

Re: Space Access Update #111 04/05/05 2nd try

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- *From:* "Ed Kyle" <edkyle99@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 11 Apr 2005 21:23:26 -0700
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Tom Cuddihy wrote:

> Ed Kyle wrote:

>>

>> A look at a Vandenberg map in the Cambridge Encyclopedia

>> of Space shows that SLC 4E (Titan 4 pad) is 2 km south-

>> southwest of SLC 4W (Falcon 1) and is pretty close to

>> being in line with (perhaps 200-300 hundred meters west

>> of) the standard space launch azimuth. For that matter,

>> SLC-6 (the Delta IV pad) isn't far from an overflight

>> path either, though it is 8 km downrange.

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>

> Is it possible that the Falcon I pad isn't actually qualified for a

> full hotfiring of the booster? I can't imagine that kind of

oversight,

> but if the pad was originally intended just to take the energy of a

> launch--there's a lot more energy in a full holddown firing of the

> booster. Could that be a concern?

>

If SLC 3W could handle Atlas, it can handle Falcon.

I think, after reading the 3/31/05 SpaceX press release reproduced below, that we have the real answer. The first Falcon is still in Texas, awaiting its acceptance test firings. It won't be shipped to Vandenberg until late April at the earliest. Once at SLC 3W, the rocket is slated to do a hold-down test before the actual launch campaign starts. SpaceX is talking late Summer, maybe July-August, for the launch.

Interestingly, the SpaceX web site is now showing the second and third Falcon I launches being performed from the Marshall Islands! The first Falcon V launch is still shown flying from Vandenberg.

>>From the SpaceX web site (www.spacex.com):

"SPACEX COMPLETES FALCON I STRUCTURAL QUALIFICATION FOR FLIGHT

El Segundo, Calif. – March 31, 2005 – Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX) today announced the completion of qualification and acceptance testing of all primary structures for the Falcon I launch vehicle. SpaceX has now successfully tested every major structural subsystem of Falcon I including the gimbal, thrust frame, first stage tank assembly, interstage, second stage tank assembly, avionics bay, payload adaptor and fairing. Stage and fairing separation systems have also been successfully tested for flight. The first stage, which is designed to be reusable, was taken through over 150 pressure cycles without any sign of fatigue.

"We recognize that nothing is more important to our customers than reliability. Failure is never low cost," said Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX, "I hope that those who have followed our progress will note that we have been meticulous and rigorous in our testing, leaving no stone unturned. By combining an exhaustive test regime with a simple, minimal failure modes design, Falcon I will deliver reliable, low cost access to space for small satellites."

The Falcon I first stage engine, Merlin and second stage engine, Kestrel will begin acceptance testing within the next few weeks at the SpaceX 300-acre testing facility in McGregor, Texas. Following that, Falcon I will be shipped to its launch site, SLC 3W at Vandenberg Air Force Base, in late April for a system test firing.

The maiden flight of Falcon I carrying TacSat-1 is scheduled to follow the launch of the last Titan IV from SLC 4 at Vandenberg Air Force Base. Assuming an on time departure of the classified Titan IV mission, SpaceX expects a launch window in late summer."

– Ed Kyle

"www.geocities.com/launchreport/slr.html"

• ***Follow-Ups:***

- ◆ ***interesting update on Falcon I***

◇ *From:* Tom Cuddihy

• ***References:***

- ◆ ***Space Access Update #111 04/05/05 2nd try***

◇ *From:* Henry Vanderbilt

- ◆ ***Re: Space Access Update #111 04/05/05 2nd try***

◇ *From:* Ed Kyle

- ◆ ***Re: Space Access Update #111 04/05/05 2nd try***

◇ *From:* Henry Vanderbilt

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