

SPACE DISCOVERY

FIRST TRAGEDY

APOLLO ASTRONAUTS DIE

Myths and Heroes

Cape Kennedy, Florida, January 27 1967. The three-man crew of astronauts for the Apollo 1 mission were killed tonight in a flash fire aboard the huge spacecraft designed to take man to the moon.

Those killed in the blaze on a launching pad were: 5

- VIRGIL I. GRISSOM, 40 years old, Air Force lieutenant colonel, one of the seven original Mercury astronauts.
- EDWARD H. WHITE 2d, 36, a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, the first American to "walk" in space. 10
- ROGER B. CHAFFEE, 31, a Navy lieutenant commander, who had been awaiting his first space flight.

The astronauts were the first American spacemen to be killed on the job and ironically, died while on the ground. The bodies were removed hours later and a space agency spokesman said death was "instantaneous." 15

Three other astronauts died in airplane crashes, in the line of duty, but today's tragedy involved the first "on premises" deaths in the American space program- the first time anyone was killed while in space hardware. 20

The New York Times, January 28, 1967

1. Introduce the document.
2. What happened.
 - Explain and give as much details as possible.
3. Who was killed?
4. Why is this tragedy so important for the NASA and the US?
5. What is ironical about their death?



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