

Jerry Linenger

Astronaut and Hero

Captain Jerry Linenger is a retired United States Navy flight surgeon and NASA astronaut. A Naval Academy graduate, he holds doctorates in both medicine and research methodology, as well as dual master's degrees in Policy and Systems Management. He has also been awarded three honorary doctorate degrees in science. Linenger was awarded the 2013 "Trailblazer Award" from WSU School of Medicine for his lifelong contributions to medical research and to the advancement of medicine.

During what has been reported to be one of the most dangerous and dramatic missions in space history, Linenger spent nearly five months aboard the Russian space station Mir. He faced numerous life-threatening events, including repeated failure of critical life-support systems, a near-collision between the space station and an incoming re-supply spacecraft and computer failures that sent the space station tumbling uncontrollably through space. As if these problems were not enough, he narrowly survived a raging out-of-control fire that was later described as the most severe fire ever aboard an orbiting spacecraft.

In spite of these challenges, Linenger and his two Russian crewmates accomplished all mission goals: shuttle docking, space walking, a Soyuz fly around and all 120 of the science experiments. In completing the mission, he logged 50 million miles, the equivalent distance of over 110 round trips to the moon, traveling at a speed of nearly 18,000 miles per hour. He was the first American ever to undock from a space station in a Russian Soyuz capsule and the first American to do a spacewalk in a Russian spacesuit. At mission completion, Linenger held the endurance record for the longest time in space for an American man. In 2008, NASA awarded Linenger the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest award conferred by NASA, citing his courage and outstanding service to our country.

Linenger is author of the books *Off the Planet*, which chronicles his time in space; and *Letters from Mir: An Astronaut's Letters to His Son*. He collaborated with National Geographic Explorer on *The Angel Effect*, a documentary revealing how he was able to endure the solitary conditions of his mission and the science behind the "Third Man Factor." He is a founding board member of the global freshwater think tank Circle of Blue and has been awarded the 2012 Royal Canadian Geographical Society's Gold Medal in recognition of his remarkable achievements in space. He has appeared in numerous documentaries seen on Discovery, Nova, History Channel, PBS and National Geographic Television. As a space analyst, Linenger is seen frequently on NBC's *Today*, *Nightly News*, as well as on various CBS, CNN, PBS and FOX news

shows. He has also worked behind the scenes as scientific advisor to various futuristic voyages to Mars films.

In 2016, Linenger was prominently featured in Discovery's eight-part series, *Secret Space Escapes*, and is presently narrating a National Geographic program focusing on Planet Earth. A full-feature movie based on his book and his life is also currently being filmed.

In his free time, Linenger enjoys bicycling, ice hockey, swimming, and stand-up paddle-boarding. He now lives back on the planet in northern Michigan with his wife, Kathryn, and their four children.