



# The Alpha Control Reference Manual

## Biography: John Sims Robinson

### Vital Statistics

Birthplace:	Lowell, Massachusetts	Eyes:	Hazel
Birthdate:	January 14, 1957	Hair:	Brown
Height:	6' 3"	Rank:	Lt. Colonel
Weight:	190 pounds	Likes:	All types of sports, football in particular

John Sims Robinson was born on January 14, 1957, in the large Massachusetts town of Lowell. The fifth child of a lower-income family, John learned at an early age that the only way that he would get ahead would be through his own hard work and determination. "You can't get something for nothing" would become his motto, a conviction brought about by his struggles to better himself during his early years. However, despite economic hardships, his natural good looks, athletic prowess, and most important, an unusually high intelligence gave him an edge over most children his age.

By the tenth grade, John was not only very popular in high school, but he was virtually always at the head of any class he attended. During his sophomore year at East Side High School, he also made a reputation for himself as the youngest quarterback ever to play on the school team. But academic pursuit remained his primary interest, despite receiving several lucrative offers from colleges wanting him to play on their teams. By working part-time and obtaining several academic scholarships for his academic excellence, John was able to put the funds together for college, and he was accepted into the California Institute of Technology in the spring of 1976. After graduation, he spent his last summer in Lowell, then moved to his new home in August - the dormitory at CIT.

From an early age, the youngest Robinson had had two keen interests: geology, and anything connected to the area of outer space. Both interests were equally fascinating, and choosing a degree in one area or another was a dilemma constantly on his mind before selecting CIT. The school offered the perfect solution with its new degree in Planetary Geological Sciences, a course of study in which he immediately enrolled.

A far greater problem for John was his meeting a beautiful - and brilliant - female student from Torrance, California, who was taking the same chemistry class as himself. Although popular, John had never dated much. After his classes and his CIT work study program, he preferred to spend the little time that remained on his studies. Despite a hectic schedule, the two found time to date, and before long the two were seldom seen apart. During the summer break of their first year in school they made the decision to be married, and did so on June 10, 1977. Maureen's sister, Colleen - her legal guardian - invited the two to live with her, and they remained there for the next four years.

John tackled the last six semesters of school as he had most things in life - with great determination and skill. His grades proved to be exceptionally high, and he decided to stay on for a fifth year at the institute to earn his master's degree in Astrophysics and Applied Planetary Geology. Graduating with honors in the spring of 1981, John was hired as an instructor of geophysics at UCLA. While working there, he continued his education and completed his doctorate in 1985. He also won a number of awards while at the school for outstanding teaching ability and leadership, including the prestigious Zane Morris award.

Other important events were occurring in John's life. The Robinson family had grown with the birth of Judy on February 26, 1978. After moving into their own home in Los Angeles, another daughter, Penny, was born on September 8, 1985. Following another move to nearby San Gabriel the following year, their son Will was born on February 1, 1987.

With seven years of teaching behind him, John had grown restless. Although his job certainly provided a stable environment

for his family, he felt that he needed the opportunity to prove himself while working in the field of geophysics under some more practical application than instructing others. When he was offered the opportunity to work with Alpha Control on a new program to study the ability of humans to adapt to the environments of alien planets, he immediately accepted the position with the blessings of his family. The Robinsons moved during the spring of 1988 to Houston, where Alpha Control facilities were still under construction. John immediately became deeply involved with the program, and his assistance on the study eventually led to the successful design, construction, and launching in December, 1988, of the Deep Thrust Telescopic Probe series of ships, one of which would eventually prove Alpha Centauri's ability to sustain human life.

Robinson stayed with Alpha Control after the project was completed, and he was given a position in the Colonization Studies Division. With his interests in the space program it was only natural that he would be enthusiastic over the prospects of a colonization mission. This same enthusiasm quickly rubbed off on Maureen, who had similar interests, especially after their move to Houston. Despite her reservations about exposing her family to the possible dangers of such a flight, John eventually convinced her that they should volunteer for the mission once the time came to select a crew.

Alpha Control announced to the general public in February of 1993 that they would begin taking applications from qualified families.<sup>1</sup> The selection process, lasting over four months, ended on June 1 when it was announced that the Robinson family would be on the Jupiter 2 when it left on Earth's first colonization mission. John, Maureen, and the three Robinson children would spend the next four years training for the mission, and would leave Earth on October 16, 1997.

### **AFTER THE LAUNCH**

John Robinson did not include a large amount of information pertaining to himself in the Jupiter 2 log books. However, he did admit that the strain of leading the mission, as well as the responsibility for the lives of everyone aboard the Jupiter 2, at times pressed his leadership abilities to the limit, particularly during the first few weeks after liftoff. During this time there were some personality clashes between himself and Major West, with one incident nearly ending in the death of the young pilot. This near-disaster seemed to bring John back into line and he and West were to remain good friends thereafter.

Since then, John has proved to be an excellent choice for leader of the pioneer expedition. Although he has still not been able to reach the original destination of Alpha Centauri, his intelligence, experience, and quick thinking under even the most adverse conditions has kept the Jupiter 2 expedition safe and sound. Under his leadership it only seems to be a matter of time before the crew reaches its final destination.

1. The actual selection of the first family in space was largely used to generate publicity for the Alpha Control program. The organization knew that there were probably less than a dozen families in the U.S. that could qualify for the flight, yet the announcement that they were taking applications for the mission resulted in an incredible response. The attitude of Alpha Control authorities - at least on an official basis - was that since the average citizen was paying for the flight, each person should have an opportunity to apply to go on the mission. But while every application was processed, only a handful were actually considered.