

# NASA ARMSTRONG

A group of approximately 20 men, likely NASA Armstrong employees, are posed in two rows in front of a large aircraft. They are wearing light-colored flight suits with NASA patches. The aircraft behind them has several circular portholes visible along its fuselage. The overall image has a dark, monochromatic aesthetic.

*How We Got Our  
CALL SIGNS*

1  
00:00:00,260 --> 00:00:02,260

[Music/Jets flying]

2  
00:00:02,320 --> 00:00:07,910

>>Well pilot call signs are kind of the nickname that you end up getting with your squadron

3  
00:00:07,910 --> 00:00:10,730

or the group of flyers that you fly with.

4  
00:00:10,730 --> 00:00:14,160

>>You can have a lot of different ranks flying together; instead of having to call someone

5  
00:00:14,160 --> 00:00:19,060

sir or lieutenant colonel so-and-so, they can call them their call sign.

6  
00:00:19,060 --> 00:00:26,009

>>How you can get a call sign is one of two ways- it can either be a natural fit to your

7  
00:00:26,009 --> 00:00:30,609

last name or your first name, or a combination thereof, or the other way you can get a call

8  
00:00:30,609 --> 00:00:36,000

sign is by doing something really dumb.

9  
00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:41,580

[Music]

10  
00:00:43,440 --> 00:00:49,480

>>Mine have never necessarily stuck; I've had several throughout the years; one of the reasons

11  
00:00:49,480 --> 00:00:55,219

I don't really have a call sign that sticks is because I go by my middle name and it is

12  
00:00:55,219 --> 00:01:00,370  
relatively unique, unless you're in Sweden  
or Norway, so because of that everybody thinks

13  
00:01:00,370 --> 00:01:04,309  
it's a call sign but it's really my name.

14  
00:01:04,309 --> 00:01:05,500  
>>My call sign is Ringo.

15  
00:01:05,500 --> 00:01:08,490  
It's just basically a play on my last name  
of Ringelberg.

16  
00:01:08,490 --> 00:01:12,531  
It's easier than saying Ringelberg, so it's  
kind of one that sort of stuck with me- and

17  
00:01:12,531 --> 00:01:14,720  
it wasn't because I screwed anything up.

18  
00:01:14,720 --> 00:01:21,250  
>>I showed up to lead-in fighter training in  
the Air Force at Holloman Air Force Base,

19  
00:01:21,250 --> 00:01:25,730  
and I walked up to the duty desk to report  
in and one of the instructors there took a

20  
00:01:25,730 --> 00:01:31,550  
look at my last name, got on the PA and said  
'all available pilots report to the duty desk'.

21  
00:01:31,550 --> 00:01:36,580  
They came up with Clue, making me Clue Less.

22  
00:01:36,580 --> 00:01:38,580  
[Music]

23

00:01:38,729 --> 00:01:40,439

>>My call sign is Trasher.

24

00:01:40,439 --> 00:01:42,130

When I was a kid, that was a nickname.

25

00:01:42,130 --> 00:01:46,729

I got into the military and became an Air Force pilot, that nickname came back as a

26

00:01:46,729 --> 00:01:51,390

nickname, but it was never really earned and I had a couple of other call signs along the

27

00:01:51,390 --> 00:01:52,850

way.

28

00:01:52,850 --> 00:01:58,869

But one particular incident, I was flying B-1 bombers up in South Dakota; now a B-1

29

00:01:58,869 --> 00:02:02,850

bomber has four great big engines that put out a lot of thrust, it's not something you

30

00:02:02,850 --> 00:02:04,270

want to stand behind.

31

00:02:04,270 --> 00:02:08,460

As we were taxiing out for a flight one day, I had a problem with the aircraft and had

32

00:02:08,460 --> 00:02:09,460

to stop.

33

00:02:09,460 --> 00:02:13,220

And while I had stopped, the young airman who had been marshaling me out of my parking

34  
00:02:13,220 --> 00:02:16,370  
spot thought he was finished and so he began  
to walk off.

35  
00:02:16,370 --> 00:02:20,780  
He errantly walked behind the airplane, which  
was ok at the time as I was stopped with the

36  
00:02:20,780 --> 00:02:25,230  
power in idle, but as I got my problem fixed  
and started to roll forward again, I pushed

37  
00:02:25,230 --> 00:02:30,030  
up the power; literally picked him up off  
his feet and blew him down the concrete ramp

38  
00:02:30,030 --> 00:02:31,480  
about one hundred yards.

