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FINDING AID TO THE DONALD E. WILLIAMS PAPERS, 1978-1991

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Revised by: Mary A. Segó, August 24, 2015
Processed by: Mary A. Segó, July 16, 2009

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Williams, Donald E., 1942-2016
Title	Donald E. Williams papers
Collection Identifier	MSA 12
Date Span	1978-1991, predominant 1985-1989
Abstract	This collection includes artifacts, memorabilia, and papers of Donald E. Williams, astronaut and Purdue alumnus (BSME 1964).
Extent	1.7 cubic feet
Finding Aid Author	Mary A. Sego
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Acquisition Information:	Donation
Preferred Citation:	MSA 12, Donald E. Williams papers, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University
Related Materials Information:	Purdue's Place in Space: From the Midwest to the Moon: http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/moon

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Williams, Donald E., 1942-2016

Organizations

United States, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Topics

Astronauts

Flight Archives at Purdue University

Purdue University--Alumni and alumnae

Space flight--1980-1990

Space Shuttle Program (U.S.)

United States, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Form and Genre Types

Artifacts (object genres)

Black-and-white photographs

Color photographs

Decals

Memorabilia

Patches

Personal papers

Space shuttle mission checklists

Occupations

Astronaut

Engineers

Test pilots

Biography of Donald E. Williams

Donald E. Williams was born February 13, 1942 in Lafayette, Indiana. Williams graduated from Otterbein High School in 1960 and went on to earn a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue University in 1964.

Williams received his commission through the NROTC program at Purdue University. He completed flight training at Pensacola, Florida; Meridian, Mississippi; and Kingsville, Texas, receiving his wings in May 1966. After A-4 training, he made two Vietnam deployments aboard the USS ENTERPRISE with Attack Squadron 113. He served as a flight instructor in Attack Squadron 125 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, California for 2 years and transitioned to A-7 aircraft. He made two additional Vietnam deployments aboard the USS ENTERPRISE with CVW-14 staff and Attack Squadron 97. Williams completed a total of 330 combat missions.

In 1973, Williams attended the Armed Forces Staff College. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland, in June 1974, and was assigned to the Naval Air Test Center's Carrier Suitability Branch of Flight Test Division. From August 1976 to June 1977 he was head of the Carrier Systems Branch, Strike Aircraft Test Directorate. He reported next for A-7 refresher training and was assigned to Attack Squadron 94 when selected by NASA. Williams was selected by NASA in January 1978 as an astronaut candidate. He became an astronaut in August 1979, and qualified for assignment as a pilot on future Space Shuttle flight crews. Since then he has had various support assignments, including working at the Shuttle Avionics Integration Laboratory as a test pilot, and at the Kennedy Space Center participating in Orbiter test, checkout, launch and landing operations. From September 1982 through July 1983, he was assigned as the Deputy Manager, Operations Integration, National Space Transportation System Program Office at the Johnson Space Center. From July 1985 through August 1986, Williams was the Deputy Chief of the Aircraft Operations Division at the Johnson Space Center, and from September 1986 through December 1988, he served as Chief of the Mission Support Branch within the Astronaut Office.

Twice flown, Williams served as pilot on STS-51D in 1985, and was the spacecraft commander on STS-34 in 1989. He has logged a total of 287 hours and 35 minutes in space. In March 1990, Williams retired from the U.S. Navy and left NASA. He went on to become a Division Manager with Science Applications International Corporation, working on several projects in the Houston area, nationally, and internationally.

Williams was honored many times and his awards include: the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Defense Superior Service Medal, 2 Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V, 2 Navy Unit Commendations, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, the National Defense Medal, an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, the NASA Space Flight Medal, the NASA

Exceptional Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal (with 4 stars), a Vietnamese Gallantry Cross (with gold star), and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Donald E. Williams died February 23, 2016. He was 74.

Source:

Retrieved November 30, 2010 from:

<http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/williams-de.html>

Collection Description

Scope

The Donald E. Williams papers (1978-1991; 1.7 cubic feet) document Williams' two shuttle missions; STS-51-D and STS-34, along with memorabilia from STS-1. Also included are various mission patches and decals. The artifacts include his flight helmet, and items used in space; gloves, knife, fork, teaspoon, and can opener.

Types of materials include: artifacts, checklists (mission), clippings, decals, memorabilia, NASA press kit, papers, patches, and photographs. The papers are organized into two series:

Arrangement

1. Papers and Memorabilia, 1978-1991 (0.5 cubic feet). The items in this series are varied and include; STS 51-D mission checklists, clippings about Williams, NASA STS-1 mission press kit, various mission patches and decals, and photographs of Williams and other astronauts.

Materials in the series are arranged chronologically.

2. Artifacts, circa 1980s (1.2 cubic feet). This series consists of Williams' flight helmet, space gloves, knife, fork, teaspoon, and can opener used in space, and STS-1 buttons.

Descriptive Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

All materials have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and acid-free boxes. The patches and decals have been placed in between protective archival paper.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. Papers and Memorabilia, 1978-1991

(.5 cubic feet)

Box 1 *STS-51-D and STS-34 Checklists, Clippings, Memorabilia, Patches, Photographs and Miscellaneous Items, 1978-1991*

Folder

1. Patches, NASA and mission related, 1978-1989 (12)
2. Decals (mission), 1978-1989 (27)
3. NASA Press Kit, STS-1, First Space Shuttle Mission, April 1981
4. Orbit Ops Checklist, STS 51-D, 1985
5. Contingency Deorbit Prep, STS-51-D, 1985
6. Contingency EVA Operations, STS-51-D, 1985
7. Clippings, press – articles and newspapers on Donald Williams, 1985-1989
8. Photographs of Williams and other astronauts, 1989 (some undated)
9. STS-34 card with mission logo Atlantis, 1989
10. STS-34 NASA causeway vehicle permit, 1989
11. NASA ID card, medical certifications for spaceflight, 1991
12. Mission patches and personal name patches, undated

Series 2. Artifacts, circa 1980s

(1.2 cubic feet)

Box 2 *Artifacts, circa 1980s*

Item

1. Space gloves, circa 1980s
2. Space knife, fork, teaspoon, and can opener, circa 1980s
3. STS-1, Columbia buttons, 1981 (4 buttons)

Box 3 *Flight Helmet, circa 1980s*

Item

1. Flight helmet, circa 1980s