

THE OUTRAGEOUS TALES OF A  
SPACE-LOVER'S NIGHTMARE

# RIDING ROCKETS

BY RICHARD MANN ROLLAND

There is only one thing better than  
riding a rocket:  
riding a rocket  
that is also a rocket.  
— RICHARD MANN ROLLAND



# Riding Rockets The Outrageous Tales Of A Space Shuttle Astronaut

**R. Mike Mullane**



## **Riding Rockets The Outrageous Tales Of A Space Shuttle Astronaut:**

*Riding Rockets* Mike Mullane, 2006-02-14 On February 1 1978 the first group of space shuttle astronauts twenty nine men and six women were introduced to the world Among them would be history makers including the first American woman and the first African American in space This assembly of astronauts would carry NASA through the most tumultuous years of the space shuttle program Four would die on Challenger USAF Colonel Mike Mullane was a member of this astronaut class and *Riding Rockets* is his story told with a candor never before seen in an astronaut's memoir Mullane strips the heroic veneer from the astronaut corps and paints them as they are human His tales of arrested development among military flyboys working with feminist pioneers and post doc scientists are sometimes bawdy often hilarious and always entertaining Mullane vividly portrays every aspect of the astronaut experience from telling a female technician which urine collection condom size is a fit to walking along a Florida beach in a last tearful goodbye with a spouse to a wild intoxicating terrifying ride into space to hearing Taps played over a friend's grave Mullane is brutally honest in his criticism of a NASA leadership whose bungling would precipitate the Challenger disaster *Riding Rockets* is a story of life in all its fateful uncertainty of the impact of a family tragedy on a nine year old boy of the revelatory effect of a machine called Sputnik and of the life steering powers of lust love and marriage It is a story of the human experience that will resonate long after the call of Wheel stop **Riding Rockets R.**

Mike Mullane, 2006 A revealing memoir of the astronaut's career with the space shuttle program describes his childhood dreams after the launch of Sputnik work as a Mission Specialist in the first group of shuttle astronauts and hundreds of hours spent aboard the Discovery and Atlantis 60 000 first printing **NASA's First Space Shuttle Astronaut Selection** David J. Shayler, Colin Burgess, 2020-07-10 Unofficially they called themselves the TFNG or the Thirty Five New Guys Officially they were NASA's Group 8 astronauts selected in January 1978 to train for orbital missions aboard the Space Shuttle Prior to this time only pilots or scientists trained as pilots had been assigned to fly on America's spacecraft but with the advent of the innovative winged spacecraft the door was finally opened to non pilots including women and minorities In all 15 of those selected were categorised as Pilot Astronauts while the other 20 would train under the new designation of Mission Specialist Altogether the Group 8 astronauts would be launched on a total of 103 space missions some flying only once while others flew into orbit as many as five times Sadly four of their number would perish in the Challenger tragedy in January 1986 In their latest collaborative effort the authors bring to life the amazing story behind the selection of the first group of Space Shuttle astronauts examining their varied backgrounds and many accomplishments in a fresh and accessible way through deep research and revealing interviews Throughout its remarkable 30 year history as the workhorse of NASA's human spaceflight exploration twice halted through tragedy the Shuttle fleet performed with magnificence So too did these 35 men and women swept up in the dynamic thrust and ongoing development of America's Space Shuttle program This book on the Group 8 Astronauts the TFNGs is an excellent summation of the individuals first selected for the new Space Shuttle Program

It provides insight into what it took to first get the Space Shuttle flying For any space enthusiast it is a must read Robert L Crippen PLT on STS 1 As a reader I had many moments where long lost memories of the triumph and tragedy of the space shuttle program were brilliantly reawakened at the turn of a page Loved it This is a must have book for every space enthusiast s library TFNG Mission Specialist Astronaut Richard Mike Mullane author of *Riding Rockets The Outrageous Tales of a Space Shuttle Astronaut* Many of the anecdotes in the book brought back memories of challenges opportunities and a team of men and women who were committed not just to the space program but to one another I ve gone back to it several times as a reference source TFNG Steve Hawley 5 time Space Shuttle Mission Specialist Astronaut The TFNG book is incredible and amazingly thorough The detail in the book is awesome It is my go to book for any of the details I ve forgotten TFNG Dr Rhea Seddon 3 time Space Shuttle Mission Specialist Astronaut I can t believe how detailed and complete it is FANTASTIC work TFNG Robert L Hoot Gibson 5 time Space Shuttle Pilot Commander and former Chief of the NASA Astronaut Office