39  
00:02:31,480 --> 00:02:38,200  
Fortunately, he was ok and just had some road  
rash and cuts and bruises and tore up his

40  
00:02:38,200 --> 00:02:42,601  
uniform, so I had to buy him a case of beer  
and a new uniform and after that my call sign

41  
00:02:42,601 --> 00:02:46,520  
was cemented in as Trasher, and remains that  
to this day.

42  
00:02:46,520 --> 00:02:49,820  
[Music]

43  
00:02:49,940 --> 00:02:54,430  
>>My call sign is Gucci, it's not the coolest  
or the most macho call sign that a guy would

44

00:02:54,430 --> 00:02:58,320

look for, so, I had no choice in it, and I haven't been able to get rid of it.

45

00:02:58,320 --> 00:03:03,870

I was flying KC-10 tankers; then I applied for the high-altitude U-2 program, when I

46

00:03:03,870 --> 00:03:09,260

arrived there, the first question that everybody had for me was why would you leave a nice

47

00:03:09,260 --> 00:03:14,980

comfortable job like that, nice big airplane that has perfect air conditioning, it's 72

48

00:03:14,980 --> 00:03:20,650

degrees, coffee makers, ovens, refrigerators, nice comfortable seat, to come put a spacesuit

49

00:03:20,650 --> 00:03:22,430

on and live in a cramped little capsule?

50

00:03:22,430 --> 00:03:27,010

So the KC-10 guys were nicknamed the Gucci Boys by the rest of the Air Force, because

51

00:03:27,010 --> 00:03:32,320

they only went to big airports around the world, five-star hotels, things like that,

52

00:03:32,320 --> 00:03:35,210

because you couldn't put that big airplane just anywhere.

53

00:03:35,210 --> 00:03:40,230

And so they said hey why would a Gucci Boy want to come to this kind of lifestyle, and

54

00:03:40,230 --> 00:03:41,340

that's when it kind of stuck.

55

00:03:41,340 --> 00:03:45,790

There is, you know, rumors out there that have run around historically that maybe I

56

00:03:45,790 --> 00:03:51,900

pay too much attention to my clothes or my hair or the Maserati or stuff like that, but

57

00:03:51,900 --> 00:03:55,290

that really has nothing to do with the call sign and the way it was awarded.

58

00:03:55,290 --> 00:04:00,340

So unfortunately you get stuck with it, I'd like to have something more cool like Maverick

59

00:04:00,340 --> 00:04:05,930

or Sharpshooter or something but it doesn't work that way, I got Gucci, so it's all about

60

00:04:05,930 --> 00:04:10,440

leather shoes and handbags and I can't change that.

61

00:04:10,440 --> 00:04:11,540

[Music]

62

00:04:11,540 --> 00:04:20,440

>>I'm a brand new combat wingman in the F-15 in Japan, it's my first war exercise, so it's

63

00:04:20,440 --> 00:04:23,530

like day 1 as a brand new wingman.

64

00:04:23,530 --> 00:04:28,320

We're gonna take off and go fly a night mission, and right before take-off, we have to get

65  
00:04:28,320 --> 00:04:32,110  
our orders from a secure radio to headquarters.

66  
00:04:32,110 --> 00:04:36,900  
And my flight lead checks me in on the secure  
radio, and I can't figure out how to make

67  
00:04:36,900 --> 00:04:41,350  
it work, because I've never seen it before,  
I'm looking down at this panel that has XYZ,

68  
00:04:41,350 --> 00:04:44,310  
ABC, and I don't now what to do.

69  
00:04:44,310 --> 00:04:50,030  
There's no on/off button so I do my best and  
am not on the radio frequency.

70  
00:04:50,030 --> 00:04:55,770  
He gets the orders for us, we take-off together,  
fly our flight, come back in and land, once

71  
00:04:55,770 --> 00:05:00,490  
again I have a few moments to look down at  
this radio; I still can't get it to work,

72  
00:05:00,490 --> 00:05:04,430  
so once again I'm not on the radio with him,  
with headquarters.

73  
00:05:04,430 --> 00:05:10,310  
My flight lead saved that story until it was  
my naming night and because that radio is