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National Air and Space Museum

Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 Recovery Letters [Parker]

Jessamyn Lloyd

2017

National Air and Space Museum Archives
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151
NASMRefDesk@si.edu
<https://airandspace.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 Recovery Letters [Parker]
Date:	1962-1963
Identifier:	NASM.2017.0017
Creator:	Parker, Donald Fred, 1934-2016.
Extent:	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Donald Fred Parker was a naval flight officer assigned to the ship's company of the USS <i>Kearsarge</i> (CV-33), the ship that recovered the Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7. This collection contains two letters written by Parker that include a first person account of the recovery operations, as well as a "Family Gram" newsletter for the ship that also includes a detailed description of the Mercury MA-8 recovery.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 Recovery Letters [Parker]

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Jo Ellen Parker, Gift, 2017, NASM.2017.0017

Processing Information

Arranged and described (2017) and encoded (2020) by Jessamyn Lloyd.

Preferred Citation

Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 Recovery Letters [Parker], NASM.2017.0017, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

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Biographical / Historical

Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 occurred on October 3, 1962 when, over the course of nine hours, Walter Marty "Wally" Schirra, Jr. orbited the Earth six times. Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 launched on May 15, 1963 and landed on May 16, 1963. During the course of that mission, Leroy Gordon Cooper, Jr. orbited Earth 22 times. Both flights were recovered in the Pacific Ocean by the U.S. Navy Aircraft Carrier CV-33 *Kearsarge*.

Donald Fred Parker (1934-2016) was a naval flight officer assigned to the ship's company of the USS *Kearsarge* (CV-33). Parker was junior officer of the deck for the Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 recovery operation, and officer of the deck for the Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7 recovery. He was also the administrative assistant to the executive officer, and his duties included writing "Family Gram" newsletters to be sent under the captain's signature to friends and relatives of the men on the ship.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of letters written by Donald Fred Parker to his girlfriend (and later, wife), Jo Ellen, that include a first person account of the recovery operations for both Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7 and Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7. The first letter is dated October 3, 1962 and is two pages, single-side, typewritten. The second letter is dated May 17, 1963 and is four pages, written on both sides by hand in blue ink. This letter is on stationery which includes a drawing of the USS *Kearsarge* (CV-33) at the top and also includes a postal cover with a cachet specific to the Mercury MA-9 recovery as well as Project Mercury stamps. The last item in the collection is a "Family Gram" newsletter dated October 1962 which also includes a detailed description of the Mercury MA-8 recovery. The newsletter is six pages long, single-side, typewritten, and includes a small USS *Kearsarge* insignia and small portrait photo of Commanding Officer, Captain E. P. Rankin, at the top.

Arrangement

Collection is in chronological order.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aircraft carriers
- Mercury MA-8 Flight Sigma 7
- Mercury MA-9 Flight Faith 7
- Space flight

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Newsletters