*Riding Rockets* Mike Mullane, 2007-02-06 Selected as a Mission Specialist in 1978 in the first group of shuttle astronauts Mike Mullane completed three missions and logged 356 hours aboard the Discovery and Atlantis shuttles It was a dream come true As a boy Mullane could only read about space travel in science fiction but the launch of Sputnik changed all that Space flight became a possible dream and Mike Mullane set out to make it come true In this absorbing memoir Mullane gives the first ever look into the often hilarious sometime volatile dynamics of space shuttle astronauts a class that included Vietnam War veterans feminists and propeller headed scientists With unprecedented candour Mullane describes the chilling fear and unparalleled joy of space flight As his career centred around the Challenger disaster Mullane also recounts the heartache of burying his friends and colleagues And he pulls no punches as he reveals the ins and outs of NASA frank in his criticisms of the agency A blast from start to finish *Riding Rockets* is a straight from the gut account of what it means to be an astronaut just in time for this latest generation of stargazers **Assembly** West Point Association of Graduates (Organization)., 2005

*Space Shuttles* Serena Vaughn, AI, 2025-03-05 *Space Shuttles* explores the ambitious Space Shuttle program a cornerstone of space exploration and aerospace engineering This book examines the design operation and lasting impact of these spacecraft which facilitated crucial missions like the deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope The book highlights how the Space Shuttle program despite its complexities significantly advanced our capabilities in orbital mechanics and spacecraft design Did you know that the Space Shuttle program spanned from the 1970s to 2011 leaving a rich legacy of technological innovation The book offers a detailed overview of the Space Shuttle program beginning with fundamental concepts of spaceflight and then delving into the specifics of the Orbiter Solid Rocket Boosters and External Tank It covers mission profiles including satellite deployment and the construction of the International Space Station providing a balanced perspective by addressing both successes and tragedies The book uses technical documentation from NASA mission reports and astronaut accounts to support its analysis offering a unique look into the program s intricate

operations The book progresses methodically ensuring accessibility for a broad audience interested in science and technology *Inventing the American Astronaut* Matthew H. Hersch, 2012-10-08 Who were the men who led America's first expeditions into space Soldiers Daredevils The public sometimes imagined them that way heroic military men and hot shot pilots without the capacity for doubt fear or worry However early astronauts were hard working and determined professionals organization men who were calm calculating and highly attuned to the politics and celebrity of the Space Race Many would have been at home in corporate America and until the first rockets carried humans into space some seemed to be headed there Instead they strapped themselves to missiles and blasted skyward returning with a smile and an inspiring word for the press From the early days of Project Mercury to the last moon landing this lively history demystifies the American astronaut while revealing the warring personalities raw ambition and complex motives of the men who were the public face of the space program *Tragedy and Triumph in Orbit* Ben Evans, 2012-06-01 April 12 2011 is the 50th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's pioneering journey into space To commemorate this momentous achievement Springer Praxis is producing a mini series of books that reveals how humanity's knowledge of flying working and living in space has grown in the last half century *Tragedy and Triumph* focuses on the 1980s and early 1990s a time when relations between the United States and the Soviet Union swung like a pendulum between harmony and outright hostility The glorious achievements of the shuttle were violently arrested by the devastating loss of Challenger in 1986 while the Soviet program appeared to prosper with the last Salyut and the next generation Mir orbital station This book explores the continued rivalry between the two superpowers during this period with each attempting to outdo the other the Americans keen to build a space station the Soviets keen to build a space shuttle and places their efforts in the context of a bitterly divisive decade which ultimately led them into partnership *Come Fly with Us* Melvin Croft, John Youskauskas, 2019-02-01 Winner of the 2020 Space Hipsters Prize for Best Book in Astronomy Space Exploration or Space History *Come Fly with Us* is the story of an elite group of space travelers who flew as members of many space shuttle crews from pre Challenger days to Columbia in 2003 Not part of the regular NASA astronaut corps these professionals known as payload specialists came from a wide variety of backgrounds and were chosen for an equally wide variety of scientific political and national security reasons Melvin Croft and John Youskauskas focus on this special fraternity of spacefarers and their individual reflections on living and working in space Relatively unknown to the public and often flying only single missions these payload specialists give the reader an unusual perspective on the experience of human spaceflight The authors also bring to light NASA's struggle to integrate the wide ranging personalities and professions of these men and women into the professional astronaut ranks While *Come Fly with Us* relates the experiences of the payload specialists up to and including the Challenger tragedy the authors also detail the later high profile flights of a select few including Barbara Morgan John Glenn who returned to space at the age of seventy seven and Ilan Ramon of Israel aboard Columbia on its final fatal flight STS 107 Purchase the audio edition **Amazing Stories**

