

Payload

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PAYLOAD. The code name used by U.S. Air Force Colonel Mark Morgan Jr. Born in Cape Canaveral, Florida, Payload grew up watching America's earliest space shots launch into the Florida sky. For years, he worked on that dream until it became a reality. He joined the Air Force and flew F-4 Phantom fighter jets over Southeast Asia for three tours of duty, then signed up for astronaut training upon his return home.

As an astronaut, Payload piloted the G.I. Joe team's space shuttle Defiant on several missions into space. From the Defiant's home at the Pit III in Utah, Payload headed up the shuttle's first mission to stop Cobra's own space shuttle from stealing U.S. spy satellites. The mission failed when Cobra decided to destroy the satellites after the Joes prevented their enemy from stealing them. Some time later, Payload managed to fly the Defiant into the earth's atmosphere and rescue a fighter pilot, after which he performed the amazing feat of landing the shuttle on the deck of the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Flagg. He later led the mission that launched a Joe vehicle into orbit, then dropped it into Trucial Abysmia on a rescue mission to save the group of Joes who survived an attack by Cobra in which a SAW Viper killed several others. A few years later, Payload piloted the Defiant along with the newly formed Star Brigade in a joint mission with the former Soviet unit, the October Guard, to destroy an asteroid heading for earth. The Star Brigade mission was the last G.I. Joe team mission Payload took part in before the unit was shut down in 1994.

(GI 64, 65, 109, 110, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149; SM 28; Figures: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)