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### **America Supports You: GIs' Kids Fly High at Space Camp**

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HUNTSVILLE, Ala., July 27, 2005 – Fifteen military children took a giant leap for 'kidkind' this summer.



*From Mission Control at Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., Patrick Rounds, 12, helps get his shuttle crew safely on the ground. Rounds is one of 15 children of active duty servicemembers who earned a scholarship to Space Camp this summer. While at camp, the students learn what it's like to be on a space shuttle during a mission and how things happen in mission control back on Earth. Photo by Samantha L. Quigley (Click photo for screen-resolution image);[high-resolution image](#) available.*

It was 36 years ago on July 20, 1969, when real astronaut Neil Armstrong announced he was taking "one small step for man, one giant step for mankind" on the moon.

The students were selected from nearly 200 applicants who applied for the Bernard Brown II Memorial Scholarship Fund that covers all expenses involved in sending military children to Space Camp here, said retired Army Lt. Gen. Don Jones, who chairs the committee that raises funds for the scholarships.

Space Camp, founded in Huntsville, Ala., in 1982, uses space and aviation as a platform to excite and educate students ages 9 -18, in the fields of math, science and technology. The program, which ranges from 3 to 13 days, teaches teamwork, self-confidence and communication through state-of-the-art simulations, missions, rocket building and robotics.

All children of active duty servicemembers and activated Guardsmen and Reservists are eligible for the scholarship administered by the Military Children Education Coalition. But it's more complicated than just filling out a form, according to Clayton Black, 12, whose stepfather is in the Air Force and stationed in Germany.

"I wrote an essay and my mom was the one who told me about it,"

Clayton said. "So she said, 'Give it a shot. You have the same chance as anybody else.' So I gave it a shot, and surprisingly I got it."

Black, who wants to fly when he grows up, whether it's as a pilot or as an astronaut, wrote about his good grades and his love of space and astronauts as well as his fascination with how everything works.

The essays were judged on four key points, including evidence of patriotism, future goals, community service and how the writer plans to apply knowledge gained at Space Camp. Jones added that why the essay writer wants to attend Space Camp also is a consideration and recommendations.

Jones said he was impressed with the caliber of the essays received and the students who wrote them. "It's just amazing, ... the quality of these youngsters that are coming here," Jones said. "They're good students. They're interested in math and science; (they're) well spoken. They're just really a quality group of young men and women that attend Space Camp."

Both Black and fellow camper Patrick Rounds, 12, were in the session that started July 17. They also agreed that camp had

been a great experience.

Black said he has made some new friends, something that isn't easy at home, where he works hard to maintain stellar grades, participate in the school band as the sole French horn player and do some volunteer work.

Rounds said Space Camp has changed his thinking on what he might want to do when he enters the work force.

"Now I'm also thinking about a career as an astronaut," Patrick said. "I think maybe I might be in Mission Control to help the orbiter up there, but I don't know if I really want to be in the orbiter."

Rounds was living in Korea when he left for Space Camp, but was headed to West Point, N.Y., afterward where his father, Army Lt. Col. Michael Rounds, will be teaching thermal dynamics at the U.S. Military Academy. He said that while he doesn't know much about his father's subject, his favorite class in school is math, but he also really likes science and social studies.

Both boys got to play roles in Mission Control and as part of a space shuttle crew, and both drew the position of station commander during the simulated flight. The station commander is charged with making sure that "on mid-deck all the controls are doing well," according to Clayton.

And just to make things more interesting, staff members introduce problems to challenge both the shuttle crew and those working in Mission Control. To put things on a more even keel, the crews do have manuals to guide the youngsters to the correct response.

While working in mission control, Rounds helped guide a shuttle's crew to a safe landing during a simulated flight. But then again, maybe it was good that it was only a simulated flight.

"I guess we did (get the crew home safely)," Patrick said, smiling sheepishly. "But someone might have died because of the payload doors being left open.

Jones said the experience is billed as a life-changing one for the students who attend, and he has the proof to back it up.

"They all will write us a letter back and say what they like most (and) what they're going to do with the new-found knowledge they have," he said. "It's amazing how bright, how articulate, how energetic and enthusiastic the children are about Space Camp."

This Space Camp class graduated July 22 and headed back to their Earthly lives with tales to tell. Rounds said that he will encourage his friends to apply for the scholarship next year, noting that his little brother already wants to attend.

The Military Children Education Coalition created the scholarship as a tribute to Bernard Brown II. The 11-year-old son of Navy Chief Petty Officer Bernard Brown had been on his way to a National Science Foundation project in California on Sept. 11, 2001, when the plane he was on was flown into the Pentagon.

The first time the scholarship was awarded, in 2002, it went to one recipient. This year 15 students received the scholarship, which is funded through donations, and Jones said the plan is for the program to continue growing.

MCEC also helps to make transitions between schools easier for military children and has several programs in place working toward that goal.

Notification of the scholarship deadline and requirements for next year will be distributed in March, Jones said.

**Related Sites:**

[Military Child Education Coalition](#)

[America Supports You](#)



*Clayton Black, 12, talks with retired Army Lt. Gen. Don Jones, who serves on the committee that oversees the Bernard Brown II Memorial Fund scholarship program. This year, 15 military children earned this scholarship to Space Camp. The scholarship is named for the 11-year-old son of Navy Chief Petty Officer Bernard Brown who was aboard the plane flown into the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. Photo by Samantha L. Quigley*