

AMERICAN ASTRONAUT VIRGIL I. GRISSOM

Major Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom was the second American Astronaut to be successfully launched into space. Grissom was the pilot of the "Mercury-Redstone 4" flight (Liberty Bell 7) on July 21, 1961. This flight launched from Cape Canaveral, was a suborbital flight following a ballistic trajectory. The flight attained an altitude of approximately 116 statute miles, and the spacecraft traveled about 254 statute miles down the Atlantic Missile Range. Grissom was safely recovered but, due to a mishap, the spacecraft filled with water and sank. The test, however, effectively proved the reliability of the spacecraft under sub-orbital conditions, and the program was considered successfully concluded.

On March 23, 1965 Major Grissom along with Astronaut John W. Young performed successfully the Gemini 3 space flight. Their flight lasted 4 hours and 54 minutes, consisted of three orbits at altitudes between 101 and 142 miles.

Astronaut Grissom, along with fellow astronauts Chaffee and White, were killed January 28, 1967 when a flash fire swept the spacecraft on its launching pad during a trainee exercise of the first Apollo I crew.

Major Grissom was made a Master Mason in Mitchell Lodge No. 228, Mitchell, Indiana, on May 19, 1949. On September 14, 1963, he was the active candidate at an all day York Rite Festival in Orlando, Florida, when he and 401 other brethren received the degrees of the Chapter and the Council, and the orders of the Commandery, K. T.

The space stamp is a stampic first for the United States in the form of a "twin" stamp and will focus world attention on our astronauts' walk in space and our continued accomplishments in space exploration.



BROTHER
VIRGIL I. GRISSOM



FIRST DAY
OF ISSUE



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE