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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910300374103321 |
| Autore | Burgess Colin <1947-> |
| Titolo | Freedom 7 [[electronic resource]] : The Historic Flight of Alan B. Shepard, Jr. // by Colin Burgess |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Cham : , : Springer International Publishing : , : Imprint : Springer, , 2014 |
| ISBN | 3-319-01156-1 |
| Edizione | [1st ed. 2014.] |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (291 p.) |
| Collana | Space Exploration |
| Disciplina | 629.450092 |
| Soggetti | Aerospace engineering Astronautics Astronomy Space sciences History Aerospace Technology and Astronautics Popular Science in Astronomy Space Sciences (including Extraterrestrial Physics, Space Exploration and Astronautics) History of Science |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | History and Development of the Mercury-Redstone Program -- The Precursory Flight of Chimpanzee Ham -- NASA's First Space Pilot -- Countdown to Launch -- Liftoff of Freedom 7 -- Fifteen Minutes That Stopped a Nation -- Splashdown. |
| Sommario/riassunto | Inevitably, there are times in a nation's history when its hopes, fears and condence in its own destiny appear to hinge on the fate of a single person. One of these pivotal moments occurred on the early morning of May 5, 1961, when a 37-year-old test pilot squeezed himself into the connes of the tiny Mercury spacecraft that he had named Freedom 7. On that historic day, U.S. Navy Commander Alan Shepard carried with him the hopes, prayers, and anxieties of a nation as his Redstone rocket blasted free of the launch pad at Cape Canaveral, hurling him upwards on a 15-minute suborbital ight that |

also propelled the United States into the bold new frontier of human space exploration. This book tells the enthralling story of that pioneering flight as recalled by many of the participants in the Freedom 7 story, including Shepard himself, with anecdotal details and tales never before revealed in print. Although beaten into space just three weeks earlier by the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, Alan Shepard's history-making mission aboard Freedom 7 nevertheless provided America's first tentative step into space that would one day see its Apollo astronauts – including Alan Shepard – walk on the Moon.
