Gus Grissom piloted the Liberty Bell 7 spacecraft - the second and final suborbital Mercury test flight - on July 21, 1961. This flight lasted 15 minutes and 37 seconds, attained an altitude of 118 statute miles, and traveled 302 miles downrange from the launch pad at Cape Kennedy. On March 23, 1965, he served as command pilot on the first manned Gemini flight, a three-orbit mission during which the crew accomplished the first orbital trajectory modifications and the first lifting reentry of a manned spacecraft. Subsequent to this assignment, he served as backup command pilot for Gemini 6. Grissom was named to serve as command pilot for the AS-204 mission, the first three-man Apollo flight. Lt. Colonel Grissom died Jan. 27, 1967, in the Apollo spacecraft flash fire during a launch pad test at Kennedy Space Center, Florida.

“If we die, we want people to accept it. We’re in a risky business, and we hope that if anything happens to us it will not delay the program. The conquest of space is worth the risk of life.”


TWIN VALLEY USD 240
107 N. Nelson St.
Bennington, Kansas
Superintendent: Fred Van Ranken

ELEMENARY SCHOOL:
Tescott Grade School
305 N. Minnesota
Tescott, Kansas
Principal: Steven Kimmi

SECONDARY SCHOOL:
Bennington Junior-Senior High School
301 N. Putnam
Bennington, Kansas
Principal: Curtis Nightingale

- Gus Grissom’s full name was Virgil Ivan Grissom.
- He grew up in the small Midwestern town of Mitchell, Indiana.
- He was too short to participate in high school sports. However, he found a niche for himself in a local Boy Scout troop, where he eventually became a leader.
- To earn spending money as a child, Grissom delivered newspapers twice a day throughout the year.