

Shepard leads the Corvette and Astronaut parade, Coca Beach, FL.



Schirra rides his *Sigma 7* Mercury spacecraft.

A portion of the monies raised by the Turtle Club Membership Drive will be donated to the *Astronaut Scholarship Foundation* and *Space Camp Scholarships*.



Graphics and Photos Courtesy of NASA

Carpenter/Cooper/Glenn/Grisson/Schirra/Shepard/Slayton

## The Turtle Club

The Turtle Club was dreamed up by test pilots during WWII, the Interstellar Association of Turtles believes that you never get anywhere in life without sticking your neck out. When asked, "Are you a Turtle?" you must answer with the password in full no matter how embarrassing or inappropriate the timing is, or you forfeit a beverage of their choice.

To become a part of the time honored tradition, you must be 18 years of age or older and be approved by the Imperial Potentate or High Potentate. Membership cards will be individually signed by Wally Schirra and Ed Buckbee. A limited number of memberships are available. Apply today by filling out the order form below or by visiting [www.apogee.com](http://www.apogee.com) and follow the prompts to be a card carrying member of the Turtle Club!



Turtle Club co-founder Shepard, High Potentate Buckbee and Imperial Potentate and co-founder Schirra enjoy a gotcha!

Order your copy today of  
*The Real Space Cowboys*  
along with your  
Turtle Club Membership

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# The REAL SPACE COWBOYS

Ed Buckbee with Wally Schirra



Available Spring 2005  
 Publisher: Apogee Books

Shepard

Grissom

Glenn

Carpenter

Schirra

Cooper

Slayton

## The Real Space Cowboys

by: Ed Buckbee with Wally Schirra

In 1959, seven U.S. military fighter pilots were selected to train as America's first astronauts. Alan Shepard, Gordon Cooper, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, Wally Schirra and Deke Slayton accepted the country's call to service and would become known as the Mercury Seven (M7). These men, who had jockeyed for the best flying jobs in the military, began competing for rides on rockets. Most would eventually vie for the ultimate ride to the moon. This was the dream - a chance to ascend to the top of the



pyramid - a lion-hearted pilot's deepest desire.

The eras of Mercury, Gemini and Apollo - these were times of nobility and humility, but also times of arrogance, tension, and from time-to-time, humor. "Gotcha's" were commonplace astronaut pranks and a dubious answer to the question; "Are you a turtle?" resulted in a healthy bar tab.

In Wernher von Braun, discover a man who was committed to living in a new frontier. His words, "late to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise," are a testament to multi-tasking. Von Braun, the German-born rocket scientist and visionary of space flight, convinced presidents and congressmen to spend millions exploring space for peaceful purposes. "Space flight did not happen because somebody thought that it would be an intriguing thing to do, but because it is part of our human destiny, and because its time had come. Let us continue to accept the challenge and to respond with our best ability," he said in 1970.

But what of our first space heroes after the Apollo program was completed? Accepting the call of Project Mercury meant a lifetime commitment. Their work

continued with motivational programs for youth through the U.S. Space Camp programs, public programs at institutions such as the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, and others. The author himself shared the task of motivating the next generation through

creation of U.S. Space Camp and the Astronaut Hall of Fame.

Seven brave men volunteered to be the first. They would lead a world into space and change it forever. Together they would make the first high risk flights, take a generation of spacecraft into the unknown and point the way for generations to follow. They were our first astronauts. They were star voyagers. The path they blazed now shines for others; on a voyage that is a measure of the best in us all and the Mercury 7 were first. They are *The REAL Space Cowboys*.



JFK and Wernher von Braun in Huntsville in 1962.



Shepard shows off his moon golf swing in Huntsville, AL.



Monkeynauts Able and Baker are first in space.



Mercury 3 Redstone and Shepard liftoff in 1961.



Von Braun observing liftoff.



JFK honors Shepard with M7 looking on.



Cowboy astronauts are introduced to Houston, Texas.



## About the Author - Ed Buckbee

Director Emeritus of the U.S. Space and Rocket Center  
Founder of Space Camp

The author Ed Buckbee, who has enjoyed a 40+ year association with the U.S. manned space flight program, follows these brave men, the last true American heroes, who pioneered the U.S. space program. Through time and personal friendships, he captures dreams of flying higher, faster and farther than anyone in the known universe. Readers are invited behind the scenes to witness the competition between chimpanzees and astronauts, and the conflict between NASA engineers designing capsules and those who would pilot them. Through this book, readers feel the collective will of a nation to defeat the Russians in an all-out space race via an American team of 400,000 engineers, technicians, astronauts and support personnel who performed as if the country were at war.

Alan Shepard is a prominent figure in the book. Together, he and the author prepared anniversary presentations, articles and TV interviews. They traveled to seven countries and more than twenty-five states marketing and opening Space Camps. They designed, developed and built the U. S. Astronaut Hall of Fame. As Shepard proclaimed upon Buckbee's retirement from the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, "He's a space relic. We need to keep him and put him on exhibit in that space museum and when he dies, bury him next to that damn monkey."

## Wally Schirra

Mercury, Gemini, Apollo Astronaut  
Co-Founder of the Turtle Club

Wally Schirra a major contributor to *The REAL Space Cowboys*, is the only Mercury astronaut who flew in all three of the nation's pioneering space programs, Mercury, Gemini and Apollo. He was an on-the-air colleague of CBS-TV's Walter Cronkite during the Apollo moon landing missions. Schirra along with Shepard was instrumental in starting the Space Camp program in Huntsville in the early 1980's.



Schirra and his space flying buddies took no prisoners in the space race to the moon. They stood on the shoulders of America's greatest peace time work force, ever assembled, and beat the Russians to the moon and along the way gave birth to some exciting new technology. Wally Schirra is of that special breed of man who created the mold and set the standard that became the role model for the U.S. astronaut corps of today. We asked the best and the bravest to lead America on it's first flights into this new ocean of space. They were the *Mercury 7*. Now they are three; John Glenn, Scott Carpenter and Wally Schirra.

Shepard

Grissom

Glenn

Carpenter

Schirra

Cooper

Slayton