

NASA's Orion spacecraft heads cross country

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Credit: NASA/David C. Bowman

A test version of NASA's Orion spacecraft gears up to take a long road trip. Starting from NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., the mockup will take a four-week journey across the nation to Naval Base San Diego in California. There, the test article will be used to support NASA's Underway Recovery Test in February 2014. The test will simulate the recovery of Orion during its first mission, Exploration

Flight Test – 1 (EFT-1), scheduled for September 2014.

The uncrewed EFT-1 mission will take Orion to an altitude of approximately 3,600 miles above the Earth's surface, reentering the atmosphere at a speed of over 20,000 miles per hour before landing in the Pacific Ocean.

During the recovery test in San Diego, the [spacecraft](#) will be set adrift in open and unstable waters, providing NASA and the Navy the opportunity to recover the capsule into the well deck of the USS San Diego. While deployed, the team will seek out various sea states in which to practice the capsule recovery procedure in an effort to build their knowledge base of how the capsule recovery differs in calm and rough seas and what are the true physical limits.

NASA and the Navy practiced recovery in calm seas during a Stationary Recovery Test in August where the spacecraft was set adrift in the waters of Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia and recovered into the docked well deck of the USS Arlington.

The Orion mockup will travel through Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and then reach its final destination in California.

Provided by NASA Image of the Day

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