

Stamp honors 1st American in space 50 years later

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In this image released by the USPS, Alan Shepard, left and the first spacecraft to orbit Mercury, are seen on the new Forever postage stamps to issued by the USPS on Wednesday, May 4, 2011, at the Kennedy Space Center. (AP Photo/USPS)

(AP) -- The first American in space, Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard, finally has his own stamp.

The Postal Service dedicated a [stamp](#) Wednesday to mark the 50th anniversary of Shepard's suborbital flight, Freedom 7. The ceremony took place at Kennedy Space Center on the eve of the anniversary.

Shepard's three daughters were there, as was Mercury astronaut Scott Carpenter. Carpenter told the crowd it's fitting that a Forever stamp was chosen to honor Shepard.

Carpenter says Shepard didn't like it that Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin beat him into [space](#) by less than a month. But he says the success of Shepard's flight on May 5, 1961, helped lead America to the [moon](#).

Shepard went on to command Apollo 14. He died in 1998.

More information: NASA:
<http://www.nasa.gov/50th>

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