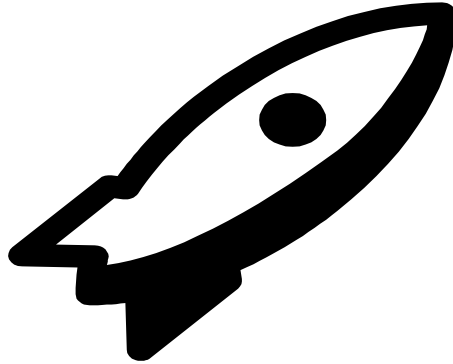


DIRECTIONS: Read the article “Private Craft Rockets Into Space – And History,” and answer numbers 17 through 19.

Private Craft Rockets Into Space — And History



by Traci Watson

MOJAVE, Calif. — A 62-year-old pilot launched a rocket plane into the sunrise Monday to become the first person to reach space without government backing.

At 7:50 a.m. PT on the first day of summer, pilot Michael Melvill fired the rocket of a craft called SpaceShipOne and shot through the atmosphere at more than three times the speed of sound.

Less than 10 minutes later, he was 62 miles above the planet — high enough that he could see the curve of the Earth. He could also see a bag of M&Ms he brought along floating through the cockpit.

The historic flight ended with Melvill gently touching down 25 minutes later at the airport in this desert town. He hopped out of the spacecraft and, beaming, raised his arms in jubilation.

“It was a mind-blowing experience, it really was,” Melvill said. “Looking at the Earth from up there is almost a religious experience.”

He had a few minor problems during the flight. The most visible was a deep dent in the white metal casing that holds the rocket nozzle.

Until now, every human who has reached space did so in a vehicle paid for by a government and on a trip organized by a government. Only three nations are wealthy and ambitious enough to sponsor spaceflight: the United States, Russia and China.

SpaceShipOne and White Knight, the jet that carried it to 50,000 feet, were developed by Mojave-based Burt Rutan. He also designed the Voyager, which in 1986 became the first plane to fly around the world without refueling.



The vehicles were funded by Paul Allen, a co-founder of Microsoft.

The flight was the most significant step taken by the craft's creators to winning the "X Prize," a \$10 million reward for the first private effort to fly a manned vehicle into space without government aid.

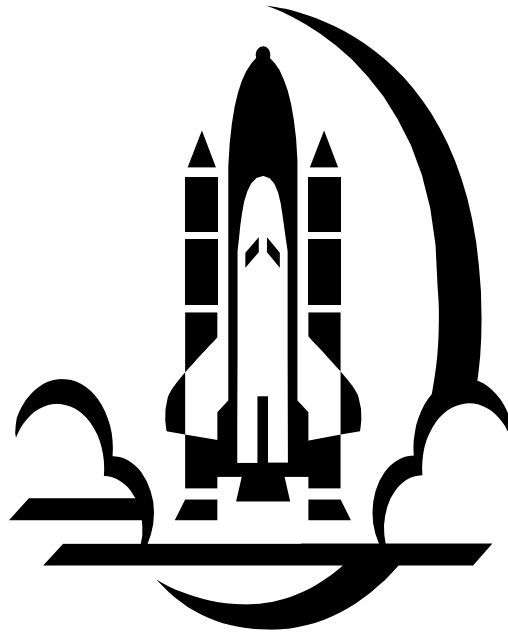
The prize money is being offered by the X Prize Foundation, a St. Louis-based group. About 25 teams from seven countries are vying for the award.

By taking SpaceShipOne above 62 miles, Melvill attained the altitude needed to qualify for the prize, a privately funded award offered to encourage the development of commercial space flight.

Monday's flight, however, is a precursor to more ambitious efforts that will have to be undertaken by SpaceShipOne to win the X Prize. To win, a craft must fly to space twice in two weeks carrying three people or an equivalent weight.

At 28 feet long, SpaceShip One is less than a quarter of the length of the space shuttle. It has room for a pilot and two passengers, and it cost roughly \$20 million to build.

A single shuttle flight costs \$500 million.



Go On 

DIRECTIONS: Based on the article “Private Craft Rockets into Space—And History,” answer numbers 17 through 19.

17. Read the sentence from the passage.

About 25 teams from seven countries are vying for the award.

Which word is the best synonym for **vying** in the quotation above?

- (A) attempting
- (B) competing
- (C) struggling
- (D) longing

18. People who read this article will learn

- (A) about the accomplishments of Michael Melvill.
- (B) about the history of personal space explorations.
- (C) about the rewards offered by various space foundations.
- (D) about the history of government sponsored space projects.

19. How does SpaceShipOne differ from the space shuttle?

- (A) The space shuttle is shorter in length than SpaceShipOne
- (B) SpaceShipOne is more expensive than the space shuttle.
- (C) SpaceShipOne is much smaller than the space shuttle.
- (D) SpaceShipOne has qualified for government funding.

Go On 