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CANADIAN WORLD EXHIBITION, MONTREAL, 1967
800 VICTORIA SQUARE, SUITE 2022
MONTREAL 3, P.Q., CANADA

Platform A

Mercury Spacecraft "Freedom 7"
Astronaut Alan B. Shepard
May 5, 1961

Project Mercury was the first phase of the U.S. Space Program. It became an official program of N A S A on November 26, 1958, and proved that men could be sent into space and returned safely to earth.

The one-man Mercury spacecraft was designed and built with a maximum orbiting weight of about 3,200 pounds. Shaped somewhat like a bell (truncated cone), the craft is 74.5 inches wide across the bottom and about 9 feet tall. The astronaut escape tower on the top added another 17 feet for an overall length of approximately 26 feet at launch. Two boosters were chosen — the Army's Redstone (78,000 lbs. thrust) and Air Force's Atlas (360,000 lbs. thrust) — for suborbital and orbital flights, respectively.

On May 5, 1961, Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr., made the first U.S. manned space flight in the spacecraft shown here on Platform A. It was named the "Freedom 7".

The Mercury Program consisted of 9 flights, six of them manned. The second flight in the Mercury Program was on July 21, 1961, when the "Liberty Bell 7" was launched with Astronaut Virgil I. Grisson at the controls.

The succeeding Mercury flights became manned orbital missions beginning with Astronaut John H. Glenn Jr., in the "Friendship 7", who completed 3 orbits on February 20, 1962.

May 24, 1962, Astronaut Scott Carpenter in "Aurora 7" completed a second 3 orbit flight.

October 3, 1962, Astronaut Walter M. Schirra Jr., orbited 6 times in the "Sigma 7".

Finally, on May 15-16, 1963, Astronaut L. Gordon Cooper, Jr., in his "Faith 7" completed a 22-orbit mission of 34½ hours. This was a triumphant conclusion of the Project Mercury phase of the Space Program and opened the way to the second phase, Project Gemini.