

Read the passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

## The Mercury 13: Part Two

The third and final phase of testing focused on advanced aeromedical examinations. Through an informal arrangement, Cobb completed these, ranking in the top 2% of all results, including the men's. Her score was on a par with the experienced Navy pilots, so Lovelace invited the other women to follow suit. They were set to gather at the Naval School of Aviation Medicine in Pensacola, Florida, for the tests in September 1961, and it would be the first time they would meet as a group. Cochran wrote to each of them, urging them to go for the final tests but it is said that Cochran also wrote to Admiral Pirie, the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, about her concerns regarding Lovelace's Woman in Space Program. Pirie flagged this with NASA who confirmed that they had received no official request for this. A couple of these women had left their jobs to take part in these tests. Devastatingly, only a few days before the tests, the women received telegrams cancelling them.

Lovelace felt that the results were superior to those gathered from the tests with the male candidates and he took these with him to Washington but there was no interest. Everything else he could do in private laboratories with private funding but the third phase required space simulation which required military facilities. They were not granted access as it was an unofficial program with no official backing from NASA. The space race meant that NASA only prioritised the programs that would directly benefit their efforts in putting a man on the moon as soon as possible. That immediacy rendered Lovelace's program redundant; it was deemed a waste of time.

Cobb flew to Washington, D.C., asking the government to back the continuation of the program. Cobb and Hart both visited Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and wrote directly to President John F. Kennedy. They had a hearing before a Subcommittee of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics where they gave testimonies, confirming that Lovelace's project had significant benefits and important results. Despite her long-term support, Cochran undermined their testimony when she argued that Lovelace's program would be detrimental to NASA's space race progress. Her intentions are still unknown but some have speculated she perhaps thought that cancelling the program would mean she might earn NASA's favour, making her more likely to be the first woman in space herself.

Others argued that women simply did not meet the selection criteria that NASA had in place; this was true. Astronaut candidates had to be engineering graduates and graduates of military jet test piloting programs. As of 1962, when this hearing was taking place, women were still barred from studying at Air Force Training schools. They needed to have extensive experience flying in jet aircraft but they were not granted access to fly any jet aircraft. Whilst the argument tried to frame women as simply not being as capable as men, it did not fairly acknowledge the fact that women did not have the opportunity to achieve the same qualifications.

In 1963 a Soviet cosmonaut called Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to ever go to space. She was remarkably unqualified for this project in comparison to the FLATs; she was not a pilot and she was not a scientist. Reports say that upon her meeting Cobb, she said that Cobb was a role model and reportedly said, "We always figured you would be the first, what happened?"

Sally Ride became the first American woman to go to space in 1983 and 12 years later, Eileen Collins became the first woman to pilot the Space Shuttle. At her first launch, she invited the Mercury 13 women who were still alive as they had inspired her when she was a child. By the time she was at college, there were far more aviation opportunities for young women and this is, no doubt, a result of the work and the drive of the Mercury 13.

Wally Funk became the oldest woman in space in 2021, when she travelled into space with Richard Branson on his Virgin Galactic dual fuselage jet spacecraft.

- 1 Why did two of the Mercury 13 women quit their jobs?
- A. Lovelace asked them to
  - B. To take part in the third phase of testing
  - C. They were so famous they didn't need jobs
  - D. They wanted to work full time for NASA
- 2 What was the conclusion of Lovelace's tests on the Mercury 13?
- A. He felt that they were inconclusive and needed more funding to do more tests
  - B. He felt that the women's results were inferior compared to the men's
  - C. He felt that the results were contradictory
  - D. He felt that the women had performed better than the men had
- 3 In which year did Eileen Collins invite the surviving members of Mercury 13 to her first launch?
- A. 1995
  - B. 1997
  - C. 1994
  - D. 1996
- 4 Which of the following reasons was **not** a contributing factor in the cancellation of the third phase of tests?
- A. It required the use of military facilities
  - B. It was not officially backed by NASA
  - C. It was not necessary in the drive to get a man on the moon
  - D. Cochran's husband could not afford the military facilities
- 5 "... she argued that Lovelace's program would be detrimental to NASA's space race progress." Which of the following words is synonymous with 'detrimental'?
- A. benign
  - B. preferential
  - C. damaging
  - D. beneficial

