



The Alpha Control Reference Manual

Biography: Donald West

Vital Statistics

Birthplace:	New York, New York	Eyes:	Hazel
Birthdate:	July 24, 1973	Hair:	Brown
Height:	6'	Rank:	Major
Weight:	160 pounds	Likes:	Flying, cars, contact sports, boxing

Donald West was born on July 24, 1973, the sixth child of a recently retired Air Force pilot, Col. Mark West, and his wife Doreen. Don grew up in the sprawling city of New York, and had a normal childhood with above average grades at Robert G. Ingersoll High School in Brooklyn.

While an apt student, Don found classroom work, for the most part, boring and monotonous. He was far more content playing sports, whether it be football, baseball, or basketball. He also developed a great love for aircraft (no doubt influenced by his father's avocation), and had earned his pilots license by the age of eighteen. Mark West, a veteran with twenty years of flying experience, considered his son to be a natural-born pilot, one of the best he had ever seen.

Besides his great enthusiasm for anything related to aviation, Don was caught up, as were many Americans at the time, in the revived interest in the space program. This was primarily due to the advancements in technology made in the early 1980's, when practical, large-scale space travel appeared possible for the first time. By the age of sixteen, Don had made the decision to try to be accepted into the Air Force Academy, and he resolved to work harder in school to receive the grades necessary for entrance into the elite university. During his senior year at high school, Don was offered a scholarship to an architectural college in Detroit. While he had shown some interest in the subject at one time, the talented pilot did not seriously consider the offer.

With the sponsorship of his congressman, Don was accepted by the Academy in the fall of 1991. With two years of R.O.T.C. training in high school behind him, he received the rank of second lieutenant upon entering the school. Don completed the regular training required by the Academy in a special three-year program designed for officers seeking entrance into the United States Space Corps. With a Bachelor of Science degree earned from the Academy, Don was transferred to the USSC Pilot Training Center in Houston. Lieutenant West displayed his incredible flying abilities both in simulators and advanced jet trainers at the center, and the combination of aviation skill and high grades allowed for a rapid promotion to captain in 1995, at the age of twenty-two.

By the end of 1994, Don and nineteen other trainees had been chosen as pilots for the colonization program. The person chosen as best-suited for the mission would pilot the first Gemini/Jupiter series ship sent to one of four potential colonization locations (with Alpha Centauri being the eventual choice). It should be noted that this was barely a year after the destruction of the Jupiter 1 and the death of the crew and passengers. The twenty volunteers to the Alpha Control mission showed considerable courage in joining the program when considering the potential dangers involved. But Don, like the other pilots, considered the risk to be minimal in comparison to the importance of the mission.

During his first semester in the Astronaut Training Program, Don met young and beautiful Judy Robinson. When time permitted,

Don had always dated, and with his sharp wit and good looks, he had few problems in finding companionship. But, despite a five year age difference, he found himself very attracted to her, and before long the two were spending most of their spare time together.

Don and Judy continued dating while in training at the Center; however, their close relationship posed problems for the Robinson family. Everyone at the school was well aware of the fact that John Robinson would have a considerable amount of influence in deciding who the mission pilot would be. With Don's reputation as a "go getter", and the resentment of his rapid promotion on the part of some of the more-experienced pilots, it was only natural that there would be rumors that Don was using Judy to make sure that he was chosen for the mission. While this certainly was not the case, John had to remain impartial to all of the pilots, including Don. Not only did the success of the mission depend on the right choice, but the Robinsons might be staking their very lives on the pilot's flying abilities should an emergency arise while en route to the planet. With the rumors circulating at the Center, the relationship between Don and the elder Robinson was usually strained, a situation not fully resolved until their first weeks on Priplanus. On a more personal note, Maureen was also not comfortable with Don and Judy's relationship. Judy was inexperienced and had led a sheltered life, and Don's reputation with women on the USSC campus, while not entirely deserved, did not sit well with Maureen. This, and the age difference between the couple, made Maureen uneasy about the two being close until well after the landing on Priplanus.

It is well known by now that Don, who was promoted to major by the time of the launch, was chosen as the pilot of the Jupiter 2, despite some protests from several of the losing pilots who felt that Robinson's decision was biased because of Don's relationship with his daughter. But John felt that Don was the best, most talented man for the job, regardless of the complications he knew his decision would bring. Don's assignment as the primary choice for Jupiter 2 pilot was announced on June 2, 1997, along with the choice of backup pilots: Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Bryce of Tuscon, Arizona; and Major James "Red" Miles of Leavittsburg, Ohio. Four and a half months later, on October 16, 1997, Don left Earth with the Robinson family aboard the Jupiter 2.

AFTER THE LAUNCH

Since leaving Earth, Don has proven on many occasions his ability to pilot the spaceship (made necessary prematurely because of the sabotage of the Jupiter 2). His rocky relationship with John Robinson was further strained by the difficult decisions made necessary during their first few weeks on Priplanus, but the situation rapidly worked out and Don was accepted as a member of the family. There is no doubt that John made the correct decision when he chose the brash but highly-qualified Major Donald West as the pilot of Earth's first colonization vehicle.

USSC staff psychologist and environmental expert, and USSC