

CAPTAIN JOHN W. YOUNG, UNITED STATES NAVY

John Watts Young was born in San Francisco, California, on September 24, 1930, son of Commander William H. Young, USNR, Retired and Mrs. (Wanda Howland) Young. He attended the Georgia Institute of Technology at Atlanta, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering in 1952. While there he was a member of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit and upon graduation was commissioned on June 6, 1952, Ensign in the U. S. Navy. Advancing progressively in rank, he attained that of Captain, to date from July 10, 1970.

After receiving his commission in 1952, he reported on board the USS LAWS (DD558), and while attached to that destroyer participated in operations in the Korean area of hostilities. Detached in June 1953, he had training at the Naval Air Basic Training Command, Pensacola, Florida and while there was designated Helicopter Pilot #1870. He was designated Naval Aviator on December 20, 1954 and the next month joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED THREE. During the period March to November 1959 he had test pilot training at the Naval Test Pilot School, Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland. He remained there until April 1962, serving from November 1959 to June 1960 as F4H Project Pilot in the Armament Test Division, then had similar duty in the Weapons Systems Test Division. In that assignment he wrote technical reports on flight test results of Navy preliminary evaluation and Board of Inspection and Survey airplane trials and in 1962, while piloting a Navy F-4B Phantom jet, set world time-to-climb records in the 3,000 meter and 25,000 meter events. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and cited as follows:

"For extraordinary achievement...during the period February 21 to April 3, 1962. As Pilot of a Navy All-Weather Fighter Aircraft, the F4H-1 PHANTOM II, Lieutenant Commander Young succeeded in establishing new world class records for time to climb to 3,000 meters and 25,000 meters, attaining a time of 34.523 seconds from a standing start to 3,000 meters altitude, and 227.6 seconds from a standing start to 25,000 meters altitude. Through his exceptional achievement, he clearly demonstrated the inherent capabilities and the maximum performance of a most important aircraft of the United States Navy. In addition, he was instrumental in focusing world attention on the continued significant development of the science of aviation in the United States..."

In April 1962 he joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED FORTY THREE as Maintenance Officer. He was one of the second group of nine test pilots selected in September 1962 by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for astronaut training and is now assigned to the Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, Texas. In addition to participation in the overall astronaut training program he has had specialized duties, including monitoring development of the environmental control system, pressure suits, survival and associated pilot equipment (spacecraft ejection seats and couches).

On March 23, 1965 he took part in America's initial two man space flight. Aboard the spacecraft GEMINI III, nicknamed the "Molly Brown," as co-pilot to Astronaut Virgil Grissom, he made three successful orbits of the earth. They were aloft for four hours and fifty four minutes and travelled a distance of over 73,000 miles. During that time they scored a world first by maneuvering their craft downwards, forwards and sideways. Landing safely in the Atlantic, the astronauts remained in their spacecraft for forty-five minutes before they were recovered by an air rescue helicopter, which flew them to the prime recovery ship USS INTREPID. "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as an Astronaut with NASA on March 23, 1965 aboard GEMINI III..." he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation further states in part:

"As Pilot in this first manned orbital maneuvers missions, Commander (then Lieutenant Commander) Young was in flight for four hours and fifty-three minutes for a total of three orbits. The flight was the first in which a spacecraft was manually controlled through the reentry phase..."

For the GEMINI VI mission, he was named backup pilot. On July 18, 1966, he occupied the command pilot seat for the GEMINI X mission and, with Michael Collins as pilot, effected a successful rendezvous and docking with the AGENA target vehicle. Then, using the AGENA propulsion system, he maneuvered the GEMINI spacecraft into another orbit for a rendezvous with a second, passive, AGENA. Other highlights of this mission included extra-vehicular activity to the passive AGENA and the recovery of a micrometeorite detection experiment from the AGENA.

The flight was concluded after forty-four orbits during which GEMINI X attained an apogee of approximately 475 statute miles above the earth, and traveled a total distance of 1,275,091 statute miles. Splashdown occurred in the Western Atlantic 529 statute miles east of Cape Kennedy where GEMINI X landed 2.6 miles from the USS GUADALCANAL. This was the second consecutive mission to land within eye and camera range of the prime recovery vessel. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Distinguished Flying Cross and cited in part as follows:

"For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as an Astronaut with NASA from July 18 to 21, 1966 aboard GEMINI X. While serving as Command Pilot, Commander Young was in flight for seventy hours and forty-seven minutes...Prior to its schedule liftoff, GEMINI X was described as the most ambitious manned space flight ever attempted by the United States and most of the goals of the mission were successfully accomplished. GEMINI X docked with the AGENA X during the fourth revolution and later docked with the GEMINI VIII AGENA target vehicle. Another record was established as the GEMINI X crew depressurized their spacecraft and opened the hatch on three different occasions during the flight. During this flight an experiment package which had been attached to AGENA VIII since March 16 was retrieved..."

In May 1969 he was a member of the three-man APOLLO 10 crew during the eight day simulation of the APOLLO 11 lunar landing mission, except for the actual moon landing. The Lunar Module carried Commander Eugene A. Cernan, USN and Colonel Thomas P. Stafford, USAF to within 50,000 feet of the Moon's surface, while Command Module Pilot Commander Young, orbited the Moon in the Command Module at an altitude of about seventy miles. The flight ended on May 26, 1969, with splashdown in the Pacific Ocean, 443 miles east of Pago Pago, American Samoa and 7,000 yards from the recovery ship USS PRINCETON. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and cited as follows:

"For exceptionally meritorious service...as Lunar Exploration Module Pilot and crew member of the APOLLO 10 spacecraft on its historic mission around the moon during the period May 18 to May 26, 1969. Commander Young handled his most difficult duties in precision space navigation and command module control with great ability and with outstanding success. The professional manner in which he performed in the critical moments of separation and rendezvous with the Lunar Module, and throughout the entire flight of APOLLO 10, demonstrated exceptional competence and was essential to the success of the mission. Watched by the entire world, the superb performance of APOLLO 10 and her crew enabled the United States to vastly increase its knowledge and experience in outer space and to prepare the way for Manned Lunar Landings..."

In addition to two NASA Exceptional Service Medals; the Distinguished Service Medal; the Distinguished Flying Cross with two stars and the Navy Astronaut Wings, Captain Young has the China Service Medal; National Defense Service Medal with bronze star; Korean Service Medal with two stars; and the United Nations Service Medal. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

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He is a member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and associate member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. He has logged more than 3,700 hours flying time, including more than 3,100 hours in jet aircraft.

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