

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROGER B. CHAFFEE,
UNITED STATES NAVY, DECEASED

Roger Bruce Chaffee was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on February 15, 1935, son of Don L. and Blanche M. (Mosher) Chaffee. He graduated from Central High School in Grand Rapids and in 1957 received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering from Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. While attending Purdue, he was a member of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit and upon graduation was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy. Advancing progressively in rank, he subsequently attained that of Lieutenant Commander, to date from February 1, 1966.

After receiving his commission in 1957, he had temporary duty with Naval Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, before reporting in October that year for flight training at the Naval Air Basic Training Command, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated Naval Aviator, he had further training from August 1958 until February 1959, while attached to Advanced Training Unit TWO HUNDRED TWELVE, at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Kingsville, Texas. He next had instruction at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, and in September 1959 joined Attack Squadron FORTY-FOUR for additional training. He had a similar assignment with Heavy Attack Squadron THREE from October 1959 until March 1960, after which he served with Heavy Photographic Squadron SIXTY-TWO. He was awarded the Air Medal with the following citation:

"For meritorious achievement in aerial flight during the period April 4, 1960 to October 25, 1962, as a photographic plane commander in Heavy Photographic Squadron SIXTY-TWO. Completing eighty-two classified operational missions of paramount military importance to the security of the United States, Lieutenant Chaffee contributed materially to the success of his squadron."

He was also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded Heavy Photographic Squadron SIXTY-TWO.

In January 1963 he entered the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to work on a Master of Science degree in reliability engineering and in October 1963 was one of the third group of astronautics selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In December 1963 he was assigned to the Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, Texas, for training and duty. Named by NASA as a member of the crew of the first manned Apollo orbital mission, Lieutenant Commander Chaffee was killed on January 27, 1967 as a result of a flash fire in the Apollo Saturn 204 test vehicle during a simulated launch. He was buried on January 31, 1967 in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

In addition to the Air Medal and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Lieutenant Commander Chaffee had the National Defense Service Medal.

He was a member of Tau Beta Pi, national engineering society; Sigma Gamma Tau and Phi Kappa Sigma.

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