**Spring 2019** Amazing Stories, Amazing Stories the home of Jules Verne and H G Wells publisher of the first stories of Ursula K Leguin and Isaac Asimov is back in print after an absence of more than a decade This relaunch of the iconic first science fiction magazine is packed full of exciting science fiction fantasy and articles all in a beautiful package featuring eye catching illustrations and cartoons The Amazing Stories Spring 2019 issue the 616th issue since 1926 includes work by Darrell Schweitzer Jack Clemons R S Belcher Marie Bilodeau Kathy Kitts Marc A Criley Matthew Timmins Sean Grigsby Rosemary Claire Smith Paul Levinson Tanya Karen Gough Elsa M Carruthers Shirley Meier Steve Fahnstalk Veronica Scott Continuing a 93 year history Amazing Stories returns as a print and digital publication      **Space Disasters** Mary B. Woods, Michael Woods, 2008-01-01 Imagine watching a space shuttle on the launchpad ready to blast off into orbit Astronauts have embarked on some of the most amazing adventures and made incredible discoveries Yet sadly some the most well planned launches have ended in tragedy In fifty years of space travel space disasters have claimed the lives of more than twenty astronauts and one hundred space workers In two of the worst disasters space shuttles exploded killing all the astronauts onboard With dramatic images and eyewitness accounts plus the latest facts and figures this book gives you a close up look at space disasters      The Penguin Book of Outer Space Exploration John Logsdon, 2018-09-11 The fascinating story of how NASA sent humans to explore outer space told through a treasure trove of historical documents publishing in celebration of NASA s 60th anniversary and with a foreword by Bill Nye An extremely useful and thought provoking documentary journey through the maze of space history There is no wiser or more experienced navigator through the twists and turns and ups and downs than John Logsdon James Hansen New York Times bestselling author of First Man now a feature film starring Ryan Gosling and Claire Foy Among all the technological accomplishments of the last century none has captured our imagination more deeply than the movement of humans into outer space From Sputnik to SpaceX the story of that journey including the inside history of our voyages to the moon depicted in First Man is told as never before in The Penguin Book of Outer Space Exploration Renowned space historian John Logsdon traces the greatest moments in human spaceflight by weaving together essential fascinating documents from NASA s history with his expert narrative guidance Beginning with rocket genius Wernher von Braun s vision for voyaging to Mars and closing with Elon Musk s contemporary plan to get there this volume traces major events like the founding of NASA the first American astronauts in space the Apollo moon landings the Challenger disaster the daring Hubble Telescope repairs and more In these pages we such gems as Eisenhower s reactions to Sputnik the original NASA astronaut application John Glenn s reflections on zero gravity Kennedy s directives to go to the moon discussions on what Neil Armstrong s first famous first words should be firsthands accounts of spaceflight and so much more      Dark Star Matthew H. Hersch, 2023-12-26 A captivating history of NASA s Space Transportation System the space shuttle chronicling the inevitable failures of a doomed design In Dark Star Matthew Hersch challenges the existing narrative of the most significant human space program of the last 50 years NASA s space shuttle He begins with the origins of the space shuttle a

century long effort to develop a low cost reusable rocket powered airplane to militarize and commercialize space travel which Hersch explains was built the wrong way at the wrong time and for all the wrong reasons Describing the unique circumstances that led to the space shuttle s creation by President Richard Nixon s administration in 1972 and its subsequent flights from 1981 through 2011 Hersch illustrates how the space shuttle was doomed from the start While most historians have accepted the view that the space shuttle s fatal accidents including the 1986 Challenger explosion resulted from deficiencies in NASA s management culture that lulled engineers into a false confidence in the craft Dark Star reveals the widespread understanding that the shuttle was predestined for failure as a technology demonstrator The vehicle was intended only to give the United States the appearance of a viable human spaceflight program until funds became available to eliminate its obvious flaws Hersch s work seeks to answer the perilous questions of technological choice that confront every generation and it is a critical read for anyone interested in how we can create a better world through the things we build

