

Transcript

Astronaut Tells of E. S. P. Tests

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DURHAM, N. C., June 21 (AP) – Capt. Edgar D. Mitchell Jr., the astronaut, said today that four persons on earth participated in the extrasensory perception experiment he conducted during the Apollo 14 flight to the moon early in February.

He said he had used 25 numbered cards in the experiment, in which he attempted to send a thought message to the four persons as to what the symbol on each card was. He said two of the four got 51 of the 200 correct, and the other two were less successful.

The space agency confirmed after the flight that the astronaut had carried out the experiments during his rest periods, but said it was a personal experiment and without sanction of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Captain Mitchell said at a news conference that he had chosen the four in a “dinner table” conversation, but he did not identify them. However, a Chicago-area psychic, Olof Jonsson, has said he participated.

Five Kinds of Cards

Captain Mitchell, a Navy officer, said the cards had included five each with stars, crosses, waves, squares and circles. He said he had made a random shuffle of the deck before blasting off to obtain a list of the sequence in which they appeared. Then, during four rest periods in the moon flight, he reshuffled the deck to obtain a new sequence. Using the second series of numbers as a guide, he concentrated on each card as it appeared.

He said that he had told the four other participants that he would try the experiment on six specific occasions, but that he could find the necessary 20 minutes or less on only four occasions. Two of the four recipients whose score was highest got 51 correct answers of 200 guesses, he said. Chance would have meant only 40 correct, he added.

Calls Results Suggestive

“This is an acceptable significant result in the other sciences, but parapsychology is more conservative and considers such odds as only suggestive or extra chance performance,” he said.

Captain Mitchell said he had been interested in E.S.P. for long time and planned to conduct similar future experiments.

“We're much too uninformed, unknowledgeable in this mechanism of telepathy or E.S.P. to project its uses, but I think once we start to understand what the mechanism is, then we can start talking about uses,” he said.

His own E.S.P. experiments during space travel produced results “far exceeding, anything expected,” he asserted, but scientifically, they were only “moderately significant.”

The astronaut was in Durham to analyze the results of his tests with Dr. J. B. Rhine, head of the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, the foundation conducts inquiries into the possibility of spiritual or other nonphysical life in man.