

NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

NAME: Leroy Gordon "Gordo" Cooper, Jr.

ORAL HISTORY: 21 May 1998

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

Attended Naval Academy Preparatory School, 1945

Attended University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1946-1949

Attended European Extension of the University of Maryland Night School, Munich, Germany, 1950

BS in Aeronautical Engineering, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 1956

Graduated, Air Force Experimental Flight Test School, Edwards Air Force Base, California, 1957

MILITARY EXPERIENCE:

Unknown Rank, United States Marine Corps (1945-1946)

Cooper received a commission from the United States Army, but transferred his commission to the Air Force

Colonel, United States Air Force (1949-1970)

PRE-NASA CAREER:

United States Marine Corps

Presidential Honor Guard, Washington, DC (1945-1946)

United States Air Force

Pilot, 525th Fighter Bomber Squadron, 86th Fighter Bomber Group, Neubiberg Air Force Base, Munich, Germany (1950-1954)

Test Pilot and Aeronautical Engineer, Performance Engineering Branch, Flight Test Division, Edwards Air Force Base, California (1957-1959)

NASA CAREER:

NASA Space Task Group, Langley Research Center, Hampton, Virginia/NASA Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, Texas

Astronaut (1959-1970)

POST-NASA CAREER:

Gordon Cooper & Associates, Inc. (1970-1974)

Vice President, Research and Development, Walt Disney Enterprises (1975)

Head, X=L, Inc. (1976- date unknown)

MISSIONS:

Mercury-Atlas 9 (MA-9) (*Faith 7*)

- Crew: L. Gordon Cooper
- Launched: 15 May 1963 at 8:04 A.M. EDT from Cape Canaveral, FL
- Duration: 34 hours, 19 minutes, 22 seconds
- Landed: 16 May 1963 at 6:23 P.M. EDT
- Mission Highlights: Final Mercury flight. Longest U.S. manned spaceflight to date

Gemini V (GT-5)

- Crew: Commander L. Gordon Cooper, Pilot Charles “Pete” Conrad, Jr.
- Launched: 21 August 1965 at 8:59:59 A.M. EST from Kennedy Space Center, FL
- Duration: 7 days, 22 hours, 55 minutes, 14 seconds
- Landed: 29 August 1965 at 7:55:13 A.M. EST
- Mission Highlights: Tested fuel cells for electrical power and evaluated guidance and navigation system for future rendezvous missions. Evaluate long duration spaceflight (1 week)

PROFESSIONAL & HONORARY SOCIETIES:

- Member, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
- Member, Society of Experimental Test Pilots
- Member, American Astronautical Society
- Member, Blue Lodge Masons
- Member, Scottish Rite Masons
- Member, York Rite Masons
- Member, Shriners
- Member, Jesters
- Member, International Rotary Club
- Member, Confederate Air Force

AWARDS & CITATIONS:

- NASA Distinguished Service Medal
- Air Force Astronaut Wings
- NASA Exceptional Service Medal
- Air Force Command Astronaut Wings
- Distinguished Flying Cross with Cluster
- Air Force Command Missileman’s Badge
- Scottish Rite 33^o
- York Rite Knight of the Purple Cross

SELECT PUBLICATIONS:

Carpenter, M. Scott, L. Gordon Cooper, Jr., John H. Glenn, Jr., Virgil I. Grissom, Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Alan B. Shepard, Jr., and Donald K. Slayton. We Seven. New York: Simon Schuster, 1962.

Glen, John, Scott Carpenter, Alan Shepard, Virgil Grissom, Gordon Cooper, Donald Slayton, and Walter Schirra. Into Orbit. Introduction by John Dill. London: Cassell Company Ltd., 1962.

BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

NASA Biographies for L. Gordon Cooper, Jr. Biographical Files, Scientific and Technical Information Center, Johnson Space Center, Houston.

Michael Cassutt, Who's Who in Space: The First 25 Years (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1987), s.v. "Cooper, Gordon."

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET CREATED: 25 FEBRUARY 1998