

John Young (astronaut)

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John Young (astronaut)

- *John Watts Young (September 24, 1930 – January 5, 2018) was an American astronaut, naval officer and aviator, test pilot, and aeronautical engineer.*
- *He died on January 5, 2018.*
- *He is the only person to have piloted, and been commander of, four different classes of spacecraft: Gemini, the Apollo Command/Service Module, the Apollo Lunar Module, and the Space Shuttle.*
- *Young retired from NASA in 2004.*

John Watts Young (September 24, 1930 – January 5, 2018) was an American astronaut, naval officer and aviator, test pilot, and aeronautical engineer. He became the ninth person to walk on the Moon as Commander of the Apollo 16 mission in 1972. Young enjoyed the longest career of any astronaut, becoming the first person to fly six space missions (with seven launches, counting his lunar liftoff) over the course of 42 years of active NASA service. He is the only person to have piloted, and been commander of, four different classes of spacecraft: Gemini, the Apollo Command/Service Module, the Apollo Lunar Module, and the Space Shuttle.

In 1965, Young flew on the first crewed Gemini mission, and commanded another Gemini mission the next year. In 1969 during Apollo 10, he became the first person to fly solo around the Moon. He drove the Lunar Roving Vehicle on the Moon's surface during Apollo 16, and is one of only three people to have flown to the Moon twice. He also commanded two Space Shuttle flights, including its first launch in 1981, and served as Chief of the Astronaut Office from 1974 to 1987. Young retired from NASA in 2004. He died on January 5, 2018.

Biography

Early years and education

- *Young was born in San Francisco, California, on September 24, 1930, to parents William Hugh Young, a civil engineer, and Wanda Howland Young.*
- *Young was a Boy Scout and earned the rank of Second Class.*

Young was born in San Francisco, California, on September 24, 1930, to parents William Hugh Young, a civil engineer, and Wanda Howland Young. At 18 months old, due to the Great Depression, he moved with his family to Cartersville, Georgia, then to Orlando, Florida, where he attended grade school and later Orlando High School until graduating in 1948. Young was a Boy Scout and earned the rank of Second Class.

Young earned a Bachelor of Science degree with highest honors in Aeronautical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1952; while attending, he became a member of the national military honor society Scabbard and Blade and Sigma Chi fraternity.

Navy service

- *After graduating from Georgia Tech in 1952, Young entered the United States Navy through the Navy ROTC and was commissioned on June 6, 1952, as an ensign.*
- *Young retired from the Navy as a Captain in September 1976, after 25 years.*
- *In January 1954, he was designated a Navy helicopter pilot.*
- *Fellow astronaut Charles Bolden described Young and Robert "Hoot" Gibson as the two best pilots he had met during his aviation career: "Never met two people like them."*

After graduating from Georgia Tech in 1952, Young entered the United States Navy through the Navy ROTC and was commissioned on June 6, 1952, as an ensign. He served as fire control officer on the destroyer USS Laws until June 1953 and completed a tour in the Sea of Japan during the Korean War. Following this assignment, he was sent to flight training. In January 1954, he was designated a Navy helicopter pilot. After receiving his aviator wings on December 20, 1954, he was assigned to Fighter Squadron 103 (VF-103) for four years, flying Grumman F9F Cougars from USS Coral Sea and Vought F8U Crusaders from USS Forrestal.

After training at the United States Naval Test Pilot School in 1959 with the Class 23, Young was assigned to the Naval Air Test Center at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, for three years. His test projects included evaluations of the XF8U-3 Crusader III and F-4 Phantom II fighter weapons systems. In 1962, he set two world time-to-climb records while flying his Phantom II, attaining 3,000 meters (9,843 ft) from a standing start in 34.52 seconds and 25,000 meters (82,021 ft) from a standing start in 227.6 seconds. He also served as maintenance officer of Fighter Squadron 143 (VF-143) from April to September 1962.

Fellow astronaut Charles Bolden described Young and Robert "Hoot" Gibson as the two best pilots he had met during his aviation career: "Never met two people like them. Everyone else gets into an airplane; John and Hoot wear their airplane. They're just awesome". Young retired from the Navy as a Captain in September 1976, after 25 years.

