

The United States, the International Geophysical Year, and the Origins of Space Exploration

The United States' entry into the space race was a direct result of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), a scientific collaboration that took place from 1957 to 1958. The IGY was designed to study the Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and polar regions, and it involved scientists from over 60 countries. The United States played a major role in the IGY, and its participation helped to lay the foundation for the country's future space program.



Deep Freeze: The United States, the International Geophysical Year, and the Origins of Antarctica's Age of Science

by Dian Olson Belanger

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Word Wise : Enabled
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Lending : Enabled



The IGY began in July 1957 with the launch of Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth. Sputnik 1 was a small, beeping sphere that weighed just 184 pounds, but it had a profound impact on the world.

Sputnik 1's launch demonstrated that the Soviet Union was capable of launching satellites into space, and it sparked a wave of fear and anxiety in the United States. Americans worried that the Soviets were on the verge of developing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that could be used to attack the United States.

In response to the launch of Sputnik 1, President Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA was tasked with developing America's space program and with overseeing the country's participation in the IGY. NASA quickly became a major player in the space race, and it played a key role in the development of the first American satellites and astronauts.

The first American satellite, Explorer 1, was launched into space in January 1958. Explorer 1 was a small, cylindrical satellite that weighed just 31 pounds. It carried a Geiger counter that detected radiation in the Earth's atmosphere. Explorer 1's launch was a major success, and it helped to restore American confidence in the space race.

The first American astronauts were launched into space in May 1961. Alan Shepard and Virgil Grissom became the first Americans to travel into space when they were launched into suborbital flights by a Redstone rocket. Shepard and Grissom's flights were followed by the launch of John Glenn, who became the first American to orbit the Earth in February 1962.

The United States' entry into the space race was a major turning point in the Cold War. The space race became a symbol of the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, and it helped to drive the development of new technologies and the expansion of human knowledge.

The United States' success in the space race also helped to boost American morale and to restore the country's confidence in its future.

The United States, the International Geophysical Year, and the Origins of Space Exploration is a fascinating and well-written book that tells the story of how the United States became a leader in space exploration. The book is full of interesting details and insights, and it is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the history of the space race.

Image Credits

- Sputnik 1 (NASA)
- Explorer 1 (NASA)
- Alan Shepard and Freedom 7 (NASA)
- John Glenn and Friendship 7 (NASA)



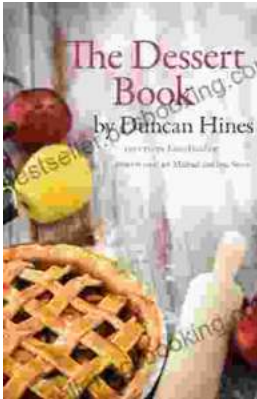
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