

FOR PRESS:

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U.S. ASTRONAUT TO BE CORAL SEA GUEST OF HONOUR

The Governments of Australia and the United States announced today that R. Walter Cunningham, lunar module pilot of Apollo 7, will be the official guest of honour during the Coral Sea Commemoration ceremonies to take place in Australia from 3-11 May.

Mrs. Cunningham will accompany the astronaut.

Their itinerary will include Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

They will visit Australia as the guests of the Commonwealth Government and the Australian-American Association. Details of the programme will be announced later.



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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Mr. Cunningham was born on 16 March 1932, at Creston, Iowa. Reared in Venice, California, he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Physics from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1960 and a Master of Arts Degree in Physics in 1961 from that same University.

Cunningham joined the United States Navy in 1951 and entered flight training in 1952. He was assigned to a Marine squadron in 1953 and remains a Marine reservist.

Prior to his selection as an astronaut, Cunningham was with the Rand Corporation where he worked as a research scientist. He performed error analysis and feasibility studies of defence against submarine-launched ballistic missiles and problems of the earth's magnetosphere. His later work at UCLA was the developing, testing, and analysing results of a triaxial search coil magnetometer which was flown aboard the first NASA Orbiting Geophysical Observatory satellite.

Cunningham was one of the 14 astronauts selected by NASA in October 1963.

He is married to the former Lo Ella Irby of Norwalk, California. The Cunninghams have two children: Brian, born 12 September 1960; and Kimberly born 12 February 1963.

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CANBERRA - 27 March 1969