XVIII ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ОЛИМПИАДА ШКОЛЬНИКОВ ПО АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ 2016 г МУНИЦИПАЛЬНЫЙ ЭТАП.

9 – 11 классы

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| **Listening Script** |

I’m Steve Ember. And I’m Barbara Klein.

Today we tell about a program in the nineteen sixties to train women as astronauts. Today they are known as the Mercury Thirteen. They never reached their goal of spaceflight. But they led the way for other American women to travel into space.

In nineteen fifty-nine the United States was involved in a space race with the former Soviet Union. The Soviets had surprised the world by launching the first satellite. Sputnik One was launched into orbit on October fourth, nineteen fifty-seven. Suddenly, the United States appeared to be behind in an important area of technology.

As a result, President Dwight Eisenhower formed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in nineteen fifty-eight.

By April seventh, nineteen fifty-nine NASA introduced the first American astronauts. They were Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Virgil Grissom, Walter Shirra, Alan Shepard and Donald Slayton. They were known as the Mercury Seven.

In the fall of that year, William Randolph Lovelace was attending a meeting of the Air Force Association in Miami, Florida. Doctor Lovelace was deeply involved in the effort to put Americans into space. He served on NASA's Special Committee on Life Sciences. Astronaut candidates had been put through tests at his medical center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Doctor Lovelace and Air Force Brigadier General Donald Flickinger wondered if women could be trained as astronauts. General Flickinger had designed the space flight tests for the astronaut candidates. He also knew that the Russians had plans to launch a woman into space.

The two men met with Jerrie Cobb, a twenty-eight year-old pilot. They thought Ms. Cobb would make a good female astronaut candidate. They invited her to Doctor Lovelace's medical research center in Albuquerque for tests.

Jerrie Cobb went to Doctor Lovelace's medical center in February of nineteen sixty. She spent one week receiving the same series of tests that the Mercury Seven astronauts faced.

The tests included a general physical examination and X-rays. Some tests involved electric shock. Other tests pushed the body to its physical limits. Yet another test required freezing the inner ear with ice water to test for the condition of vertigo. The doctors also measured brain waves. They performed a total of seventy-five tests on Jerrie Cobb.

Jerrie Cobb had one unusual test on a machine called the Multi-Axis Space Test Inertia Facility, or MASTIF. The MASTIF was in NASA's Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. This special machine could move a person in three different directions almost at the same time. It was designed to test a pilot's ability to control a spacecraft under severe conditions. Jerrie Cobb passed the test.

During her tests, Jerrie Cobb knew that if she failed the first level of astronaut training no other women would be tested. By August, the results of the tests were complete. Doctor Lovelace was fully satisfied that Jerrie Cobb had scored similarly to the Mercury Seven astronauts. He even noted that Ms. Cobb required less oxygen than the average male astronaut. Jerrie Cobb's success meant that more female candidates were needed for more tests.

Jerrie Cobb helped Doctor Lovelace and General Flickinger chose female astronaut candidates. She searched among members of the international woman's aviation group, the Ninety-Nines, based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Ms. Cobb worked hard to develop a list of good candidates by August, nineteen sixty-one. Twenty-five other women pilots were chosen and tested at Doctor Lovelace's research center. Candidates had to have flown an airplane for more than one thousand hours. Generally, they were required to be in their early thirties. And they had to be in good physical health.

The Mercury Thirteen women were never officially part of the NASA space program. But their willingness to undergo testing to be astronauts and their performance in those tests showed that women could go into space.

It was not until nineteen eighty-three that Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. Sixteen years later, Eileen Collins became the first woman to command a Space Shuttle mission. She invited the surviving members of the Mercury Thirteen to attend the launch. Seven women were able to attend.

On May twelfth, two thousand seven, the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh also honored these women. The university gave honorary Doctor of Science degrees to the eight surviving members of the Mercury thirteen. The university said it was honoring the spirit and efforts of this special group of women.

This program was written and produced by Mario Ritter. I’m Barbara Klein.

And I’m Steve Ember.