

# Glenn, John Encyclopedia Article

## Glenn, John

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# Glenn, John

John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth during the Mercury 6 mission on February 20, 1962. In 1998, at the age of seventy-seven, Glenn returned to space.

## **American Astronaut and Senator 1921-**

Born in Cambridge, Ohio, on July 18, 1921, John Hershel Glenn, Jr., graduated with a bachelor of science degree in engineering from Muskingum College in 1942. Glenn has received nine honorary doctoral degrees from various colleges and universities.

Through the Naval Aviation Cadet Program, Glenn obtained a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943. He flew combat missions in World War II and the Korean War. After Korea, Glenn attended Navy test pilot school and joined the Naval Bureau of Aeronautics' Fighter Design Branch in Washington, D.C. In 1957 he set a transcontinental speed record, averaging supersonic speeds in flying from Los Angeles to New York.

In 1959 Glenn was chosen to be a member of the first group of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) astronauts. On February 20, 1962, he became the first American astronaut to orbit Earth aboard Mercury 6. In January 1963, Glenn specialized in the design and development of spacecraft and flight control systems for Project Apollo. He retired from NASA and the Marine Corps as a colonel in 1964 and was elected a U.S. senator from Ohio in November 1974.

On October 29, 1998, at the age of seventy-seven, Glenn returned to space aboard the space shuttle Discovery for a nine-day mission investigating, among other things, the relationship between spaceflight and the aging process.

## **See Also**

Aging Studies (Volume 1);; History of Humans in Space (Volume 3);; Mercury Program (Volume 3);; Space Shuttle (Volume 3).

## **Internet Resources**

*Astronaut Hall of Fame*. "John Glenn." U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, 1999.  
<[http://www.astronauts.org/astro\\_nauts/armstrong.htm](http://www.astronauts.org/astro_nauts/armstrong.htm)>.