

Re: Apollo 7

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- *From:* "Rusty" <reuben_barton@xxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 23 Nov 2005 20:31:04 -0800
-

al wrote:

> Joe Delphi wrote:

>

>> Hi,

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>> I was over in S.S.S reading a thread about how Wally Schirra refused
>> to wear his helmet during re-entry on Apollo 7. Can anyone shed some
>> light

>> on this incident? I remember reading somewhere that the A7 astronauts
>> became upset with mission control at some point in the mission and then
>> became un-cooperative for the remainder of the mission. Was this part of
>> that issue?

>>

>> JD

>

>

> He had a head cold and thought he might damage his ear drums with the helmet
> on

He and the crew had head colds. Mercury and Gemini spacesuits allowed the wearer to open the faceplate with the helmet still in place. Apollo 7 was the first use of the Apollo spacesuit with the "fish bowl" helmets. It was all or nothing. There was no faceplate to open. Wally Schirra wanted to the crew to be able to pinch their noses and blow to equalize pressure in their ear drums as atmospheric pressure increased during reentry. I believe that Wally wanted to reenter in coveralls. Deke Slayton reminded him that this was the first reentry of a new spacecraft. He reminded Wally that Gus Grissom and John Young had a rough parachute deployment on Gemin 3, causing their faceplates to bump the instrument panel. Wally stood firm about not wearing the helmets. I believe the final compromise was the crew would reenter wearing their spacesuits, but not the helmets.

Of course earlier in the flight, Wally had refused to do the first U.S. live broadcast from space because the crew didn't feel well. (Gordon Cooper had a slow scan TV camera on his Mercury flight, but it was more like a series of still pictures being sent to the ground.) This was to be a big P.R. coup for NASA and all of the networks were geared up for

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the show. The Apollo 7 crew did the telecast a day or so later, but the damage had been done by that time.

– Rusty

–Rusty

–Rusty

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◇ *From:* Henry Spencer

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◇ *From:* Nicholas Fitzpatrick

• *References:*

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◇ *From:* Joe Delphi

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