

A photograph of Scott Carpenter, a Mercury astronaut, speaking into a microphone. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a blue and white striped shirt, and a dark red tie. The background is a green wall with a grid pattern and some faint white markings, including the number '2'.

Scott Carpenter

Mercury Astronaut



1
00:00:01,510 --> 00:00:05,950
Music

2
00:00:05,950 --> 00:00:09,560
JOHN GLENN, Mercury Astronaut : "It's been 50 years, it's hard for me to believe that. It seems like just

3
00:00:09,560 --> 00:00:14,300
a couple of weeks ago to me because things were impressed so much at the time.

4
00:00:14,300 --> 00:00:18,570
The experiences of the flight have been recalled so often since that time."

5
00:00:18,570 --> 00:00:23,190
NARRATOR: Mercury astronaut John Glenn returned to NASA's Kennedy Space Center for a weekend of

6
00:00:23,190 --> 00:00:27,680
celebrations marking 50 years of Americans in orbit.

7
00:00:27,680 --> 00:00:32,650
During the events, Glenn and fellow Mercury astronaut Scott Carpenter, the second American

8
00:00:32,650 --> 00:00:38,710
to orbit the planet, told crowds of current workers, news media members and a couple of today's astronauts

9
00:00:38,710 --> 00:00:41,380
about their adventures.

10
00:00:41,380 --> 00:00:45,890
GLENN: "Would your eye balls change shape, that was one of the concerns, and the little

11
00:00:45,890 --> 00:00:51,290
miniature eye chart is still on Friendship 7 in the Smithsonian up there in Washington."

12
00:00:51,290 --> 00:00:57,700
SCOTT CARPENTER, Mercury Astronaut: "There were a lot of unknowns in the early days of spaceflight.

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00:00:57,700 --> 00:01:05,630

Some turned out to be important, some turned out to be unimportant."

14

00:01:05,630 --> 00:01:11,750

NARRATOR: Glenn made three orbits of Earth during his mission on Feb. 20, 1962.

15

00:01:11,750 --> 00:01:16,880

Carpenter followed three months later with a similar mission that continued to prove that people could

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00:01:16,880 --> 00:01:23,110

operate in orbit. With those fledgling steps completed, the space agency continued making large

17

00:01:23,110 --> 00:01:29,340

strides into space, including the giant leaps to the surface of the moon seven years after Glenn began

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00:01:29,340 --> 00:01:32,240

America's orbital exploration.

19

00:01:32,240 --> 00:01:36,060

Glenn and Carpenter undertook different adventures following their flights.

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00:01:36,060 --> 00:01:43,210

Glenn served in the U.S. Senate while Carpenter charted a new career researching the underwater world.

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00:01:43,210 --> 00:01:48,720

Glenn returned to NASA in 1998, for a research mission aboard space shuttle Discovery that

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00:01:48,720 --> 00:01:57,080

lasted more than eight days. By comparing his body's reactions to microgravity with information

23

00:01:57,080 --> 00:02:03,250

from his first years with NASA, scientists could better judge some aspects of the aging process.

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00:02:03,250 --> 00:02:09,350

For both Mercury astronauts, their flights of the 1960s opened an era of space exploration that

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00:02:09,350 --> 00:02:15,450

continues to inspire Americans and produce technological innovations on Earth.

26

00:02:15,450 --> 00:02:19,120

GLENN: "And what have we done in the space program? We have 16 nations working together,