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FINDING AID TO THE ROGER B. CHAFFEE LETTER AND POSTCARD, 1965

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Processed by: Mary A. Segó, March 26, 2014

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Chaffee, Roger B., 1935-1967
Title	Roger B. Chaffee letter and postcard
Collection Identifier	MSA 282
Date Span	1967
Abstract	Roger Chaffee personally signed letter with letter from Martha Chaffee on reverse, and postcard from Iceland
Extent	½ mss box; 2 items; letter and postcard
Finding Aid Author	Mary A. Segó
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:	Auction purchase, 2013
Accession Number:	20130614.3
Preferred Citation:	MSA 282, Roger B. Chaffee letter and postcard, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University per auction purchase

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Chaffee, Roger B., 1935-1967

Organizations

Purdue University

Navy ROTC

United States Navy

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Topics

Aeronautics

Aerospace Engineering

Project Apollo (U.S.)

Astronauts

Flight Archives at Purdue University

Purdue University--Alumni and alumnae

Purdue University--students

Space Flights

Form and Genre Types

Correspondence

Letter

Postcards

Occupations

Astronauts--American--1950-1960

Biography of Roger B. Chaffee

Roger B. Chaffee was born February 15, 1935 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Chaffee graduated from Central High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering, Purdue University in 1957. While at Purdue University, he was a member of Tau Beta Pi, National Engineering Society, Sigma Gamma Tau, and Phi Kappa Sigma.

Chaffee entered the Navy in 1957 as a United States Navy Lieutenant Commander. He served as safety officer and quality control officer for Heavy Photographic Squadron 62 at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida. 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. He logged more than 2,300 hours flying time, which included more than 2,000 hours in jet aircraft. Chaffee was awarded the United States Navy Air Medal.

Chaffee was one of the third groups of astronauts selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in October 1963. In addition to participating in the overall training program, he was also tasked with working on flight control communications systems, instrumentation systems, and attitude and translation control systems in the Apollo Branch of the Astronaut office. On March 21, 1966, he was selected as one of the pilots for the AS-204 mission, the first 3-man Apollo flight.

Lieutenant Commander Chaffee died on January 27, 1967, in the Apollo spacecraft flash fire during a launch pad test at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. He is survived by his wife Martha and two children.

“You’ll be flying along some nights with a full moon. You’re up at 45,000 feet. Up there you can see it like you can’t see it down here. It’s just the big, bright, clear moon. You look up there and just say to yourself: I’ve got to get up there. I’ve got to get up there. I’ve just got to get one of those flights.”

- Roger Chaffee (*The New York Times*, January 29, 1967, p. 48)

Sources:

Retrieved March 26, 2014 from:

<http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/chaffee-rb.html>

NASA Biography:

<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/Apollo204/zorn/chaffee.htm>

Collection Description

Scope

The letter dated July 24, 1965 is from Roger Chaffee to his parents. On the reverse is a July 25, 1965 note from Martha Chaffee to her in-laws in which she signs, "Roger, Martha, Sheryl and Steve." In the letter, Roger discussed an upcoming flight and the astronaut's rotation as capsule communicators (CAPCOMS). He mentions Gus Grissom, Gene Cernan, Jim McDivitt, Buzz Aldrin and Dave Scott. Both Roger and Martha discuss recent family activities at home. The postcard, dated July 1965, was sent by Roger from Iceland to his parents.

Descriptive Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

The letter and postcard have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and an acid-free box.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

1 Box *Letter and Postcard*

Item

1. Letter, side 1, from Roger Chaffee to his parents; side 2, Martha Chaffee writes to her in-laws, July 1965
2. Postcard, sent by Chaffee while in Iceland, to his parents, July 1965