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John Glenn's Cosmic Experience Compared to That of Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov: Observations of Specialists of Cosmonaut Training Center of the Soviet Air Force (1962)

Abstract

The is the first publication of the report of specialists of the Cosmonaut Training Center of the Soviet Air Force summarizing the results of the space orbital flight of the American astronaut John Glenn; its aim is to compare the Soviet and American flight conditions and technical equipment of the spacecraft (flights of Y.A. Gagarin, G.S. Titov, and J. Glenn). Space confrontation between the USSR and the USA in combination with insufficient knowledge of the influence of space factors on the human body prompted great scrutiny of successes and failures

by both parties with an eye to possible adjustments of the competing projects. The historical source was found in the fond of the Cosmonaut Training Center (fond 1) from the Russian State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation (RGANTD) which has been classified and been published before. Additional information on the competition between the USSR and the USA in order to establish a world record for the range and duration of orbital space flight (flights of G. S. Titov and J. Glenn) has been found in the "Collection of documents of the Interdepartmental Scientific and Technical Council for Space Research under the USSR Academy of Sciences" (RGANTD, fond 213). The author concludes that the summary of the Cosmonaut Training Center employees' observations on flights of American and Soviet cosmonauts pursued two goals: to identify the advantages and shortcomings in the training and implementation of orbital flights by the two space powers and to focus the attention of the management on main problems in the implementation of cosmonaut training in the USSR in early 1960s, such as want of a centrifuge and a swimming pool for cosmonauts training in zero gravity. Successful orbital space flight of the American astronaut in February 1962 gave the US a chance to compete with the USSR for world record range and duration of flight and hindered international cooperation between the two countries in peaceful exploration and use of the cosmic space.

### Keywords

Archival document, historical source, John Glenn, Yuri Gagarin, Gherman Titov, cosmonautics, space flight, Cosmonaut Training Center, "Mercury," "Vostok-1," "Vostok-2," space records, rivalry in space

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