



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Mercury Project Dietary and Nutritional Guidelines [McKay]

2017

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## Collection Overview

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|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Repository:</b>      | National Air and Space Museum Archives   |
| <b>Title:</b>           | Mercury Project Dietary and Nutritional Guidelines [McKay]   |
| <b>Date:</b>            | (bulk 1951-2004)   |
| <b>Identifier:</b>      | NASM.2017.0028   |
| <b>Creator:</b>         | McKay, Jean Kathleen Trainum, 1924-2016.<br>United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration<br>Whirlpool Corporation  |
| <b>Extent:</b>          | 0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)   |
| <b>Language:</b>        | English .  |
| <b>Summary:</b>         | This collection consists of material relating to Captain Jean Kathleen Trainum McKay (1924-2016) and her work as the dietitian for the Mercury Project including news clippings, press releases, writings by McKay, photographs, and a detailed pre-flight feeding plan. |
| <b>Digital Content:</b> | <a href="#">Image(s): NASM-9A18895: Captain Jean McKay, circa 1960s</a>  |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Laurel Barile, Gift, 2017, NASM.2017.0028.

### Processing Information

Arranged and described by Jessamyn Lloyd, 2017; encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2019; revised by Amara Pugens, 2022.

### Preferred Citation

Mercury Project Dietary and Nutritional Guidelines [McKay], Acc. NASM.2017.0028, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Captain Jean Kathleen Trainum McKay (1924-2016) was serving as the staff dietitian in the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General when she was selected to serve as the dietitian for the Mercury Project and was sent to Cape Canaveral in April 1961. Although research and development for the pre-flight dietary guidelines had been done previously at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, McKay was responsible for planning specific menus from the basic guide, purchasing the food and supervising preparation and serving, and conducting nutritional analysis and reporting to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Prior to this assignment, McKay was a member of a unified team of women serving in various branches of the military put together to work with the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) to recruit more women to serve in the Armed Forces.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of approximately 0.05 cubic feet of material relating to Jean McKay and her work as the dietitian for the Mercury Project including news clippings, press releases, writings by McKay, photographs, and a detailed pre-flight feeding plan. The feeding plan consists of nutritional information, menus, and recipes, and is signed on the front by astronauts Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom, Alan B. Shepard, Jr., John Herschel Glenn, Jr., Malcolm Scott Carpenter, Leroy Gordon Cooper, Jr., Walter Marty "Wally" Schirra, Jr., and Donald Kent "Deke" Slayton. The writings by McKay consist of papers on nutrition and feeding astronauts as well as the notes for a talk to a docent meeting at the San Diego Air and Space Museum recounting McKay's experiences with the Mercury Project. Press releases are from the office of Congressman Phillip Hart Weaver (R-Nebraska) and one from the Whirlpool Corporation on their Space Kitchen which includes two 8 by 10 inch black and white photographs. Also included is also a 4 by 6 inch color photograph of McKay with Shepard and Schirra taken in August 1995.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Apollo Lunar Module
- Astronautics
- Astronauts
- Dietetics
- Food
- Manned space flight
- Mercury Project
- Project Apollo (U.S.)

### Types of Materials:

- Menus
- Newspaper clippings
- Papers, technical
- Photographs
- Press releases

### Names:

- Carpenter, M. Scott (Malcolm Scott), 1925-2013

Cochran, Jacqueline  
Cooper, Leroy Gordan, 1927-2004  
Gilruth, Robert  
Glenn, John Herschel, Jr., 1921-2016  
Grissom, Virgil I.  
Schirra, Wally  
Shepard, Alan B. (Alan Bartlett), 1923-1998  
Slayton, Donald K., 1924-1993  
Von Braun, Wernher, 1912-1977  
Webb, James E. (James Edwin), 1906-1992

Preferred Titles:

*United States Women in Aviation, 1940-1985*

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## Container Listing

### Reports, papers, and speeches

#### ["Project Mercury Pre-space Flight Feeding Program" summary and meal plan](#)

Notes: 'PROJECT MERCURY Pre-space Flight Feeding Program.' Twenty-five-page summary of a Project Mercury astronaut's meal plan 96 hours prior to a space mission. The report includes information on a low-residue diet, menus prior to take-off, meal preparation procedures (recipes), market orders for low-residue menus, and a calculated nutritional analysis. Cover page includes handwritten notes, inscriptions, and signatures.