NASA career



Young, age 34, as pilot of Gemini 3

Project Gemini

- *Young then trained as backup pilot for Gemini 6A.*
- *Joining NASA in 1962, Young was the first of the Astronaut Group 2 to fly in space, replacing Thomas P. Stafford as pilot of Gemini 3 when Alan Shepard, the original command pilot, was grounded due to Ménière's disease.*
- *The assignment of Gemini 7 backup command pilot Ed White to Apollo, created an opening for Young as commander of Gemini 10 in 1966.*

Joining NASA in 1962, Young was the first of the Astronaut Group 2 to fly in space, replacing Thomas P. Stafford as pilot of Gemini 3 when Alan Shepard, the original command pilot, was grounded due to Ménière's disease. Making the first crewed flight of the Gemini spacecraft with Gus Grissom in 1965, Young scored another space first by smuggling a corned beef sandwich onto the spacecraft—a feat for which he was reprimanded. Some members of the US House of Representatives were not pleased about the stunt, claiming that Young cost taxpayers millions of dollars by disrupting a scheduled test of space food during the flight.

Young then trained as backup pilot for Gemini 6A. The assignment of Gemini 7 backup command pilot Ed White to Apollo, created an opening for Young as commander of Gemini 10 in 1966. The mission was the first to perform a rendezvous with two Agena target vehicles; and his pilot, Michael Collins, performed two spacewalks.



Young jumps while saluting the American flag during Apollo 16

Apollo program

- *By rotation, Young became commander of Apollo 16, and studied geology with his crew while preparing for the mission.*
- *Young's final assignment in Apollo was as the backup commander for Cernan on Apollo 17.*
- *This crew was assigned as backup to the second manned Apollo mission, planned before the Apollo 1 fire.*

In 1966, Young was assigned to an Apollo crew as Command Module pilot, with Commander Thomas Stafford and Lunar Module pilot Eugene Cernan. This crew was assigned as backup to the second manned Apollo mission, planned before the Apollo 1 fire. After that fire, both crews[clarification needed] were assigned to the first actual manned mission, Apollo 7, which flew in October 1968. In May 1969, this crew flew to the Moon on Apollo 10. While Stafford and Cernan flew the Lunar Module in lunar orbit for the first time, Young flew the Command Module solo. Apollo 10 set the record for the highest speed attained by any crewed vehicle at 39,897 kilometres per hour (24,791 mph) during its return to Earth on May 26, 1969.

Young was backup commander of Apollo 13, the troubled mission in which the Moon landing was aborted because of an explosion in the Service Module.

By rotation, Young became commander of Apollo 16, and studied geology with his crew while preparing for the mission. Apollo 16's lunar landing was almost aborted when a malfunction was detected in the SPS engine control system in the Service Module. It was determined that the problem could be worked around, and the mission continued. On the surface, Young took three moonwalks in the Descartes Highlands with Charles Duke on April 21, 22 and 23, 1972, making Young the ninth person to walk on the surface of the Moon, while Ken Mattingly flew the Command Module in lunar orbit.

Young's final assignment in Apollo was as the backup commander for Cernan on Apollo 17. The backup crew was originally the Apollo 15 crew, but Deke Slayton removed them from the assignment when he learned they had taken a small statue to the Moon, as well as stamps that they sold to a dealer.

Space Shuttle program

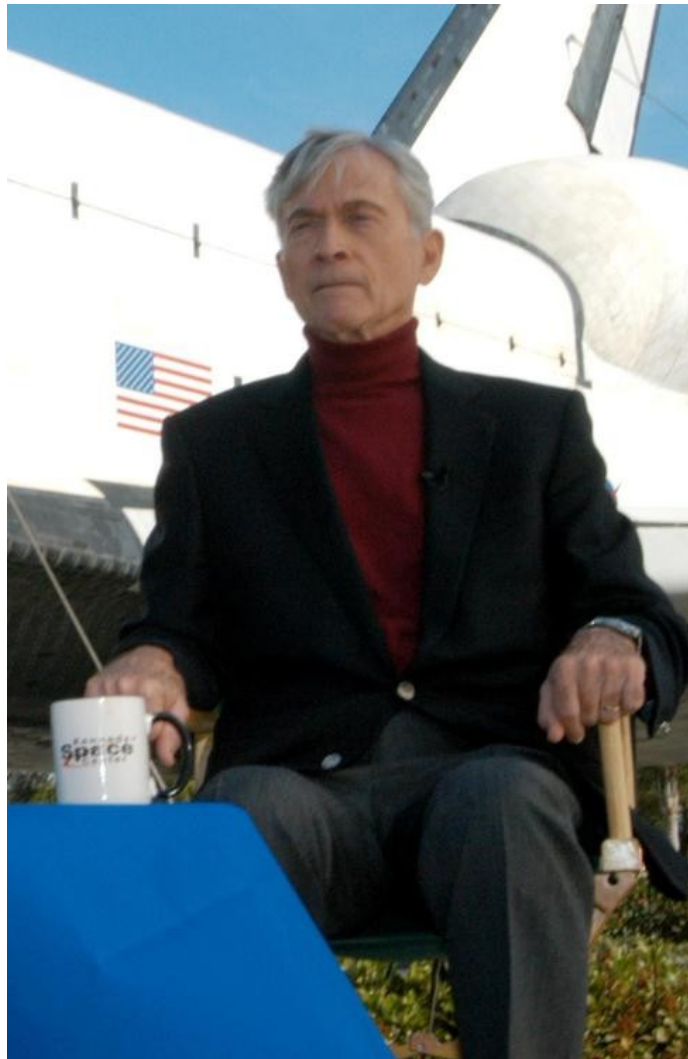
- *In January 1973 Young was made Chief of the Space Shuttle Branch of the Astronaut Office.*
- *In 1986 he was in line to make a record seventh space flight on STS-61-J to deploy the Hubble Space Telescope, but the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster earlier that year had delayed NASA's schedule.*
- *Young flew two missions of the Space Shuttle, both aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia.*

