NASA Astronaut Selection

2009:
Behavioral Overview

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Background

• 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
Goals and Methods

• 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