#### ["Meal Planning for Compact Feeding Console" program summary](#)

Notes: Two-page typewritten summary on the flight feeding program for a 3-man 2-week space mission. Information includes the planning of meals to maintain physical and mental health, storage and space in the compact feeding console, and meal preparation during space travel. Date unknown and post-1961.

#### [Captain McKay 'Certifying the Presence' card, 5 May 1961](#)

Notes: Air Force Missile Test Center's 'Certifying the Presence' authorization paper for Captain Jean T. McKay dated 5 May 1961. Card used at Cape Canaveral, Florida during the first launching of an American Astronaut into space.

#### ["14-Day Menu for Whirlpool Compact Feeding Console" menu and meal plan](#)

Notes: '14-Day Menu for Whirlpool Compact Feeding Console.' Five-page typewritten meal plan summary during longer space missions. Providing plans for four days, the summary is divided into breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus while supplying information on the type of food, method of storage, and how to prepare each item. Date unknown.

#### ["Basic Nutrition" brief report on nutrition](#)

Notes: Document titled 'Basic Nutrition' providing a brief overview on nutrition, essential food groups, and what happens to food in a human body. Probably a speech written and presented by Captain Jean McKay. Date unknown.

#### ["Feeding Men in Space" report](#)

Notes: Typed and handwritten draft titled 'Feeding Men in Space' describing space flight with an emphasis on food storage in the Apollo Lunar Module and meal preparation for astronauts in space. Document also notes the conditions experienced while traveling to the moon, the issues of feeding astronauts in space, and the potential plan for the Apollo program. Date unknown; probably created between 1965 and 1969 by Captain Jean McKay for a speech.

["1st Manned Space Flight: Talk at S.D. Aerospace Museum Docent Meeting."](#)

Notes: First-person narrative of Captain Jean McKay describing her experience before the launch of Project Mercury in May 1961. Undated speech in an embossed report cover, presented to the San Diego Air and Space Museum [formerly the San Diego Aerospace Museum].

['Project Identify and Recognize' form completed by Mrs. Jean T. McKay.](#)

Notes: A completed 'Project Identify and Recognize' form detailing personal information and military history of Mrs. Jean T. McKay. Two brief personal stories about McKay are attached. One describes her service with the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services recruiting and improving the image of women in the military while the other notes her work as a dietitian with the Project Mercury preparing astronauts for the first manned space flight. Form signed by McKay and dated 22 May 2004.

Articles, news clippings, and press releases

[Articles, news clippings, and press releases](#)

Notes: Articles, news clippings, and press releases related to Captain Jean McKay and her role in the first launching of an American Astronaut into space.

[Captions of Whirlpool Corporation's Space Kitchen](#)

Notes: Images or photographs are missing or detached. Date unknown; post-1961.

[Whirlpool Corporation memorandums, 1960s](#)

Notes: 'No Sink in Spaceship Kitchen.' and 'MOON-BOUND ASTRONAUTS WILL DINE IN STYLE.' Two typewritten memorandums on the compact feeding console designed by Whirlpool Corporation for space missions. Includes information on how the Whirlpool Space Kitchen will be used as well as on the astronauts' menus and meal preparations. Release noted for R. W. Armstrong. Date unknown; circa 1960s.

["Food, Nutrition and the Space Traveler" by Beatrice Finkelstein and Lt. Col. Albert A. Taylor](#)

Notes: 'Food, Nutrition and the Space Traveler' by Beatrice Finkelstein and Lt. Col. Albert A. Taylor. Separated reprint originally published in the November-December 1960 issue of The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Volume 8, Number 6, pp 793-800. Printed by The American Journal of Medicine.

Photography