



Roger Chaffee

S.S. Roger Chaffee

NG-11 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station

Northrop Grumman is honored to name the NG-11 Cygnus spacecraft after astronaut Roger B. Chaffee. It is the company's tradition to name each Cygnus spacecraft after an individual who has made a significant impact on the aerospace industry.

Roger Chaffee was born on February 15, 1935 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He earned a Bachelor of Science in aeronautical engineering from Purdue University before joining the Navy. He achieved the rank of lieutenant commander while serving as a safety and quality control officer for the Heavy Photography Squadron 62. Part of his duties included aerial reconnaissance of Cuba and one of his missions provided photographic evidence of the build-up of Soviet missiles. During his Navy service he logged more than 2,300 hours flying time, including more than 2,000 hours in a jet aircraft, and earned his Master of Science degree in reliability engineering.

After a series of rigorous psychological and physical examinations, Chaffee officially joined the astronaut corps in 1963. He trained as an astronaut for nearly two and a half years before he was named as a pilot for the first Apollo Earth-orbit mission along with Virgil "Gus" Grissom and Ed White II. He was the first to be selected to crew the inaugural flight of a brand new spacecraft – an exceptional accomplishment within an accomplished group.

The primary purpose of the Apollo I mission was to test and evaluate all major spacecraft systems as well as the ground tracking and control facilities. On January 27, 1967, Chaffee and crewmates entered their Apollo module for a countdown rehearsal of the launch. As the crew progressed through their simulated countdown a fire broke out inside the command module. All three astronauts died in the tragic accident.

Roger Chaffee was inducted into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame on October 4, 1997.

Although Chaffee never made it to space, his sacrifice inspired fellow and future astronauts to push the boundaries of spaceflight. In the 50 years since the Apollo 1 crew's tragedy, Americans have visited the moon, built a home on the International Space Station and have begun to plan extended trips through deep space to Mars as well as returning to the moon. Northrop Grumman is proud to celebrate the life of Roger Chaffee and his dream of human spaceflight.