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Astronaut speaks at University

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ASTRONAUT SPEAKS AT UNIVERSITY

MISSOULA---

An Air Force major who hopes to be one of the first two U.S. astronauts to set foot on the moon, said the initial attempt by this country to land men on the moon may occur before the end of 1969.

In a press conference Wednesday at the University of Montana, Maj. Joe Henry Engle said two or three additional developmental flights similar to the Apollo 7 mission scheduled for Friday at Cape Kennedy, Fla., probably will be needed if the lunar landing and return is attempted by next year's end.

Engle said he hopes to be one of the first two astronauts to land on the moon, but the three men who will make the flight haven't been chosen.

Engle said Friday's scheduled Apollo flight and the orbit around the earth is scheduled to last about 10 days, 19 hours, the approximate total time slated for the actual flight to the moon, the lunar landing and return to earth.

In the actual moon journey and lunar landing attempt, Engle said the pilot in the command section of the spaceship will circle the moon while the other two astronauts, including the pilot of the lunar module, descend on the moon in the lunar vehicle to set up experiments and gather geologic specimens for examination after the return to earth.

Total time spent on the moon by the two astronauts will be 18-20 hours, Engle said.

Engle, 36, who has been trained as a lunar module pilot, said he doesn't know whether or not Russia is ahead in the space race.

He said the U.S. space program "is handled by what we feel is a sound engineering approach" to the objectives in mind and not by the space feats of other nations.

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