

Francis Richard Scobee, Astronaut

Dick Scobee enlisted after high school and received training as a reciprocating engine mechanic, but he was driven by a desire to fly. After attending night school he was selected for the Airman's Education and Commissioning Program, through which he won a degree at the University of Arizona in aerospace engineering in 1965—making an officer's commission and pilot training possible. He was commissioned in 1965 and, a year later, received his wings. He completed a combat tour in Vietnam and went on to become a test pilot for the Air Force, logging more than 6,500 flight hours in 45 types of aircraft. In 1978, Scobee entered the NASA astronaut corps and made his first spaceflight in 1984 as the pilot of the shuttle Challenger. Scobee was the shuttle commander when, on Jan. 28, 1986, Challenger exploded on takeoff, killing all members of the crew.