In January 1973 Young was made Chief of the Space Shuttle Branch of the Astronaut Office. In January 1974, he became Chief of the Astronaut Office after the retirement of Alan Shepard.

Young flew two missions of the Space Shuttle, both aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia. He commanded the program's 1981 maiden orbital flight, STS-1, and in 1983 commanded STS-9, which carried the first Spacelab module. In 1986 he was in line to make a record seventh space flight on STS-61-J to deploy the Hubble Space Telescope, but the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster earlier that year had delayed NASA's schedule.

Young was openly critical of NASA management following the Challenger disaster, and in April 1987 was made Special Assistant to JSC Director Aaron Cohen for Engineering, Operations and Safety. NASA denied that his criticism triggered the move, although Young and industry insiders believed that was the reason for the reassignment. In February 1996, he was assigned as Associate Director (Technical) JSC.

During his NASA career, Young logged more than 15,000 hours of training, mostly in simulators, to prepare for positions on eleven spaceflights in prime and backup crew positions.



Young at the 25th anniversary of STS-1 at Kennedy Space Center

Retirement

- *Young worked for NASA for 42 years and announced his retirement on December 7, 2004.*
- *In 2012, Young published an autobiography, Forever Young.*

Young worked for NASA for 42 years and announced his retirement on December 7, 2004. He retired on December 31, 2004, at the age of 74, but continued to attend the Monday Morning Meeting at the Astronaut Office at JSC for several years thereafter. He logged more than 15,275 hours flying time in props, jets, helicopters, and rocket jets; more than 9,200 hours in T-38s; and 835 hours in spacecraft during six space flights.

On April 12, 2006, Young appeared at the 25th anniversary of the STS-1 launch at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, along with pilot Robert Crippen. The two spoke of their experiences during the flight.

In 2012, Young published an autobiography, Forever Young.

Personal life

- *Young died on January 5, 2018, at his home in Houston of complications from pneumonia.*
- *Young married Barbara White of Savannah, Georgia, and they had two children, Sandra and John.*

Young married Barbara White of Savannah, Georgia, and they had two children, Sandra and John. They were divorced in 1972 after 16 years of marriage. He later married Susy Feldman, and lived in El Lago, Texas, a suburb of Houston.

Young died on January 5, 2018, at his home in Houston of complications from pneumonia. He was 87.

Legacy

- *In October 2018, Northrop Grumman announced that the Cygnus spacecraft for their tenth cargo resupply mission to the International Space Station would be named S.S. John Young.*
- *Upon learning that Young would interview him as part of his astronaut selection process, Kelly listed some of Young's more impressive achievements, and then stated simply, "He was what you might call an astronaut's astronaut, a living legend."*

In October 2018, Northrop Grumman announced that the Cygnus spacecraft for their tenth cargo resupply mission to the International Space Station would be named S.S. John Young.

Florida State Road 423 is named in his honor, as is John Young Elementary School in Orlando, Florida.

Scott Kelly (an American astronaut who spent nearly a year aboard the International Space Station) had high praise for Young in his memoir, *Endurance: A Year in Space, a Lifetime of*

Discovery. Upon learning that Young would interview him as part of his astronaut selection process, Kelly listed some of Young's more impressive achievements, and then stated simply, "He was what you might call an astronaut's astronaut, a living legend. I wanted to be just like him."

