

## **Gerry Griffin's Sequence of Apollo Missions**

I'm often asked by people who have read my Apollo era oral history to provide a summary of my assignments as a Flight Director during the Apollo Program. Perhaps this addendum will serve that purpose.

After graduating from Texas A&M University in 1956 I went to work for NASA in 1964 after four years of active duty in the Air Force and four years in the space industry. For Project Gemini from Gemini 2 through 12, and the Apollo Program up until the Apollo 1 fire in 1967, I was a flight controller in Mission Control with responsibility for the guidance, navigation, and control (GNC) systems of the Gemini spacecraft and the Apollo Command and Service Modules (CSM).

In 1968, after the fire and before the first crewed mission of Apollo, I was selected to be a Flight Director in Mission Control, and chose the color Gold for my team's color designation giving me the moniker, "Gold Flight."

I was assigned to be a Flight Director for the first crewed Apollo mission, Apollo 7, which was a very successful earth orbit mission of the CSM-only with three astronauts aboard.

In October 1968, within a few days after Apollo 7 returned to earth, I found out that the next mission, Apollo 8, would be a CSM-only flight in December to orbit the moon with three astronauts aboard. Three Flight Directors, Cliff Charlesworth (Green), Glynn Lunney (Black) and Milton Windler (Maroon) were named to lead three teams in Mission Control. Cliff was designated as the Apollo 8 Lead Flight Director.

The Apollo 8 MCC Mission Operations Control Room (MOCR) Access and Badging list indicated that I was to receive a badge for full MOCR access, like all the other Flight Directors, but I was not shown as being assigned to a specific shift.

Sometime in late November or early December of 1968 in a conversation with Cliff he asked me to "ride shotgun" with him during the mission since Apollo 8 was a CSM-only flight to the Moon, and I had just finished Apollo 7 which was a CSM-only in earth orbit. In addition my background was in spacecraft systems, most recently the CSM, and Cliff's background, as a former Flight Dynamics Officer (FIDO), was in spaceflight dynamics...the shaping and control of trajectories in space. It was a simple handshake agreement.

During the Apollo 8 mission Cliff used me as a second set of eyeballs and to chase down issues involving spacecraft systems and the crew. (My first issue to address at Cliff's behest was "different." Shortly after Translunar Injection (TLI) Cliff asked me to work with the flight surgeon (SURGEON) to understand the severity and potential mission impact of space motion sickness (SMS) encountered by all three astronauts...plus a

subsequent stomach illness of the commander. I recall the SURGEON prescribed medications, restricted movement, and rest when possible. I was happy to report back to Cliff later that the prescribed treatment worked without impacting the mission.) Besides being a second set of eyeballs during very active periods I also sat in for Cliff for a couple of shifts in relatively “quiet time” during translunar and transearth coast periods. This allowed Cliff to circulate among the personnel in the MOCR, Staff Support Rooms, Landing and Recovery Room, Spacecraft Analysis Room, upper management, etc. The handshake agreement with Cliff worked smoothly and well.

I was assigned as a Flight Director on Apollo 9, and then on Apollo 10 I was assigned to Shift 1 with the Lead Flight Director, Glynn Lunney. My assignment on Apollo 10 was simply a follow-on to how I had worked with Cliff on Apollo 8. I had just finished Apollo 9 with the first flights of the CSM and LM together in earth orbit, and Apollo 10 was to take both modules to the Moon. So I worked beside Glynn in the same way I had with Cliff on Apollo 8.

Then Apollo 11 was upon us. Cliff was the Lead Flight Director, and I filled exactly the same role with him as I had filled on Apollo 8, and this time the MOCR Access and Badging list indicated that I was assigned specifically to Shift #1 with Cliff. No handshake agreement was required this time!

I was designated as the Lead Flight Director for Apollo 12, and I was ready for it after serving alongside Cliff and Glynn during America’s big “firsts” in human space flight at lunar distance.

I went on to serve as a Flight Director for each of the remaining Apollo Missions: Apollo 13, Apollo 14, Apollo 15, Apollo 16, and Apollo 17. I was Lead Flight Director for Apollo 15 and Apollo 17, and was the lunar landing Flight Director for Apollo 14, Apollo 16, and Apollo 17...half of the six landings made on the Moon during the Apollo Program.