investigation Board report recommendations. The MSFC challenged each assurance office to develop a path forward to embrace the Board’s recommendations, and the local assurance



(Left) Program Manager Mr. Dale Hansen at work at DCMA ATKThiokol (DCMA staff photo)

(Above) The *Space Shuttle Discovery* leaves the launch pad at Kennedy Space Center in Florida on its Return to Flight mission. Mr. Hansen has made “measurable contributions” to this mission. (Photo courtesy of NASA)

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¹ ATK's Thiokol division, with five locations throughout the U.S., is the world's leading supplier of rocket motors for space launch vehicles, strategic missiles and missile defense interceptors.

Source: ATK Thiokol, 2005, Alliant Techsystems Inc., 1 June 2005, <<http://www.atk.com/corporateoverview/corporateoverview.asp>>.



office requested DCMA's assistance in creating and executing a plan. Mr. Hansen accomplished this task superbly by implementing a highly effective RSRM GMIP review plan, which brought together NASA,

DCMA and expert contractors to review more than 20,000 Critical Items List safety of flight inspections. The review team's five-month, exhaustive effort resulted in a new GMIP list containing 1,047 inspections that provide NASA with better evidence of quality assurance. He aggressively moved to implement RTF GMIP, and the overhaul is approximately 60 percent complete. His GMIP review plan was adopted by the MSFC Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate as the standard for the RTF GMIP process.

Mr. Hansen has also been instrumental in establishing ATK Thiokol's closed-loop GMIP and Critical Items List accounting system. Over the past several months, Mr. Hansen and ATK Thiokol proactively established minimum requirements for tracking both government and contractor critical safety of flight inspections. These requirements were integrated into ATK's newly developed system, which is now being tested prior to full-scale integration.

Mr. Hansen continues to be DCMA ATK Thiokol's GMIP expert. He is recognized by DCMA and NASA at all management levels for his measurable contributions to the Space Shuttle program's Return to Flight mission. On a daily basis, his unwavering commitment to program safety and quality is outstanding.

NASA's Most Recent Space Shuttle Mission: Return to Flight

NASA's July 2005 mission to space was named "Return to Flight" (STS-114) as it was the first Space Shuttle mission since the Columbia disaster in 2003. The Space Shuttle Discovery's seven-member Return to Flight crew traveled to the International Space Station primarily to test and evaluate new safety procedures. The crew members' safe and successful mission, which lifted off from NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla., on July 26, 2005, was supported by two years of hard work by tens of thousands of people such as Mr. Hansen.

There have been many safety improvements to the Shuttle, including a redesigned external fuel tank that uses electric heaters rather than foam to prevent ice buildup; new temperature sensors; enhanced imaging equipment for recording the launch; and a boom, the Canadian-built robotic arm ("Canadarm"), that allows astronauts to inspect the Shuttle for any potential damage.

Two crewmembers, Dr. Steve Robison and Mr. Soichi Noguchi, ventured outside the Shuttle three times on spacewalks. The first demonstrated repair techniques on the Shuttle's protective tiles, known as the Thermal Protection System. During the second spacewalk, they replaced a failed Control Moment Gyroscope, which helps keep the station oriented properly. Finally, they also installed the External Stowage Platform, a sort of space shelf for holding spare parts during Station construction.

STS-114 will also be the third trip of the Multi-Purpose Logistics Module (MPLM) named Raffaello to the Station. Raffaello is a cylindrical module, about 21 feet long and 15 feet in diameter, weighing almost 4.5 tons. It's essentially a "moving van" that transports supplies to the orbital outpost.

Source: *STS-114 Crew & Mission — Mission Overview*, 2005, NASA, 26 July 2005, <<http://www.nasa.gov/returntoflight/crew/index.html>>.

(Above) Framed by a yellow ventilation hose and parts of the airframe, Aerospace Technician Ms. Lisa Campbell, United Space Alliance, works in a tight space inside *Discovery's* left wing at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. (Photo courtesy of NASA)