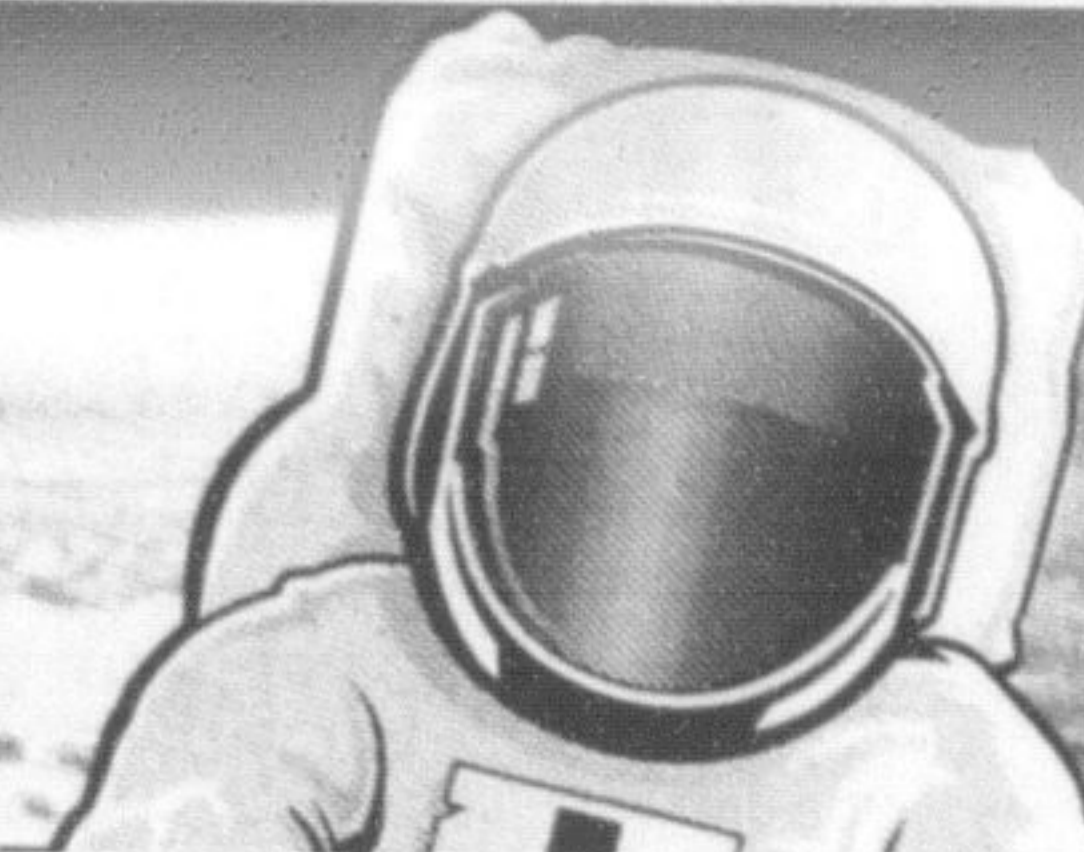


SPACE WALK 2001



Poem from mom goes up in space with Hadfield

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**
The Champion

Eleanor Hadfield didn't know what she would say to her son in the few precious moments she had with him before the Shuttle Endeavour took off for the International Space Station yesterday.

"It will be spur of the moment," she said.

Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield will become the first Canadian in history to perform a space walk when he leaves the shuttle to install the Canadarm2, a robotic arm needed to complete the space station.

The arm will propel itself around the station structure like an inchworm, performing construction tasks beyond the reach of the smaller original Canadarm on the space shuttles.

Born in Sarnia but raised in Milton from the age of seven, Col. Hadfield grew up in the farming community of the town and was raised on aviation right from the start.

"I was a pilot with Air Canada for 46 years and his (Col. Hadfield) brothers David and Phillip are also pilots," said Roger Hadfield in an interview from the home he shares with his wife Eleanor in rural Milton earlier in the month. "Between the three of us we have 65 years of flying experience."

The idea of travelling into space appealed to the future astronaut after watching American astronaut Neil Armstrong walk on the moon in 1969.

The proud parents flew out to Cape Canaveral, Florida Tuesday for the launch at 2:40 p.m. yesterday and will return home for a few days before heading out again April 29 to watch the shuttle land the following day.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE
Needless to say, Chris Hadfield's parents Roger and Eleanor are proud of their son's accomplishments.

"We won't really have time to see Chris before launch because he's in semi-seclusion but hopefully when he lands we'll see more of him," Ms Hadfield said while flipping through one of seven scrapbooks she's put together of her son's accomplishments.

"We're going to stand in the family section (of the space centre) to watch the take-off and we have STS-100

(mission number) t-shirts to wear."

The astronauts are "pretty shaky" when they land and Col. Hadfield will need some time to re-adjust to Earth living, his father said.

"The backbone stretches. They don't use their arms and legs when they're up there and the muscle tone is gone."

But neither is worried their middle son won't be able to handle the mis-

sion because this isn't the first time the 41-year-old astronaut has headed into space.

In 1995, Col. Hadfield became the first Canadian to enter the Russian space station MIR and was also the first Canadian to operate the Canadarm remote manipulator system in space.

"We went to the launch the first time he went up," Ms Hadfield said. "I thought I would feel nervous but it was so exhilarating. There was a sense of achievement and euphoria during the take-off. We know there's the possibility of an accident but you can't let that preoccupy you. You can walk across the street and get hit by a bus."

Mr. Hadfield admitted he felt a little apprehensive during the last launch.

"The whole ground shakes and you feel the heat from the shuttle even though it's three miles away. I kept shaking after the take-off. The landing is also a sight to see because the sound barrier is broken."

When the Hadfield children were growing up, Mr. Hadfield insisted they keep all doors to their future open.

"Sometimes it wasn't easy for them to take a particular course in school but we were fortunate the kids had lots of ability. I kept the pressure on them."

After attending Milton District High School for four years and then graduating from White Oaks High School in Oakville in 1977, Col. Hadfield earned an honours bachelor of mechanical engineering from the Royal Military College in Kingston in 1982 and completed a masters of aviation systems at the University of Tennessee in 1992.

Selected by the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) as one of four astronauts out of 5,000 applicants, Col. Hadfield was enrolled in mission specialist training at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas.

Chris

He was just a boy like other boys
Growing strong and tall
Amidst his brothers and sisters
At his parent's beck and call
Then, one moon-lit night of wonder
He saw a rocket soar
He watched a man walk on the moon
And knew that he would pour
His thoughts, dreams and ambitions
Toward something very new
To learn enough to qualify
Himself to join that crew
He accomplished all he aimed for
When, after years of strain,
Atlantis hurled him skyward
And brought him home again
Now once more we'll be watching
As Endeavour rises high
Our hopes and prayers and wishes
Will go with him to the sky
We'll glory in his space walks
And be proud of what he's done
Our little lad's gone up and up
Good luck, God-speed, dear son
— Eleanor Hadfield

Currently, he works as a CAPCOM, the voice of mission control to shuttles in orbit.

Ms Hadfield gave her son a poem she wrote for his mission to be taken up in the shuttle with him.

Do the parents of the man who's about to make history once again consider their son to be a hero?

"I suppose he is a hero," his father said. "We need heroes in Canada and we need to recognize them."

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