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COMMEMORATION OF THE LATE U.S. SENATOR AND ASTRONAUT JOHN GLENN

Abstract

John Glenn gained his first hands-on experience as a pilot in the Korean War, during which he flew 63 combat missions. Right before the end of his service, Glenn was accepted to the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School. As a test pilot, he broke the record time for a flight from LA to New York. In 1959, after undergoing extensive physical and psychological tests as part of the recruiting process for NASA astronauts, he was selected as one of the Mercury Seven – the first class of American astronauts. In 1962, John Glenn made history as the first American to orbit the earth. This instantly established his place as a role model to countless children in America and around the world. With his experience and passion for the promotion of science and technology, he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Here he was able to use his influence to initiate bills for issues such as renewable energy and programs to help stimulate youth interest in science. Even as a Senator, Glenn couldn't resist another opportunity to travel to space. He flew to the ISS on space shuttle Discovery in 1998, late in his political career. John Glenn used his unique experience as one of the first humans to orbit our planet to help enrich the lives of as many people as he could by promoting education and shaping policy. In 2012, Glenn received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the U.S., for his contributions to the progression of space exploration and public policy as a Senator. This paper is a biographical investigation of Glenn's life of distinguished service to his country and the world, compiled to celebrate his memory and accomplishments.