

AFEHRI File 19-10

**Research Materials/Source Documents
ENLISTED FIRSTS**

FILE TITLE: 1st Person to Simulate a Trip to the Moon: A1C Donald G. Farrell

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DID YOU KNOW THAT...

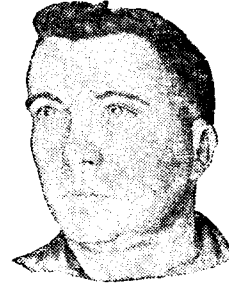
ALMOST 33 YEARS AGO, A TWENTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD ENLISTED PERSON TOOK A TRIP TO THE MOON. ON 9 FEBRUARY 1958, AIRMAN FIRST CLASS DONALD G. FARRELL, A NEW YORKER FROM THE BRONX, "TOOK OFF" FOR THE FIRST SIMULATED TRIP TO THE MOON. HIS TRAIL BLAZING ACHIEVEMENT WAS COMPLETED AT THE AIR FORCE SCHOOL OF AVIATION MEDICINE, RANDOLPH AFB, TEXAS. AIRMAN FARRELL'S SEVEN-DAY MISSION WAS HAILED BY SCIENTISTS AS EVIDENCE THAT MAN IS EMOTIONALLY EQUIPPED FOR SPACE TRAVEL, AND CAN ENDURE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN AN ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT IMPAIRING HIS NORMAL FUNCTIONS. AIRMAN FARRELL'S MISSION MARKED A GIANT STEP FORWARD IN THE DRIVE TO DESIGN A CABIN IN WHICH A MAN CAN LIVE COMFORTABLY FOR LONG FLIGHTS INTO SPACE.

FARRELL, 'SPACEMAN'

WEDGED INTO a barrel-shaped steel chamber amid a nightmare of instruments and controls, Airman First Class Donald G. Farrell "took off" for the first simulated trip to the moon on February 9, 1958. Place: the Air Force School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Seven days later Farrell came back to earth. He was "a little tired" but physically and mentally in good shape.

Air Force scientists hailed Airman Farrell's trail-blazing achievement as evidence that man is emotionally equipped for space travel, that he can endure solitary confinement in an artificial environment without impairing his normal functions. His seven-day stint marked a giant step forward from previous tests of twenty-four hours duration in the drive to design a cabin in which a man can live comfortably for long flights into space.

Although Airman Farrell was not exposed to acceleration, weightlessness and cosmic rays, he lived under the same lonely, hemmed-in conditions a space flyer would encounter. There were some "rough spots" in the 1958 mission.



New Yorker from The Bronx. In his tight little cabin, he could not stand up or stretch; he could barely recline for sleep by sticking his feet into a four-foot-long vestibule projecting from the chamber and snugging his hips into less than a foot-wide clearance. His compartment (three feet wide, five feet high) was so filled with equipment that he could move only his arms freely. By leaning forward he could lift himself out of his seat. That was all.

On the fifth day, instruments indicated to scientists that the twenty-three-year-old airman was suffering from fatigue. He muffed a couple of problems fed to him on twin radar screens. But he snapped out, completed his stint—and set a space age milestone.

On emerging from his "space ship," Airman Farrell said: "I really would like to make a trip to the moon."

Airman Farrell has completed his military service and is attending Boston University, working toward a degree in aeronautical-engineering. He hopes to help build manned spacecraft.

GRIFFITH, MISSILEMAN

A TENSE HUSH prevailed in the blockhouse as Captain Millard Earl Griffith ticked off the final seconds of the countdown: four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . zero. From its huge launching pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida, the gleaming white rocket roared upward with incredible speed, rising gracefully on its flaming exhaust, urged on by the jubilant blast-off team: "Go, baby, go."

Pioneer I was on its way. Time: 4:42 a.m. (E. S. T.), October 11, 1958.

Forty-three hours and nineteen minutes later, Pioneer plunged back into the atmosphere and disintegrated over the South Pacific. It had failed in its maximum objective of orbiting around the moon; but it was one of the most glorious failures in scientific history, acclaimed by scientists around the world as a masterly achievement. For Pioneer had ascended to an altitude of 71,300 miles—twenty-seven times as high as any other missile had risen.

As project officer for the Thor-able tests conducted by Major General Bernard A. Schriever's



Ballistic Missiles Division, Captain Griffith was a key member of a huge team of dedicated missilemen whose efforts, from all parts of the country, sent Pioneer aloft. The total countdown took over eight hours, with a final twenty-minute

"spread"; yet all the multitudinous details were meshed so precisely that Pioneer blasted off only nine seconds behind the scheduled launching time.

"Nowhere else is teamwork more important than in the missile business," says thirty-seven-year-old Captain Griffith, who trained as an engineer and became a missile man because "it just gets in your blood." He received his master's degree at Ohio State University, joined the Air Force in 1942 and flew twenty-two combat missions in the Pacific as pilot of B-24 and B-29 bombers. After the war he took his doctorate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"There's a popular misconception," he says, "that one man does the missile job by pushing a button. There's no button. It's a complex situation in which thousands of people do the work."