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Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin (9 March 1934 - 27 March 1968) was a Soviet pilot and cosmonaut. He was the first human to journey into outer space, when his Vostok spacecraft completed an orbit of the Earth on April 12, 1961.



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In his youth, Gagarin became interested in space and planets. After studying for one year at a vocational technical school in Lyubertsy, Gagarin was selected for further training at a technical high school in Saratov. While there, he joined the "AeroClub", and learned to fly a light aircraft, a hobby that would take up an increasing portion of his time.



- * In 1955, after completing his technical schooling, he entered military flight training at the Orenburg Pilot's School. In 1960, after the search and selection process, Yuri Gagarin was chosen with 19 other pilots for the Soviet space program.



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In August 1960 Gagarin was one of 20 possible candidates for the first launch. When the 20 candidates were asked to anonymously vote for which other candidate they would like to see as the first to fly, all but three chose Gagarin.



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On 27 March 1968, while on a routine training flight from Chkalovsky Air Base, he and flight instructor Vladimir Seryogin died in a MiG-15UTI crash near the town of Kirzhach.



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Gagarin's
monument in
Moscow