NASA Astronaut Selection
2009:
Behavioral Overview

A. Holland, W. Sipes, G. Beven, L. Schmidt,
K. Slack, R. Moomaw, S. Vander Ark
May, 2011
Behavioral Health and Performance (BHP) is an operational group under medical sciences at NASA/Johnson Space Center. Astronaut applicant screening and assessment is one function of this group, along with psychological training, inflight behavioral support and family services. Direct BHP assessment spans 6-7 months of a 17-month overall selection process.
Applicants

• 3535 applications
• 113 invited to Round 1 initial Astronaut Selection Board (ASB) interview, medical review and psychological testing
• 48 individuals invited back for Round 2 ASB interview, full medical testing, behavioral interview and assessment
Two primary goals are clinical screening and suitability assessment.

Clinical screening is primarily medical in nature, screening for active or potential psychiatric dysfunction.

- Methods: Clinical interview, psychological testing, staffing
- User: Aerospace Medical Board (AMB)
- Go/No-Go role
Goals and Methods

• Suitability Assessment is primarily psychological in nature, assessing for job-person fit
  – Methods: Structured interview, psychological testing, staffing, behavioral observation
  – User: Astronaut Selection Board (ASB)
  – Advisory/consultative role
Sample of Proficiencies

- Mental/emotional stability
- Ability to perform under stressful conditions
- Teamwork skills
- Motivation
- Communication skills
- Ability to cope with prolonged family separations
Outcome

• 9 astronaut candidates (ASCANs) selected to start training
  – 6 male, 3 female
  – Age range: 30-43
  – Average over 20 years of education
  – Most married
  – None had interviewed in previous selection cycles

• Two-round approach gave more face time to enable better long duration assessment
2009 Astronaut Candidates

- Serena M. Aunon, M.D. – physician, flight surgeon
- Jeanette J. Epps - technology intelligence, CIA
- Jack D. Fischer – MAJ USAF, test pilot
- Michael S. Hopkins – LTC USAF
- Kjell N. Lindgren – physician, flight surgeon
- Kathleen (Kate) Rubins – biomedical research, MIT
- Scott D. Tingle – CDR USN, test pilot
- Mark T. Vande Hei – LTC USA, flight controller
- Gregory (Reid) Wiseman – LCDR USN, test pilot