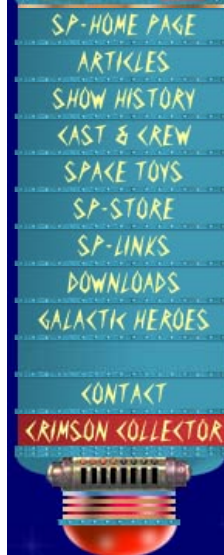




SPACE PATROL: The Premiums & Merchandise

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By the Crimson Collector



During its long run on the ABC Television Network, (1950 - 55) the television series "SPACE PATROL" generated a host of premium mail-in offers as well as general merchandise sold in toy and department stores. Today, those premiums and toys are sought by collectors and go for high prices on (internet auction) sites such as Ebay as well as the vast secondary collector's market. It all culminated in one of the biggest television/radio premium contests ever on record.

In this article I can't possibly cover everything that was offered, so I will stick to some of the prime items. I am sure there are more that we all remember and wish we still had today. Feel free to [EMAIL](#) me with your favorites.

Space Patrol's first sponsor was Ralston Cereals, later Ralston was joined by Nestlé's Chocolate as a co-sponsor. Eventually Weather Bird Shoes got into the act as a sponsor, participating in the biggest contest of the show's history, but it was Ralston and Nestle that offered a galaxy of space toys which were cleverly tied into the story-line of the show to make them that much more desirable.



A great deal of the Ralston Space Patrol gear was also offered for sale in grocery stores and department stores. The main source for the smaller premiums was the TV and Radio pitch, where you would send in a coin and a box-top to the sponsor. Plastic items such as guns, clothing etc. available in stores generally were in different color combinations as well as subtle detail design changes.

Many of the Space Patrol premiums were paper or cardboard, such as membership cards, handbooks, photos, catalogs, charts, masks, replicas of Terra City, the Lunar Fleet Base, Spaceship cockpits, pictures, coloring books and albums. Perhaps the most sought after cardboard premiums are the Martian Totem Head helmet/mask and the cockpit from the experimental rocket featured on-air.

To me the really neat premiums were those that were more substantial like plastic or metal and really did some sort of action.



The first Space Patrol plastic item was a very fancy badge in red, white and blue. (above) Later on a plastic belt with a decoder buckle in the shape of a rocket ship was offered and is much sought after today.



Undoubtedly one of the great premiums offered by Space Patrol was the Cosmic Smoke Gun. This gun was introduced on the show and as always, played a big part in the show's story line while it was being offered. The toy did not always work as designed. It was a small handheld gun that had a rubber bladder inside it. The object was to suck up a talcum powder substance into the bladder inside the gun, and when the trigger was pulled, it would force the powder out into the air giving a smoke-like effect. Not so was the case, when LIVE ON THE AIR - Major Robinson was "cosmic smoked" by a villain who had managed to wrestle his gun from him. The villain pulled the trigger and out came a big glob of powder onto the Major's face...

not quite the hoped for "smoke effect." He (Ken Mayer) still coughed and passed out on cue as the script required.

The cosmic smoke gun came in two versions: RED with a short barrel, and GREEN with a longer barrel.

The green one was sold in stores also. Today, most all of the guns remaining are inoperable as the rubber bladder has become brittle with age and cracked and will no longer pump out the powder, but it still is one of the most desirable of the Space Patrol premium toys and often sells for over two hundred dollars.

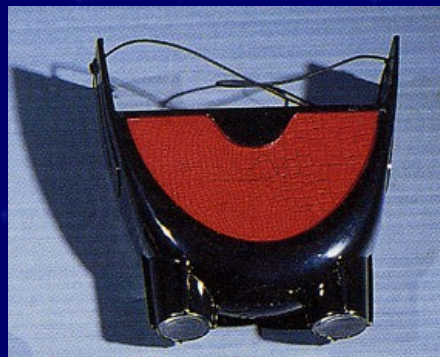


The official handgun of the Space Patrol (known as the Rocket Gun - above) was only sold in stores. It was a handsome gun with simple clean lines. It shot a variety of "Rocket Darts". The darts were a suction-cup tipped two toned design with rocket fins the length of the dart. One of them had a slot to put a toy explosive cap into and when the dart hit a hard surface it would fire the cap with a bang. Most of the darts however do not show up too often today.

