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Guion Bluford

The first African American to go to space.



- Guion Stewart Bluford Jr. is an American aerospace engineer, retired U.S. Air Force officer and fighter pilot, and former NASA astronaut, who is the first African American and the second person of African descent to go to space. Guion Bluford was born September 22, 1942 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S

- “I felt an awesome responsibility, and I took the responsibility very seriously, of being a role model and opening another door to black Americans, but the important thing is not that I am black, but that I did a good job as a scientist and an astronaut. There will be black astronauts flying in later missions ... and they, too, will be people who excel, not simply who are black . . . who can ably represent their people, their communities, their country.” -Guion "Guy" Bluford





- after receiving his Air Force pilot wings, Bluford was assigned to the 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. As an F4C fighter pilot, he flew 144 combat missions in Southeast Asia. From 1967 to 1972, he was a T-38 instructor pilot at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas where he trained future U.S. Air Force and West German fighter pilots.



- Guion Bluford has been to space four times, logging nearly 700 hours in orbit as a mission specialist on the Space Shuttles Challenger and Discovery. He holds a PhD in aerospace engineering, with a minor in laser physics, from the Air Force Institute of Technology, and he has flown over 5,200 hours as a jet pilot. Guion Bluford died February 1st, 2003 when the space shuttle Columbia perished with its crew during reentry. Bluford was also the first African American to return to space a second, third, and fourth time when he flew on sts 61A in 1985, sts 39 in 1991, and sts 53 in 1992.

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- Guion earned honorary degrees from 14 universities, including Drexel University and University of the Sciences. Guion was Inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame in 1997 and U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2010.
 - Guion had received two-dozen awards and accolades for his years of service as a pilot and astronaut.
 - Guion was a part of the Tuskegee Airmen
 - Guion was Ranked colonel in U.S. Air Force before he started working for NASA
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