



# THE SPACE RACE

USA vs. USSR



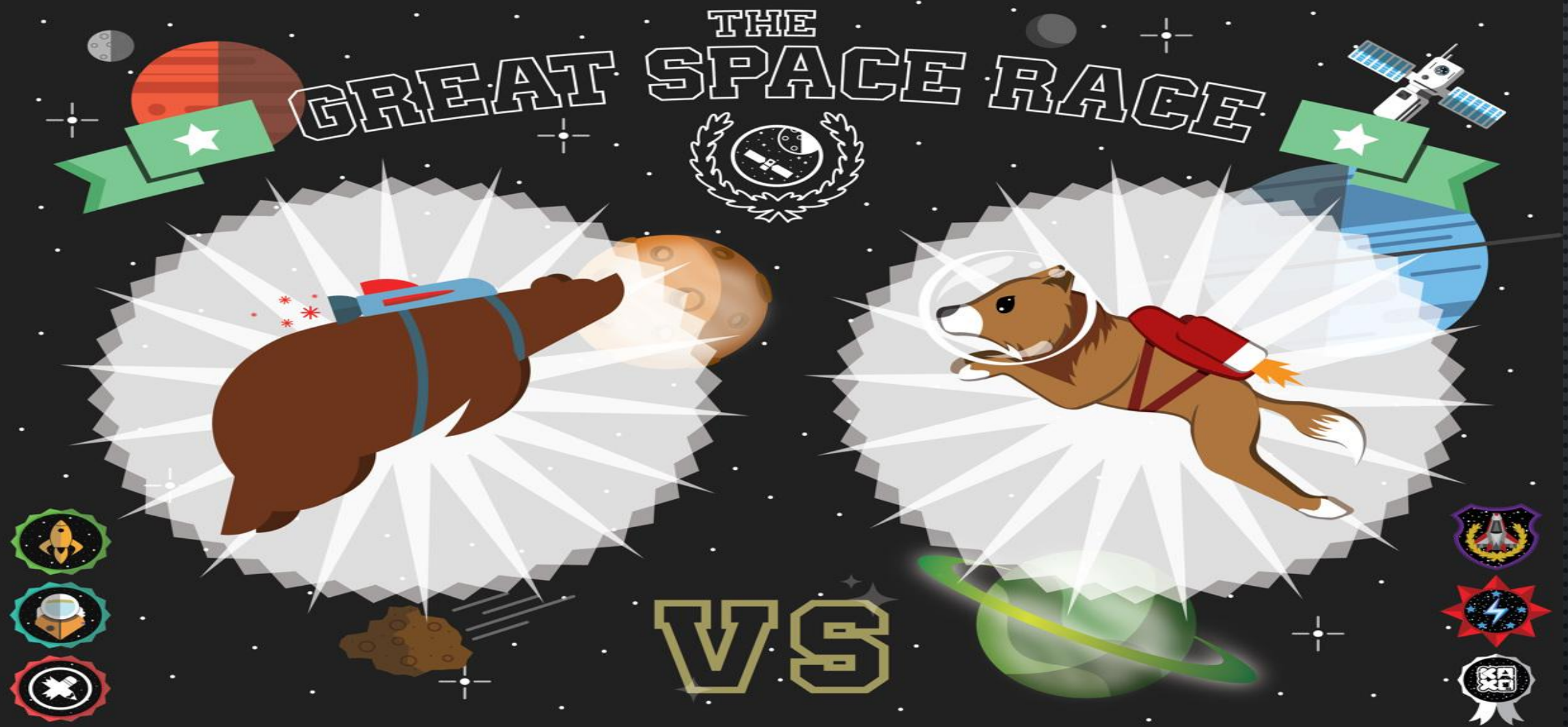


Throughout much of the 20th Century, the USA and USSR were enemies.

They ran their countries with very different politics (think of it like our Labour Vs Conservative political parties, but much more extreme)