The gun was also available in red, black, yellow and even blue. You could buy the gun itself, or you could go deluxe and buy it with its official holster.



This gun was a "must have" as Buzz, Happy and the whole Space Patrol gang used the toy as their sidearm on the air, (with added sound effects of course.) In later years the mold was sold to other toy manufacturers and the guns were marketed under various names even as far away as England.



A set of Space Patrol Binoculars were offered in black as a premium on the show, but the version sold in stores was molded in green. They sort of wrapped around your head and were secured with an elastic string. They really didn't magnify that much, but they were still a keen design.



Space-O-Phones in bright blue & yellow (above), although I have seen some that were red & yellow and red & white, they appear to have been made in a few different color combinations. They were a sort of “walkie-talkie,” soped up version of what we used to make at home with two tin cans and a string. They actually worked but they certainly were not wireless units as we saw Buzz and Happy use on the air.



A Cosmic Rocket Launcher was offered and it was basically a “slide down a string” rocket ship projectile that fell apart easily and even the existing kinescoped commercials show that it was difficult to make work properly.

The Hydrogen Ray Gun Ring is very familiar and may have been previously marketed by older radio shows other than Space Patrol, but it is an impressive premium nonetheless and highly prized.



A Project-O-Scope, in the classic shape of a space ship appeared and featured a little film strip that would project Space objects on the wall. Well....sort of!



How about a 10 cent Space Patrol Giant Balloon? It had the image of a Space Ship on its exterior, but it looked more like the Buck Rogers style than Space Patrol.



A Space Patrol Monorail set was offered and even appeared on the air in a few shots used as a miniature. Nothing ever went to waste on this show.

Some Paper Items of Interest:



Ralston did not neglect trading cards, a set of 40 colorful cards were produced with typical space scenes and some images of the shows stars and were enclosed in packages of Ralston's Chex cereals.



“Magic” Space Patrol pictures were produced in a set of 24 cards that had pictures of the cast and space ships etc. These were done in negative black and white. You had to stare intently at them and then quickly look away and your persistence of vision would retain a positive image on your eyes for a few fleeting seconds.

The cardboard Martian Totem-Head (it was 25 cents, pictured at far right - unbuilt) was tied into a series of episodes and is highly collectible when found intact. It had a two-way panel in it that enabled you to see out, but nobody could see in. A plainer straight Outer Space Helmet was also offered and the concept was very similar.



A cardboard Space Periscope with Space Patrol graphics on its exterior was touted... "Hey Kids, look over the tops of people's heads!" It featured some nice graphics on its exterior.



When Space Patrol introduced a new "rocket test plane", what better item to market to you than the official cardboard mock-up of the cockpit? Today, in mint condition, this is highly collectible and expensive. (You may notice the CC: Space Patrol site uses a few graphics from this rare item as part of the graphics menu for the site above)

OTHER COMPANIES GET INTO THE ACT

Here are some of the store items:



Decca Records offered 'Space Patrol Adventures' on LP-records and these were sold in your local record store.



Marx toys got into the act and recycled their Signal Ray Gun with the words Space Patrol on it. It had first appeared with its generic name, then Tom Corbett, Rex Mars and Dan Dare. It was pretty ugly and had nothing to do with the real show, but sells for big bucks today.



Ray-O-Vac made one of the classiest looking Space Patrol toys: the Rocketlite flashlight in the shape of a rocket ship with all sorts of neat graphics on the box... a real beauty.



All sorts of clothing items from Giant Plastic Bubble Space Helmets to the Space Patrol Cap with fold-down sun-glasses appeared in department stores.



