



Francis R. "Dick" Scobee

S.S. Francis R. "Dick" Scobee

NG-21 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station

Northrop Grumman is proud to name the NG-21 Cygnus spacecraft in honor of astronaut Francis R. "Dick" Scobee. It is the company's tradition to name each Cygnus spacecraft after an individual who has made significant contributions to human spaceflight. Scobee was an astronaut, pilot and engineer who commanded the 1986 Challenger spacecraft during its ill-fated mission.

Dick Scobee was born in Cle Elum, Washington in 1937. In 1957 he enlisted in the United States Air Force as a reciprocating engine mechanic. During this time, he attended night school and completed two years of college, making him eligible for the Airman's Education and Commissioning Program, which he used to complete a bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Arizona.

In 1966, he obtained his pilot wings and shortly after served a tour of duty in Vietnam. When he returned, he was selected to attend the U.S. Air Force Aerospace Research Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Over the next several years, he served as a test pilot logging more than 6,500 hours flying time in 45 types of aircraft.

In 1978, Scobee was selected into NASA's astronaut candidate class, completing training in August 1979. In addition to his astronaut role, Scobee was an Instructor Pilot on the NASA/Boeing 747 shuttle carrier airplane.

In 1984, he was selected to fly as pilot of the STS 41-C mission during which Scobee logged 168 hours in space.

In 1986, he served as commander of the Challenger spacecraft for the STS 51-L mission. Shortly after launch, the vehicle experienced a fatal disaster, and he lost his life along with six other crew.

Scobee was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor in 2004, by President George W. Bush, for "meritorious and dedicated service to the nation and his pioneering contributions to human space flight."

Commander Scobee is memorialized all over the country, including at an exhibit at the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center and at Arlington National Cemetery where the seven Challenger crew members are honored for their incredible courage.