

ASTRONAUT BIOGRAPHY



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

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Jessica Wittner

(Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy) NASA Astronaut

Summary:

Jessica Wittner was selected by NASA to join the 2021 Astronaut Candidate Class. She reports for duty in January 2022. She previously had a distinguished career serving on active duty as a U.S. naval aviator and test pilot. A California native, she holds a bachelor's in aerospace engineering from the University of Arizona, Tucson, and a master's in aerospace engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Wittner was commissioned as a naval officer through an enlisted-to-officer commissioning program, and has served operationally flying F/A-18s with VFA-34 in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and VFA-151 in Lemoore, California. A graduate of U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, she also worked as a test pilot and project officer with VX-31 in China Lake, California.

Personal Data:

Wittner was born in Fresno, California and considers Clovis, California, to be her hometown. Her mother and father still reside in Clovis. Her husband, Timothy Wittner, is from Camas, Washington. She enjoys outdoor activities, riding motorcycles, learning new skills, and exploring hard-to-reach places on long overlanding trips.

Education:

Graduated Buchanan High School in Clovis, California, in 2001. U.S. Navy Aviation Machinist Mate A-School, Pensacola, Florida, 2002. Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering, University of Arizona, 2009. U.S. Naval Test Pilot School (Class 150), Patuxent River, Maryland, 2016. Master of Science in Engineering Science (Aerospace Engineering), U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 2018. Naval Command and Staff Graduate, U.S. Naval War College, 2021.

Experience:

Wittner enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2001 as an aviation machinist mate where she worked as an aircraft mechanic prior to acceptance in the Navy's Seaman-to-Admiral-21 Commissioning Program in 2006. She earned her commission after graduating from the University of Arizona in 2009. She attended U.S. Navy flight training in Pensacola, Florida, and earned her wings of gold in Meridian, Mississippi, in 2011. After completing the F/A-18C flight syllabus in Virginia Beach, Virginia, she was assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-34, the Blue Blasters, where she completed multiple mission-based training cycles and an international Rim-of-the-Pacific exercise onboard the USS Ronald Regan. She was later selected to attend U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in Patuxent River, Maryland, as part of Class 150. Upon graduation, she was a test pilot and project officer with Test and Evaluation Squadron VX-31, the Dust Devils, in China Lake, California. She led multiple engineering teams in the development and flight test of mission-critical capabilities for the F/A-18E-F Super Hornet. Wittner was later reassigned to the Staff of Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9) in Lemoore, California, as the assistant operations officer and test liaison. Off-duty, she completed the Command and Staff Course with the U.S. Naval War College. At the time of her selection, Wittner was assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-151, the Vigilantes, as a department head.

NASA Experience:

Wittner was selected as a NASA astronaut candidate in December 2021 and reported for duty in January 2022 to complete two years of initial astronaut training.

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Awards/Honors:

Military Excellence Award (U.S. Navy Boot Camp Honor Grad), 2001; U.S. Navy Aviation Machinist Mate School Honor Grad, 2002; Junior Sailor of the Year, VFA-106, 2003; Magna cum laude, University of Arizona, 2009; VX-31 Test Pilot of the Year, 2018; Naval Test Wing Pacific Test Pilot of the Year, 2018; F/A-18 & EA-18G Program Manager's Wingman Award (PMA-265), 2019; Team Warfighter Support Award, Naval Air Weapons Center China Lake, 2019. Military decorations include three Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals and three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals.

Organizations:

Tailhook Association Member. National Outdoor Leadership School Alumni.