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American Crane Completes the First Lift for Orion

American Crane & Equipment Corporation's overhead clean room crane helped to lift and stack the Orion crew module. The stacking took place inside the Final Assembly and System Test (FAST) cell inside the Operations and Checkout facility at Kennedy Space Center.

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Early last month, American Crane's 25 ton double girder clean room crane (with single failure-proof hoist) strategically lifted and placed Lockheed Martin's Orion crew module atop their service module. This custom overhead crane is specifically designed with micro speed movements to mate these critical components. The crane also features stainless steel self-locking fasteners, runway conductor bars enclosed in plastic housing, a debris shield on the lower block, (preventing any small particles from falling off the crane) and continuous kick-plates on all the walkways, capturing any dirt or debris.

The special design of American Crane's clean room crane is imperative for the safe performance of the spacecraft. Later this year, an uncrewed Orion will launch on a Delta IV Heavy rocket and travel 3,600 miles beyond low Earth orbit, 15 times further than the International Space Station. That same day, Orion will return to Earth at a speed of approximately 20,000 mph for a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean. This flight test will help ensure the safety of the flight crew for future manned flights.

American Crane & Equipment Corporation is a privately held U.S. company with headquarters in Eastern Pennsylvania. This leader in material handling equipment has designed and manufactured overhead cranes and hoists for the Aerospace, Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Transit, Construction and Waste industries along with many others.

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