closeout crew is not special there's thousands of people out here that have thousands of job you know in each ones equally important the only unique thing about us is we have the last hands-on job before the bird flies the closeout crew is the last to shake the gloved hands of space shuttle astronauts before they rocketed orbit from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida we closed the vehicle out for flight which means we take out anything that doesn't fly we put in what needs to fly
we put the astronauts in strap them in

and we close the hatch for flight the
team is made up of NASA and United Space

Alliance workers from Kennedy and the

Johnson Space Center in Houston the

orbiter closeout crew chief coordinates

launch day activities and communicates

with the fire room via radio he goes by

the call-sign ovcc two technicians are

experts of the shuttle crew module side

hatch and to insertion technicians

specialize in helping the astronauts

strapped into their seats

an additional astronaut joins the
closeout crew as the prime astra support

person with a callsign asp a nasa

quality representative rounds out the team 20 people are certified to work with the closeout crew but only a few serve at a time so on launch day we all come together to make one team there's only seven people out of that 20 that would support a launch come up here some crime team it all happens at the 195-foot level of the shuttle launch pad or the orbiter access arm leads to the climate-controlled white rope the
closeout crew reports to the launch pad

shortly after the shuttles external fuel tank is filled with propellant several hours before launch the team sets up its own rescue gear and takes care of some pre-boarding housekeeping duties then the astronauts arrive and suddenly the white room gets a whole lot more crowded okay once the crew gets here naturally I can't put all seven people in there six or seven in the ship at one time the countdown allows 50 minutes to get everyone strapped in with their gloves and helmets on the astronauts need help putting on their parachute harness and
communications gear before climbing

aboard after a round and communications checks anything not needed for flight

has to come out including the closeout

crew we go close the hatch and

pressurize the cabin there's some

last-minute things takes us roughly an

hour after we close the hatch to get out

of here but before they go the white room must be partially taken apart so it could swing back into position beside

the shuttle if there's an emergency even

if the astronauts have already opened

the hatch you can see these billows
behind me we deflate those

and this White Rim has hinges and so we

would swing one door out swing this

piece comes this way so there's a big

gaping hole right here but everything is

cleaned up and strapped down it's time

for the clothes our crew to leave the

astronauts alone at the launch pad

they've got it down to a science but

with so many tasks involving so many

pieces of shuttle and ground hardware

things don't always go according to plan

from burned-out light bulbs on cockpit

switches to problems with the hatch
closed our crew has seen it all and had
to fix it fast so they bring two boxes
of tools to the white room with even
more in their truck down by the elevator
you know you can't always think
everything that these guys are very good
at improvising when the shuttle is fully
loaded and ready to fly everyone in or
near the vehicle is working in a
hazardous area the closeout crew and the
astronauts practice escaping in the
launch pad in case there's ever an
emergency everyone has to learn how to
move from the white room to the
slidewire baskets they will twist them away from the pad down to a nearby bunker in an emergency a series of overhead sprinklers call the firing system what activate and lights would come on showing everyone on the foot level the way out so we have this painted yellow with black chevrons we call it the yellow brick road and that because you basically can't see anything but your feet so you follow the Chevron's out your primary egress around to the slidewire baskets what are the benefits to being part of the closeout crew is working closely with the
astronauts it's a unique gift I think

that we get to know them personally we

get to shake their hand right before

they go in some of the astronauts that

are on the closeout crew actually apply

so you know one time supporting a

mission they'll be wearing a white

uniform with us and the next time

they'll be wearing an orange uniform

getting ready to fly themselves as the

program draws to a close many Space

Shuttle team members are making the most

of the final flights and that of course

includes the closeout crew and I'll
probably just stand over there in the corner and soak it in try and remember as much as I can

and hope that another program comes along and I get to do this again