**Texas Women** Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Stephanie Cole, Rebecca Sharpless, 2015 This is a collection of biographies and composite essays of Texas women contextualized over the course of history to include subjects that reflect the enormous racial class and religious diversity of the state Offering insights into the complex ways that Texas position on the margins of the United States has shaped a particular kind of gendered experience there the volume also demonstrates how the larger questions in United States women s history are answered or reconceived in the state Beginning with Juliana Barr s essay which asserts that women marked the lines of dominion among Spanish and Indian nations in Texas and explodes the myth of Spanish domination in colonial Texas the essays examine the ways that women were able to use their borderland status to stretch the boundaries of their own lives Eric Walther demonstrates that the constant changing of governments in Texas Spanish Mexican Texan and U S gave slaves the opportunities to resist their oppression because of the differences in the laws of slavery under Spanish or English or American law Gabriela Gonzalez examines the activism of Jovita Idar on behalf of civil rights for Mexicans and Mexican Americans on both sides of the border Renee Laegreid argues that female rodeo contestants employed a unique regional interplay of masculine and feminine behaviors to shape their identities as cowgirls

**Amazing Stories Winter 2018** Amazing Stories, 2018-12-11 Amazing Stories the home of Jules Verne and H G Wells publisher of the first stories of Ursula K Leguin and Isaac Asimov is back in print after an absence of more than a decade This relaunch of the iconic first science fiction magazine is packed full of exciting science fiction fantasy and articles all in a beautiful package featuring eye catching illustrations and cartoons The Amazing Stories Winter 2018 issue the 615th issue since 1926 includes work by Allen M Steele Gary Dalkin Jack Clemons Lena Ng Marina J Lostetter Neal Holtschulte Daniel M Kimmel Jule Novakova G Scott Huggins Noah Chinn Vonnie Winslow Crist Steve Fahnestalk Shirley Meier

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NASA 50th Anniversary Proceedings: NASA's First 50 Years: Historical Perspectives Steven J. Dick, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2010-07-07 On 29 July 1958 President Dwight D Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA which became operational on 1 October of that year Over the next 50 years NASA achieved a set of spectacular feats ranging from advancing the well established field of aeronautics to pioneering the new fields of Earth and space science and human spaceflight In the midst of the geopolitical context of the Cold War 12 Americans walked on the Moon arriving in peace for all mankind Humans saw their home planet from a new perspective with unforgettable Apollo images of Earthrise and the Blue Marble as well as the pale blue dot from the edge of the solar system A flotilla of spacecraft has studied Earth while other spacecraft have probed the depths of the solar system and the universe beyond In the 1980s the evolution of aeronautics gave us the first winged human spacecraft the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station stands as a symbol of human cooperation in space as well as a possible way station to the stars With the Apollo fire and two Space Shuttle accidents NASA has also seen the depths of tragedy In this volume a wide array of scholars turn a critical eye toward NASA's first 50 years probing an institution widely seen as the premier agency for exploration in the world carrying on a long tradition of exploration by the United States and the human species in general Fifty years after its founding NASA finds itself at a crossroads that historical perspectives can only help to illuminate *Amazing Stories Fall/WorldCon 2018 Edition* Amazing Stories, 2018-08-15 Amazing Stories the home of Jules Verne and H G Wells publisher of the first stories of Ursula K LeGuin and Isaac Asimov is back in print after an absence of more than a decade This relaunch of the iconic first science fiction magazine is packed full of exciting science fiction fantasy and articles all in a beautiful package featuring eye catching illustrations and cartoons The Amazing Stories Fall 2018 issue the 614th issue since 1926 includes work by Robert Silverberg Jack Clemons Allen Steele Lawrence Watt Evans Rudy Rucker Dave Creek Shirley Meier Kameron Hurley Julie Czerneda Paul Levinson Drew Hayden Taylor Gary Dalkin Steve Fahnstalk Continuing a 92 year history Amazing Stories returns as a print and digital publication

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