

Remembering Dick Gordon

By Paul Kruppenbacher

The Apollo 12 prime crew, Pete Conrad, Dick Gordon and Al Bean, had just finished water egress training in the MSC Building 260 water tank and went outside to their car to drive back to their office. It was pouring out, and when the crew noticed me standing outside the door waiting for a NASA taxi they asked if I needed a ride back to my office, Building 30. I quickly accepted and jumped in the back seat with Gordon. Bean was driving with Conrad in the front passenger seat. Bean had to back up to make a turn onto the road and it was hard to see in the pouring rain. Conrad faced the rear and told Bean he'd guide him. Conrad repeated, 'Back up, back up, back up.' As the car lurched into a drainage ditch, Bean frantically shoved the car in drive and we skidded back up onto the road. At this point, Conrad let out a roar, clearly having had fun at driving Bean into a ditch. I thought, 'What a wacky crew...all Navy of course!' As we drove off, Conrad started talking about how exciting it was to be in the program and headed for the moon. He turned to Bean and said, 'I told you Beano that you'd be farting through silk!'

They were a crew clearly enjoying themselves. Professionals, yet not taking their special life too seriously. Rest in Peace, Dick Gordon.

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