

## A Memorable GT-2 Recovery

By  
Paul Chaput

In January 1965 I was on the USS Lake Champlain mainly to see how well the Gemini flotation collar went during rehearsals and recovery of the unmanned GT2 spacecraft after its launch and ballistic flight into the Atlantic. Just one or two days prior to splashdown I was asked by team leader Doc Stullken to take on the duty of safing the recovered spacecraft, removing certain equipment, and taking gauge readings within the vehicle. I was given a checklist to do this from. I had never seen the spacecraft or checklist before, nor had I trained in any way for this. I can't remember who was on the team to do this task but whoever it was, late in the game, had been transferred to another recovery ship. (Incidentally, Doc had also given me a pair of white coveralls and a blue crayon to print "NASA" on the back of it.) Anyhow I ended up helping to guide the recovered spacecraft into its cradle on the ship and then going on to delicately opening the hatches, safing the pyrotechnics onboard, and doing the other tasks - while virtually the whole ship's crew watched. Boy, did I feel important (and a bit shaky).



Paul Chaput (right) guiding Gemini-2 into recovery cradle onboard USS Lake Champlain on January 19, 1965



Paul Chaput performing postlanding checklist on Gemini-2 onboard USS Lake Champlain on January 19, 1965