got beat John Graunt 48 years ago on February 20th 1962 NASA astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth when an Atlas rocket successfully carried his friendship 7 capsule into space. Glenn's three orbits of the planet assured in a new era in space travel paving the way for the Apollo astronauts to walk on the moon. Glenn was one of seven men chosen by NASA in 1959 to become the nation's first astronauts in its new human spaceflight program. The other Mercury 7 astronauts were Alan B. Shepard the first.
American in space Virgil Gus Grissom

scott Carpenter Wally schirra Gordon

Cooper and deke Slayton all but Slayton

is grounded by a heart condition would

fly a mercury mission Slayton finally

made it to space in 1975 on the

apollo-soyuz test project Glenn and

carpenter are the only surviving

original seven mercury astronauts