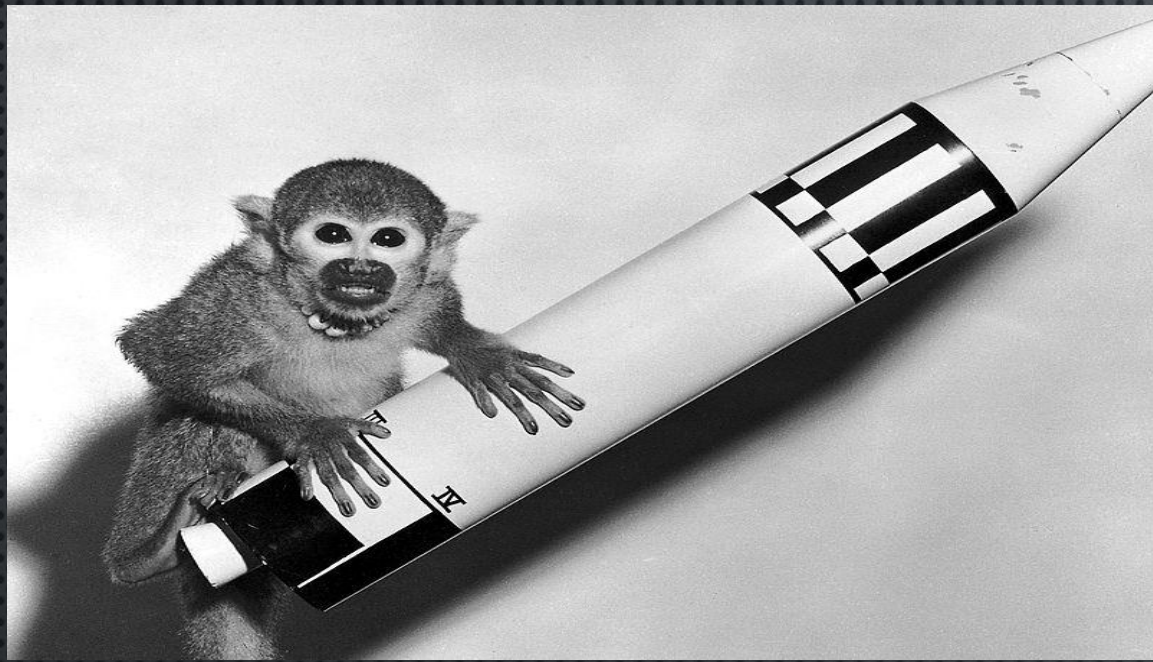
Each country wanted to prove itself superior. This played out in a quest to be the first into space and ultimately, to land on the moon.





Both countries were using experimental technology that was extremely dangerous and a lot was at stake. Whoever got there first, without casualties would be the better country - and the whole world was watching. In the late 1950s, space flight was still too dangerous to risk an astronaut's life.





The USA sent fruit flies into space in 1947 so they were technically the first animals in space. In 1949 however, a rhesus monkey called Albert 1 reached 30-39 miles (48-63 km) altitude. Albert II reached about 83 miles (134 km) on a different space mission. Albert II died on impact after a parachute failure.





After a successful unmanned mission, the USSR decided to send 'Sputnik' into space with a stray dog called Laika as it's passenger.

