

The Tenth "Should Have Flown Shuttle" Astronaut – Chuck Jones
Jim Oberg advises [September 11, 2011]:

1. It's worth mentioning, among all the various people from many nations and walks of life who lost their lives on 9/11, an astronaut whose own chance to fly in space had been lost years earlier when 'Challenger' and its crew were lost in Jan 1986. That loss led him to his own death on 9/11.

2. Charles 'Chuck' Jones, 48, had been assigned to fly on "STS 71-B", aboard 'Challenger' later that year, 1986, as a military payload specialist on a classified Defense Department mission. But with the shuttle program grounded for years, the mission was delayed and then cancelled. Jones left the USAF astronaut program, and in 1998 retired from the USAF.

3. When, last July on the occasion of the last-ever shuttle flight, I wrote my MSNBC story on people who SHOULD have flown on shuttles but never had the chance, the original list contained TEN people. By the time it was published, I had reduced the list to NINE, taking Jones off.

4. See here: **Nine space stars who should have gone into orbit**
30-year space shuttle program flew hundreds — but missed some good ones
By James Oberg NBC News space analyst
Special to MSNBC Special to MSNBC
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http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43861886/ns/technology_and_science/

5. I'm still not sure why I did this, but perhaps because his death -- and every one else's that day -- was still too painful to bring up in a light-hearted article about missed possibilities. After the article appeared, numerous friends and relatives of those on it contacted me with gratitude and agreement, but I could hardly imagine Jones' widow Jeanette would have been anything but horrified to see it.

6. But I don't want his loss -- or anyone else's -- to be forgotten today.

7. Here's some bio data and links. <http://www.astronautix.com/flights/sts71b.htm>
He was 48 // *Birth Place*: Clinton, Indiana. **Service Years** 1974 - 1998 ret Colonel
http://www.spacefacts.de/bios/astronauts/english/jones_charles.htm
<http://airforce.togetherweserved.com/usaf/servlet/tws.webapp.WebApp?cmd=ShadowBoxProfile&type=Person&ID=94709>
<http://memwall.usafalibrary.com/files/JONESCECHECKPOINTSARTIC.JPG#files/JONESCECHECKPOINTSARTIC.JPG#>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Edward_Jones

8. Had Jones flown, his life would have taken a different course and his experience made him even more valuable to military planning for space operations. It's unlikely he'd have retired to Massachusetts, or been aboard that doomed plane.

9. But someone else would have been in that seat.

10. As a former military officer myself, I feel that fellow officer Jones, as all other serving military personnel, would place the lives of their fellow citizens above their own. It's our duty and we chose it freely. We [and other professions] are ready at any notice to lay down our lives for those we protect.

11. So the notion of him saving his own life, at the cost of somebody else's, would be anathema to him. He didn't choose that path [although hundreds of other men and women on 9/11 DID rush into what they fully realized was mortal danger], but he would not have shirked it when it was thrust upon him.

12. So my list remains at 'nine', I do not retroactively put Colonel Jones on it, since the price of his flight would have been higher than he would have been willing to pay. But I reserve for him and others on that day a much more special list in my heart.