

Springer

1st
edition

2011, XXV, 371 p. 167 illus.

Printed book

Softcover

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ISBN 978-1-4419-8404-3

\$ 54,99

Available

Discount group

Trade Books (1)

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Physics : Space Sciences (including Extraterrestrial Physics, Space Exploration and Astronautics)

Burgess, Colin

Selecting the Mercury Seven

The Search for America's First Astronauts

- Contains authorized biographical sketches of all 32 pioneering astronaut candidates, even ones that didn't fly on the Mercury mission, the first U.S. manned space program
- Authoritative, well researched, highly readable, and copiously illustrated, with many photographs of the first astronaut candidates published for the first time
- Examines the goals and achievements of the Mercury team
- Commemorates the 50th anniversary (in 2011) of the first manned U.S. space flight, with a Mercury astronaut onboard, in 1961

The names of the seven Mercury astronauts were announced in April 1959 amid a flurry of publicity and patriotism. This work provides biographical details of all thirty-two finalists for the seven coveted places as America's pioneering astronauts. All of the candidates were among the nation's elite pilots involved in testing new supersonic aircraft capabilities. Most had served as wartime fighter and bomber pilots; some were test pilots on top secret and sophisticated aviation projects, while others were fleet admirals, prisoners of war, and proposed pilots for spaceflight programs such as the Dyna-Soar (X-20). The names of all 32 finalists have been kept secret until very recently. "Selecting the Mercury Seven" also relates the history and difficulties behind the initial choice of candidates. The lives, motivations, military careers, and achievements of the unsuccessful twenty-five finalists are explored first in fully authorized biographies. Test pilots for the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, each man has a fascinating and very different story to tell. All thirty-two men had to endure meticulous, demeaning, and brutal week-long medical examinations at the Lovelace Clinic in New Mexico. This was followed by another torturous week at the Wright Aeromedical Laboratory in Ohio, where they were subjected to extreme fitness and physiological testing, the sole purpose of which was to sort out the Supermen from the near-supermen.

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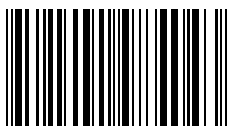
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