Recognition

Military and NASA insignia and decorations

- *NASA Space Flight Medal (1981, 1983)*
- *NASA Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal (1988)*
- *NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal (1992)*
- *Congressional Space Medal of Honor (1981)*
- *Navy Astronaut Wings (1965)*
- *NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal (1994)*

China Service Medal (1953)

Korean Service Medal with two battle stars (1953)

National Defense Service Medal with star (1953, 1966)

United Nations Korea Medal (1953)

Navy Astronaut Wings (1965)

Navy Distinguished Service Medal with gold award star (1969, 1972)

Distinguished Flying Cross with two gold award stars

Congressional Space Medal of Honor (1981)

NASA Distinguished Service Medal (1969) with three oak leaf clusters (1981, 2004)

NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal (1994)

NASA Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal (1988)

NASA Exceptional Service Medal (1965, 1966, 2006)

NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal (1992)

NASA Space Flight Medal (1981, 1983)

Awards and honors

- *Along with nine other Gemini astronauts, Young was inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame in 1982.*
- *3 most-popular space hero in a 2010 Space Foundation survey*
- *In 1995, Young was inducted into the International Air & Space Hall of Fame at the San Diego Air & Space Museum.*
- *He was the first John Young History Maker Honoree in 2005*

Inducted into six Aviation and Astronaut Halls of Fame

General James E. Hill Lifetime Space Achievement Award from the Space Foundation (2010)

Exceptional Engineering Achievement Award (1985)

Golden Plate Award for Science and Exploration (1993)

American Astronautical Society Space Flight Award (1993)

In 1995, Young was inducted into the International Air & Space Hall of Fame at the San Diego Air & Space Museum.

In 2001, Young was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame.

NASA Ambassador of Exploration (2005)

He was the first John Young History Maker Honoree in 2005

Six honorary doctorate degrees

John Young Parkway, a major highway in Orlando and Kissimmee, Florida, is named for him. When he heard the highway was named for him, he said "Them boys shouldn't a'done that. I ain't dead yet". An elementary school (OCPS) on the parkway also bears his name.

The planetarium at the Orlando Science Center was originally named in his honor.

Ranked as the No. 3 most-popular space hero in a 2010 Space Foundation survey

Recipient of Aviation Weeks 1998 Philip J. Klass Award for Lifetime Achievement

Asteroid 5362 Johnyoung was named in his memory in 2018

Along with nine other Gemini astronauts, Young was inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame in 1982.

Organizations

- *Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society member*
- *Georgia Tech ANAK Society member*

- *Sigma Gamma Tau Aerospace Engineering Honor Society member*
- *Sigma Chi fraternity member*
- *Society of Experimental Test Pilots fellow*
- *American Astronautical Society fellow*
- *American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics fellow*

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American Astronautical Society fellow

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Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society member

Sigma Gamma Tau Aerospace Engineering Honor Society member

Georgia Tech ANAK Society member

Sigma Chi fraternity member

Media portrayals

- *In the 1995 film, Apollo 13, Young was played by Ben Marley.*
- *In the 1998 HBO miniseries, From the Earth to the Moon, he was played by John Posey.*

In the 1995 film, Apollo 13, Young was played by Ben Marley. In the 1998 HBO miniseries, From the Earth to the Moon, he was played by John Posey.

Young is one of the astronauts featured in the 2007 documentary film and book, In the Shadow of the Moon; the 2007 documentary film The Wonder of It All, and the 2008 Discovery Channel series, When We Left Earth;

See also

- *List of spaceflight records*

List of spaceflight records

References

Bibliography

- *Light This Candle: The Life & Times of Alan Shepard, America's First Spaceman (1st ed.).*

Thompson, Neal (2004). *Light This Candle: The Life & Times of Alan Shepard, America's First Spaceman* (1st ed.). New York: Crown Publishers. ISBN 0-609-61001-5. LCCN 2003015688. OCLC 52631310.

Further reading

- *"Conversation With John Young", Houston Chronicle (December 17, 2004)*
- *"The Big Picture: Ways to Mitigate or Prevent Very Bad Planet Earth Events", an essay by Young*

"Conversation With John Young", Houston Chronicle (December 17, 2004)

"The Big Picture: Ways to Mitigate or Prevent Very Bad Planet Earth Events", an essay by Young

External links

- *John Young at Find a Grave*
- *John Young on IMDb*

Appearances on C-SPAN

John Young on IMDb

John Young at Find a Grave