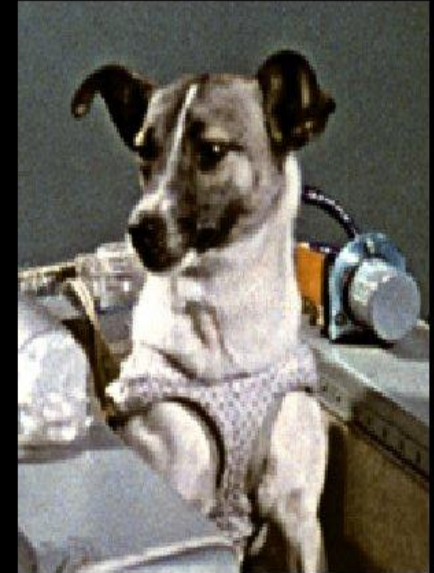
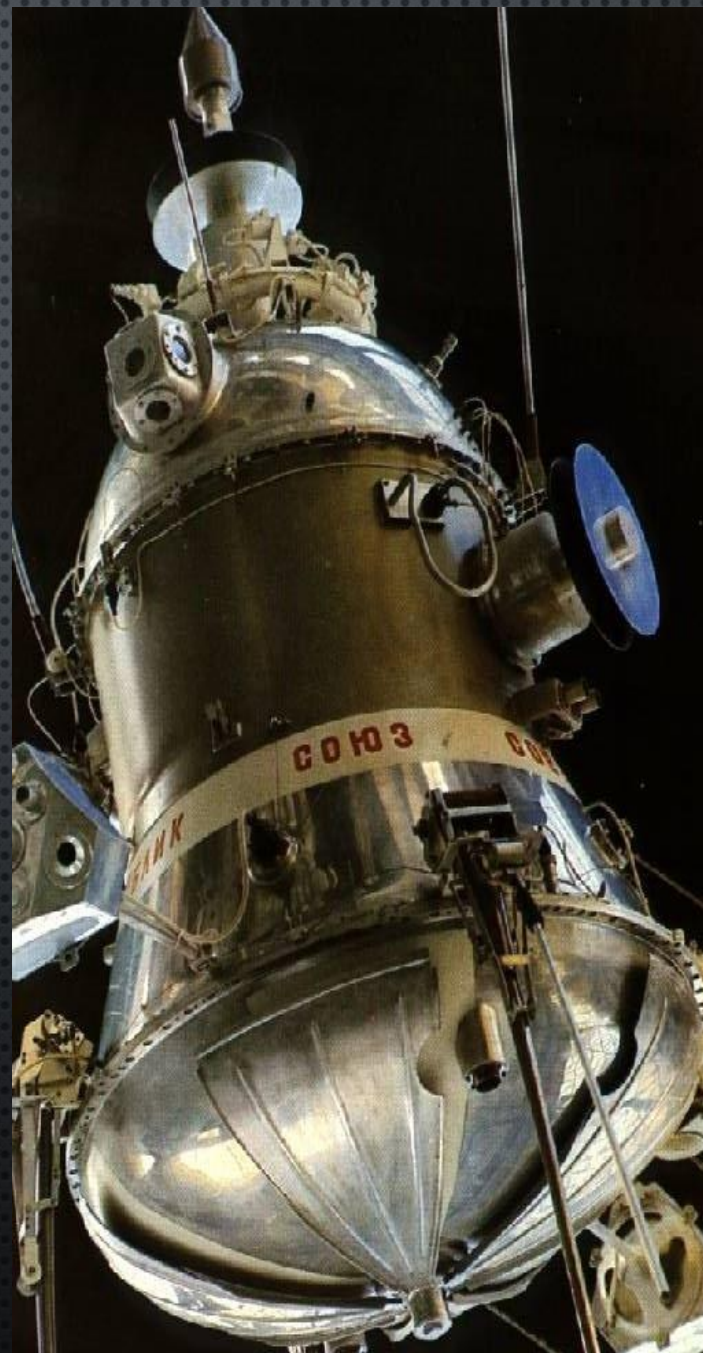
By using a dog, their scientists could see the effects of zero-gravity on something living.

If the mission was not successful, then the loss of a dog's life wouldn't be as bad as a lost human life (on the world stage).

On November 3rd 1957, Sputnik 2 was launched into space with Laika.



She had gone from being a stray dog in Moscow to being an animal astronaut pioneer.







Follow the link for a  
short film about Laika

[https://www.youtube.  
com/watch?v=N3x\\_TSq0  
cVo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3x_TSq0cVo)





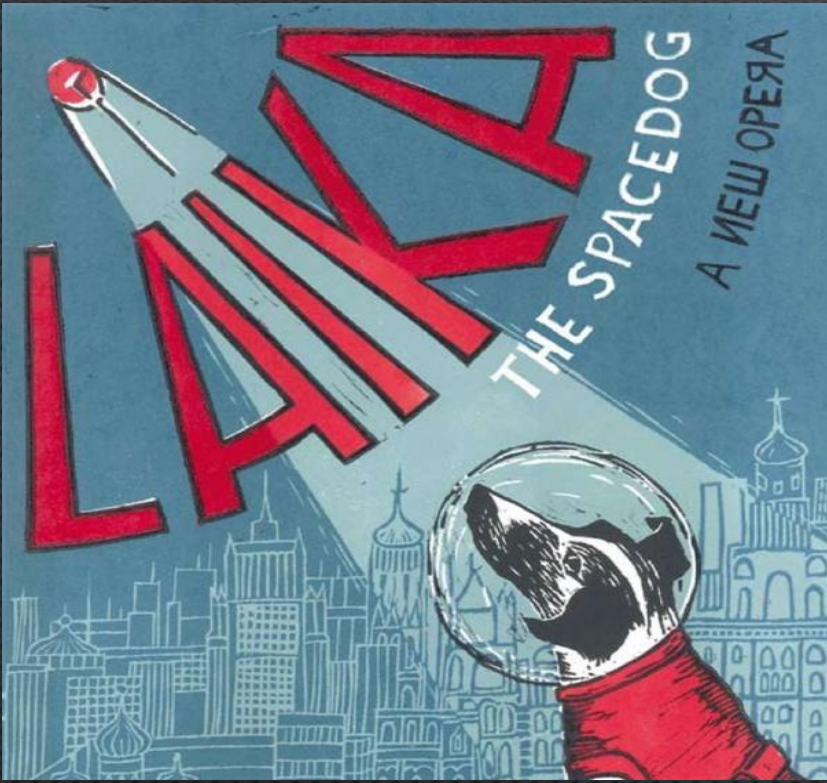
Laika died within hours of take off due to overheating. This was not made public until 50 years later. The Russian government wanted to project a successful space programme at all times so they stated she had been euthanised (put to sleep) before she ran out of oxygen.



