

There's a coincidence today. On this day 390 years ago, the great explorer Sir Francis Drake died aboard ship off the coast of Panama. In his lifetime the great frontiers were the oceans, and an historian later said, "He lived by the sea, died on it, and was buried in it." Well, today we can say of the Challenger crew: Their dedication was, like Drake's, complete.

The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and "slipped the surly bonds of earth" to "touch the face of God."

[Note: The President spoke at 5 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. His address was broadcast live on nationwide radio and television.]



Updated June 7, 2004

Steve Garber, NASA History Web Curator

For further information E-mail hq-histinfo@nasa.gov