- 6 Why did Cobb fly to Washington D.C.?
- A. To get away from the stress of the tests
  - B. To put pressure on the government to continue Lovelace's program
  - C. To try and find more funding for Lovelace's program
  - D. To return home to her family
- 7 Approximately how many years after the hearing did the Russians send Tereshkova into space?
- A. Two
  - B. 12
  - C. One
  - D. 21
- 8 Which of the following statements is **not** true?
- A. The female candidates studied alongside the men at Air Force Training School
  - B. The female candidates did not meet NASA's criteria
  - C. Cobb and Hart met President John F. Kennedy
  - D. The women were disappointed when the final phase of testing was cancelled
- 9 What did the Mercury 13 do for Eileen Collins?
- A. They invited her to their first launch
  - B. They paved the way for her and inspired her
  - C. They put in a good word for her at NASA
  - D. They paid for her college fees
- 10 What was insincere about Cochran urging the Mercury 13 to attend their final tests?
- A. It was insincere because she did not pass the first phase of tests
  - B. It was insincere because she was funding the program
  - C. It was insincere because she was friends with Lovelace and was biased
  - D. It was insincere because she also notified a Navy official of Lovelace's unofficial tests and her concerns regarding the program

11

"That immediacy rendered Lovelace's program redundant..." Which of the following words is synonymous with "redundant"?

- A. inconclusive
- B. reduced
- C. useless
- D. unfocused

12

Why is it thought that Jacqueline Cochran undermined Cobb and Hart's testimony at the hearing?

- A. She did not want NASA to fund it and take the credit from her and her husband
- B. She did not want women to go to space
- C. She wanted to earn NASA's favour to better her own chances at spaceflight
- D. She wanted to start up her own program to replace Lovelace's one

13

Which of the following was not a NASA requirement for astronaut candidates?

- A. Must have experience flying in stormy weather
- B. Must be a graduate of military jet test piloting programs
- C. Must have experience flying jet aircraft
- D. Must be a graduate of engineering

14

Why was it surprising that Jacqueline Cochran testified against the program?

- A. Because she was a feminist
- B. Because she was a friend of Cobb's
- C. Because she said she was NASA's enemy
- D. Because she had funded the program and was Lovelace's friend

15

Which of the following people did Cobb not meet?

- A. Jane Hart
- B. President John F. Kennedy
- C. Valentina Tereshkova
- D. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson

16 Why was the program to put a man on the moon prioritised over Lovelace's Woman in Space Program?

- A. Men were better at spaceflight
- B. Men had more experience in space
- C. The public did not want to see a woman in space
- D. America were so invested in the space race they had to stay focused

17 Which of the following statements is **not** true?

- A. Eileen Collins was the first American woman to go to space
- B. The Mercury 13 received telegrams to cancel the third phase of tests
- C. Cobb was Tereshkova's role model
- D. Phase three of the tests required the use of Navy facilities

18 In what ways was Tereshkova underqualified compared to the Mercury 13?

- A. She was a woman
- B. She was not a pilot or a doctor
- C. She was not a pilot or a scientist
- D. She had eight children

19 Who contacted NASA to enquire as to whether Lovelace had made an official request?

- A. Jerrie Cobb
- B. Admiral Pirie
- C. Jacqueline Cochran
- D. President Lyndon B. Johnson

20 Which of the following statements is true?

- A. Tereshkova always knew Russia would put a woman in space before America
- B. Cobb ranked in the top 1% of results
- C. Cobb was the only one of the Mercury 13 to complete all the tests
- D. In 1984, the first American woman went into space

## Answers

1	B
2	D
3	A
4	D
5	C
6	B
7	C
8	A
9	B
10	D
11	C
12	C
13	A
14	D
15	B
16	D
17	A
18	C
19	B
20	C