



GAGARIN

YURI ALEXEYEVICH GAGARIN is 27. He was born in Gzhatsk district, Smolensk region (in the Russian Federation) on March 9, 1934. His father is a collective farmer. He entered school in 1941, but his schooling was interrupted by the Nazi invasion.

After the war the Gagarin family moved to the town of Gzhatsk, where Yuri continued his studies in secondary school. In 1951 he finished a trade school in the town of Lyubertsy, near Moscow, with honours, qualifying as a foundryman. He finished an evening school for young workers at the same time. From there he went on to an industrial school in Saratov on the Volga, which he finished with honours in 1955.

While attending the industrial school he took up flying in his spare time at the Saratov flying club. After finishing the course at the club in 1955, he studied at a flying school in Orenburg. He has been a flyer since 1957, when he graduated with honours from the Orenburg school. After graduation from the Orenburg flying school as a fighter pilot he served in one of the units of the Soviet armed forces.

On his insistent request he was included in the group of space-flying candidates and successfully passed the selection tests. During the training of the group of space pilots Gagarin was one of the best.

Yuri Gagarin became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1960. His wife Valentina, 26, is a graduate of the Orenburg medical school. They have two girls, Yelena, aged two, and Galya, only one month old at the time of the launch. Yuri's father, now 59, is a carpenter. His mother Anna, 58, is a housewife.



SHEPARD

ALAN BARLETT SHEPARD, JR, was born November 18, 1923 in East Derry, New Hampshire. He is married, with two daughters: Julian, 9, and Laura, 13. His parents live in East Derry where the elder Shepard, a retired officer of the US Army, is an insurance broker.

Shepard attended primary school in East Derry and graduated from Pinkerton Academy, Derry, New Hampshire, in 1940. He studied one year at Admiral Farragut Academy, Toms River, New Jersey, and then entered the Naval Academy, Annapolis. He graduated from Annapolis in 1944.

The astronaut saw service on the destroyer *Cogswell* in the Pacific during World War II. He then entered flying training at Corpus Christi, Texas, and Pensacola, Florida. He received his wings in March 1947. Subsequent service was in Fighter Squadron 42 at the Norfolk Naval Air Station and Jacksonville, Florida. He also served several tours aboard aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean. Shepard went to USN Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland, in 1950 and served two tours in flight-test work.

Between his flight-test tours at Patuxent, Shepard was assigned to Fighter Squadron 193 at Moffet Field, California, a night-fighter unit flying Banshee jets. He was Operations Officer of this squadron and made two tours with it to the Western Pacific on board the carrier *Oriskany*. He has been engaged in the testing of the F3H Demon, F8U Crusader, F4D Skyray, and F11F Tigercat. He was project test pilot on the F5D Skylancer. After his graduation from the Naval War College, Shepard joined the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet, as aircraft readiness officer. He has 3,700hr of flying time, 1,800 in jets.

FLIGHT,
17 August
1961

THE YEAR OF THE ASTRONAUTS

THIS century has known no day more momentous than Wednesday, April 12, 1961. With the orbital flight of Maj Yuri Gagarin, space became operational, and man's thinking was jerked into a wider, unfamiliar realm. In a year when the successful orbit and recovery of an Earth satellite may rate only one sentence in the mass-circulation newspapers, and at a time when the pioneer astronaut has come to be regarded by some primarily as a political figure and not as the world's first space pilot, it is as well to remind ourselves of the significance of '61. This is history, and we are privileged to be here to see it made.

Space history moves fast, and news of the latest achievement—man in orbit for over 24 hours—came even as this issue was being prepared, less than four months after Gagarin's premier orbit. As we close for press, there are four names on the roll of space pilots: Gagarin, Shepard, Grissom and Titov. In their respective log books are 1hr 48min orbital flight; 15min ballistic flight; 16 min ballistic flight and 25hr 18min orbital flight. The four astronauts, their spacecraft, and the programmes leading up to their flights into space form the subject of this article, which is compiled from official American and Soviet sources.

The flight phase of the Soviet man-in-space programme leading up

Right, launch from Baykonur, April 12; left, from Cape Canaveral, May 5

