

In memoriam:

Columbia and crew of STS-107

The monument where the proud Luna once stood is pictured in every schoolroom. Many trips followed, some tragic, some not, before space transportation reached it's present safe operation. The spaceways are paved with the bodies and glorious hopes of pioneers. With accomplishment of their dream some of the romance has gone out of space."

-- Farquharson, History of Transportation, III: 414

This and other excerpts from a fictional history book were a part of "Destination Moon," Heinlein's short story based on the movie of the same name.

The seven-member crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia could have been the heroes of any Heinlein story. They were brave, smart and fearless.

When Columbia broke up on reentry on February 1, 2003, critics of space travel used this tragedy to argue against manned space flight. Unnamed rockets can do the job, they say.

But the crew of STS-107 knew that the benefits of space travel outweighs the risks.

Several on-line memorials to the crew of Columbia borrowed these lines from "The Green Hills of Earth."

We pray for one last landing
On the globe that gave us birth;
Let us rest our eyes on the friendly skies
And the cool, green hills of Earth.

-- Robert A. Heinlein

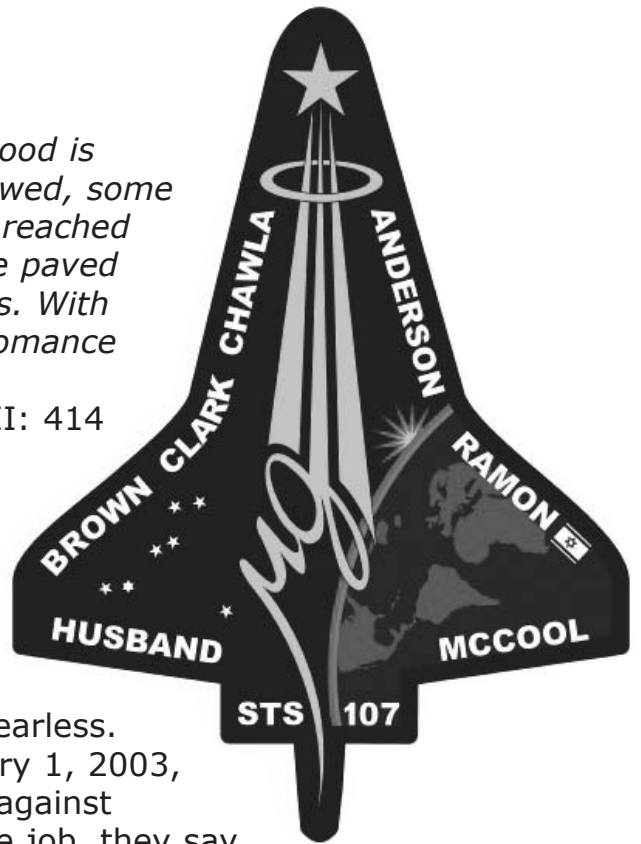


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