



Class of 2024

R. Walter Cunningham Astronaut

Walter Cunningham was selected in the third group of NASA astronauts in 1963. His previous service as a U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilot and academic credentials in physics laid the foundation for his time at NASA. Assigned to the Apollo 7 mission as lunar module pilot, Cunningham and crew mates Walter Schirra and Donn Eisele flew the first crewed Apollo flight and first since the tragic launch pad fire killing the Apollo 1 astronauts January 27, 1967. Launched on October 11, 1968, the eleven-day mission met all its objectives. The efforts by Cunningham and fellow crew members to test the new and redesigned systems provided NASA the much needed confidence to proceed with Apollo 8 two months later that would orbit the moon. Following the Apollo 7 mission, Walter was assigned to Astronaut Office's Skylab division until he left NASA in 1971.