A rare Sonic Rifle was marketed and is seldom seen intact today.



An official Space Patrol wrist watch made by U.S. Time with nice graphics on the box was marketed and many of them show up to this day on eBay.



A Space Patrol jigsaw puzzle was made by Milton Bradley



Archer made "Space Patrol" walkie-talkies, and sold many of them, although they were never licensed by the TV series or had any real Space Patrol graphics.



Tin toys of rockets and robots etc. have come out of Japan with the name generic name of space patrol but none of these were licensed by the TV show and have little relationship in style or look to the real Space Patrol.



Video rights to the TV episodes were licensed to Wade Williams by Mike Moser's widow, but copies of the shows appear everywhere such as SwapSale.com... as most of the material is in public domain.



Ziff-Davis Publishing issued two Space Patrol comic books with painted covers and these issues are rare today and highly collectible.

THE BIGGEST PREMIUM CONTEST OF THEM ALL!

At the height of Space Patrol's popularity came the big one... the contest to name villain Prince Baccarratti's Planet X. A planet said to be 5,000 times bigger than Earth...and even larger than that depending on which show you listened to.



The first prize was a 35 foot, 10,000 pound life-size Terra IV Rocket Club house. It was 35 feet long, complete with its own flat bed motor truck to haul it around. It came with a bonus of \$1500.00 in cash. It had everything you could want inside it: camping gear, electric lights, lockers, bunks, cooking equipment etc. All you had to do was name the evil Baccarratti's Planet X. Winner RICKY WALKER won the rocket with the winning name for Planet X, "CAESARIA."

The contest was a cooperation between Ralston and Weather bird Shoes.

On the show, Jack Narz would extol us to visit our local Weather Bird Shoe Store and pick up a "FREE" Space Patrol coin album with three plastic space coins in it, and most of all, the entry blank for the contest. If you could not find a Weather Bird Shoe Store, then you could always get a box of Hot Ralston, with the special pictures of Buzz or Happy on the front of the box. The back of the box had the instructions on how to enter this great contest. In each box was one of the special Space Patrol coins too.

The contest offered other prizes...1750 of them!

750 second prizes of Varsity Schwinn 3-speed bikes in your choice of boy's or girl's models were given away.

1000 third prizes of Space Patrol goodies were next. You could win an official Space Patrol Bubble Space Helmet, a Space Patrol Sonic Ray Rifle, an official Space Patrol wrist watch just like Commander Corry wore, and a special Space Patrol Emergency Kit.

All of these neat prizes were featured prominently on the Planet X episodes. You can view these old episodes on video today as Bruce David offers copies of the old kinescope recordings on his [Swapsale](#) site. The specific volumes containing these promos for the Ralston Rocket contest seem to be V0Ls #14-17. Bruce recently has made available the whole Planet X series on one tape. He even has early recordings of the original Kit Corry with Glen Denning and you can see for yourself how miscast and wrong for the part he was. Ed Kemmer's arrival as the new Commander In Chief of Space Patrol gave life to the series. Despite the age of these old kinescope recordings, I cannot recommend them enough as they are great fun. (use the link above for more info) They are nearly 50 years old and many show their age, but all the fun and excitement of Space Patrol remains.

The cult following of Space Patrol and all its premiums continues into the 21st Century and shows no sign of abating...

As Cadet Happy might say if he were with us today: "SMOKIN' ROCKETS!"

Tom Mason
aka, The Crimson Collector
[RETURN TO THE SPACE PATROL 'ARTICLES'](#)

*Note: there were at least two other television shows with the name "Space Patrol." One was in Germany and another in England and they generated their own following that exists to this day... Neither of these versions had any relationship to the ABC version.

If you have an 'Article' or 'Review' that you would like to share with the Crimson Collector. Then feel free to submit it for use on the Articles & Reviews page. [SUBMIT HERE](#)



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