

Contents

Foreword by Tracy Kornfeld	viii
Acknowledgements	xii
Author’s prologue.....	xiv
1 A pilot born of pilots	1
Flying on the Western Front.....	1
Missing in action.....	3
Growing up in Oradell	7
A love of flying and the Green Bowlers.....	10
Chance encounters	15
Horseback surrender	16
An aviator in action.....	17
China Lake	21
Test pilot and astronaut candidate.....	27
2 The making of a flight-ready astronaut	34
On becoming an astronaut	36
Early astronaut training	38
Wally and the Turtle Club	45
MA-8 pilot	49
A tale of two nurses	63
Getting ready to fly	69
3 The art of space flight.....	79
Realizing a childhood ambition	79
Problems on the launch gantry.....	85
Men’s worlds and mechanical mischief.....	90
“Nekkid ladies” and “gotchas”	95
After NASA	100

4	<i>Sigma 7</i> flies	107
	Final preparations.....	107
	All systems “Go”	115
	Strapped in and secure	119
	The final countdown.....	124
5	Six times around the world	129
	A near abort after lift-off.....	129
	Achieving orbit	135
	An overheating space suit	138
	“Go” for a second orbit	141
	A textbook flight	146
	“Buenos Días, you-all”	149
	Homeward bound.....	151
6	“A sweet little bird”	155
	Recovery training	155
	Witness to history.....	161
	Pacific splashdown.....	163
	Recovery	165
	Post-flight duties	178
	Setting sail for Hawaii.....	183
	Honolulu to Houston.....	186
7	Press conferences, parades, and post-flight honors	192
	The “textbook” flight of <i>Sigma 7</i>	195
	Welcoming a hometown hero.....	200
	Receiving awards.....	208
	Visit with the president	211
8	Mercury, Gemini and Apollo veteran.....	218
	On to Gemini.....	219
	Calling off a chase.....	221
	The most dangerous moments	225
	Space chase	227
	Tragedy, and a troubled time.....	232
	Third and last flight.....	235
	Pressing the issues.....	239
	Wally and the mystery boxes	242
	Epilogue: Final salute to a hero	246
	Life beyond NASA	249
	A well-traveled spacecraft	258
	Appendices	267
	About the author	292
	Index.....	293

Sigma 7

The Six Mercury Orbits of Walter M. Schirra, Jr.

Burgess, C.

2016, XVII, 298 p. 226 illus., 82 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-27982-4