

ASTRONAUT BIOGRAPHY



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

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Christopher J. Cassidy

(Captain, U.S. Navy) NASA Astronaut

Summary:

Christopher J. Cassidy was selected as an astronaut by NASA in 2004 and is a veteran of three space flights, STS-127, Expedition 35, and Expedition 63. During STS-127, Cassidy served as a Mission Specialist and was the 500th person in history to fly into space. This mission delivered the Japanese Experiment Module Exposed Facility (JEM-EF) and the Experiment Logistics Module Exposed Section (ELM-ES) to the station. For Expedition 35, Cassidy and the European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Luca Parmitano had their unplanned spacewalk to replace a pump controller box cut short when Parmitano had cooling water leak into his helmet. Cassidy, a U.S. Navy SEAL, has been deployed twice to the Mediterranean and twice to Afghanistan. He has been the recipient of Bronze Star with combat 'V' and Presidential Unit Citation for leading a nine-day operation at the Zharwar Kili Cave on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. Cassidy recently served as Commander on the International Space Station for Expedition 63.

Personal Data:

Born in 1970 in Salem, Massachusetts. Considers York, Maine, to be his hometown. Married to the former Peggy Yancer, Elyria, Ohio. They have five children between the two of them. Recreational interests include traveling, biking, camping, snow skiing, weight lifting, running, basketball, real estate, and home improvement.

Education:

Graduated from York High School, York, Maine; completed Naval Academy Prep School, Newport, Rhode Island, 1989; received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, U.S. Naval Academy, 1993; received a Master of Science in Ocean Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000, Honorary PHD from Husson University, 2015.

Military Experience:

Eleven years as a member of the U.S. Navy SEALs Team. He made four six-month deployments: two to Afghanistan, and two to the Mediterranean. Cassidy served as Executive Officer and Operations Officer of Special Boat Team Twenty in Norfolk, Virginia, and SEAL platoon commander at SEAL Team THREE in Coronado, California. He deployed to the Afghanistan region two weeks after September 11, 2001, served as ground assault force commander for international and U.S. only combat missions in Afghanistan, and led two months of noncompliant ship-boarding in the Northern Arabian Gulf. He was SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) platoon commander at SDV Team TWO in Norfolk. He accumulated more than 200 hours underwater as pilot/navigator/mission commander of a two-man flooded submersible SDV, which is launched and recovered from a host-ship submarine. He also served as dry deck shelter platoon commander at SEAL Delivery Team TWO in Norfolk. Cassidy volunteered to complete a week-long, 180-mile charity kayak paddle from Norfolk to Washington, D.C. to raise money and awareness for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. He achieved the rank of Captain in 2014.

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NASA Experience:

Cassidy was selected as an astronaut by NASA in May 2004. In February 2006, he completed Astronaut Candidate (ASCAN) training. From 2006 through 2008, he served as Capsule Communicator (CAPCOM) in the Mission Control Center. From 2009 through 2011, Cassidy was assigned as the support astronaut on the Space Shuttle Closeout Crew tasked with strapping in the crew and closing and sealing the access hatch for flight. From 2014 to 2015, he served as the Extravehicular Activity (EVA) branch chief and in 2015 was assigned as the Deputy Chief, Astronaut Office. After serving four months as deputy, Cassidy became NASA's 14th Chief Astronaut in July 2015 where he was responsible for flight assignments, mission preparation and on-orbit support of U.S. crews as well as organizing astronaut office support for future launch vehicles.

Spaceflight Experience:

STS-127 (July 15 through July 31, 2009). Cassidy served as Mission Specialist aboard the Endeavour for this International Space Station assembly mission 2J/A. Cassidy was the 500th person in history to fly into space. The crew delivered the Japanese Experiment Module - Exposed Facility (JEM-EF) and the Experiment Logistics Module Exposed Section (ELM-ES) to the station. They completed the construction of the KIBO JEM, installed scientific experiments on its exposed facility and delivered critical spare parts and replacement batteries.

Expedition 35 (March 28 through September 10, 2013). Cassidy served as a Flight Engineer and flew to the station aboard Soyuz TMA-08M (U.S. designation: 34S), which launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The three crew members were the first to complete an expedited docking to the station – instead of taking the standard two days to rendezvous and dock, they arrived at the orbiting complex in six hours.

Expedition 63 (April 9 through October 21, 2020). Cassidy served as Commander and flew to the station aboard Soyuz, which launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Cassidy and his fellow Astronaut Robert Behnken completed four spacewalks, totaling 23 hours and 37 minutes, to upgrade station batteries. While on station, he contributed to hundreds of experiments, including a study of the influence of gravity on electrolytic gas evolution, which looks at bubbles created using electrolysis. Cassidy also worked with Astrobee, cube-shaped, free-flying robots that may one day assist astronauts with routine duties, and conducted research for the Onco-Selectors experiment, which leverages microgravity to identify targeted cancer therapies. He spent a total of 196 days in space.

Cassidy has completed a total of ten spacewalks, but two were of particular note. On May 11, 2013, Cassidy and Thomas Marshburn performed an unplanned spacewalk to replace a pump controller box suspected to be the source of an ammonia coolant leak, and on July 16, 2013, he and Luca Parmitano had their spacewalk cut short when Parmitano had cooling water leaking into his helmet covering his face with water. Overall, Cassidy has accumulated 54 hours, 51 minutes of spacewalk time and 378 days in space.

Awards/Honors:

Honor graduate of Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) Class 192; awarded the Bronze Star with combat 'V' and Presidential Unit Citation for leading a nine-day operation at the Zharwar Kili cave complex on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border; guest speaker at the U.S. Naval Academy Combat Leadership Seminar, 2003 & 2004; awarded a second Bronze Star for combat leadership service in Afghanistan, 2004; Recipient of NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal. Finisher in the Ironman World Championship triathlon in Kona, Hawaii, 2014.

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Organizations:

U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association; Massachusetts Institute of Technology Alumni Association; Fraternal Order of Underwater Demolition Team (UDT)/Sea, Air, Land Team (SEAL) Association.