Biographical Data

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
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ROBERT L. BEHNKEN (COLONEL, USAF, PH.D.)
NASA ASTRONAUT

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PERSONAL DATA: Hometown: St. Ann, Missouri.

EDUCATION: Pattonville High School, Maryland Heights, Missouri, 1988; Bachelor of Science degree in Physics, Washington University, 1992; Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, Washington University, 1992; Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, California Institute of Technology, 1993; Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering, California Institute of Technology, 1997.

SPECIAL HONORS: Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Senior, Washington University (1992); National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow (1993 to 1996); United States Air Force Meritorious Service, Defense Meritorious Service and Defense Superior Service Medals; NASA Space Flight Medal (2008, 2010); Exceptional Service Medal Washington University Young Alumni Achievement Award (2009); Distinguished Alumni Award (2013).

EXPERIENCE: Colonel Behnken's thesis research was on control of rotating stall and surge in compressor systems. The research included nonlinear analysis, real-time software development, and hardware construction. During his first two years of graduate study, Colonel Behnken developed control algorithms and hardware for flexible robotic manipulators.

Colonel Behnken was commissioned via the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). His first assignment was at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida managing and developing new weapon systems. He next attended the Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California with a follow on assignment to the F-22 Combined Test Force (CTF) where he served as the lead Flight Test Engineer for the 4th F-22. He has flown more than 1,500 flight hours in more than 25 different types of aircraft.

NASA EXPERIENCE: Colonel Behnken was selected by NASA in July 2000, and following the completion of astronaut candidate training was assigned to support launch and landing activities at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida. Since then, within the Astronaut Office, he served in the Exploration branch, as Chief of the Space Station Operations Branch, and between July 2012 and July 2015 as NASA's Chief Astronaut. As Chief Astronaut, he was responsible for flight assignments, mission preparation, and on-orbit support of international space station crews as well as organizing astronaut office support for future launch vehicles.

Colonel Behnken trained as an international space station crew member following the loss of Columbia and as a mission specialist for STS-400 the launch-on-need rescue flight for the last Hubble servicing mission. He is currently assigned to the cadre of astronauts that will train and fly the initial test flights of the Boeing CST-100 or Space X Dragon commercially built spacecraft.

SPACEFLIGHT EXPERIENCE: Colonel Behnken flew STS-123 in March 2008 and STS-130 in February 2010, logging more than 708 hours in space, and performing more than 37 hours in six spacewalks.

STS-123 Endeavour (March 11 to March 26, 2008) was a night launch/landing and the 25th International Space Station assembly mission. Endeavour's crew delivered the first component of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Kibo Laboratory and the final element of the station's Mobile Servicing System, the Canadian-built Special Purpose Dexterous Manipulator, known as Dextre. Colonel Behnken served a flight deck mission specialist for ascent and entry, performed three spacewalks, and operated both the station robotic arm and the Dextre robot. The mission was accomplished in 250 orbits of the Earth, traveling 6,577,857 statute miles in 15 days, 18 hours, 10 minutes and 54 seconds.

STS-130 Endeavour (February 8 to February 21, 2010) was a night launch/landing and the 32nd International Space Station assembly mission. Endeavour's crew delivered and outfitted Node 3 (the station's habitation module) and the Cupola (the station's seven-window Earth facing observation portal). Colonel Behnken served as a mission specialist, operated the space station robotic arm, served as the spacewalking lead and performed three spacewalks. The mission was accomplished in 217 orbits of the Earth, traveling 5,738,991 statute miles in 13 days, 18 hours, 6 minutes and 24 seconds.