The mission was, however, deemed a success by the Russian government.



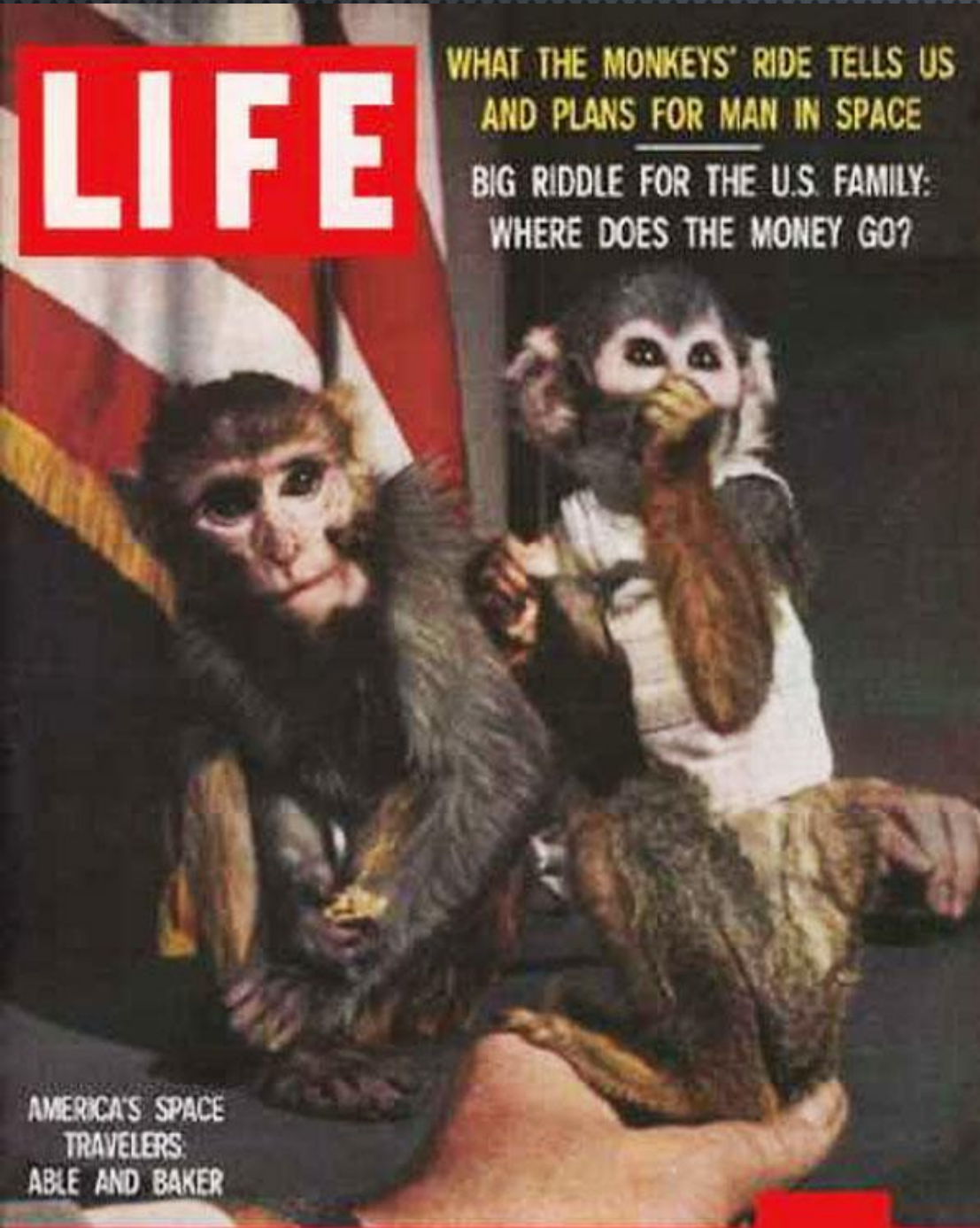




Laika is considered a hero in the USSR. There have been books written about her, she has appeared on stamps, ornaments, coins and even a statue has been erected in her honour.







Able and Baker were the first animals to survive a space mission in May 1959 aboard a spacecraft called 'Jupiter IRBM.' They withstood forces 38 times the normal pull of gravity and were weightless for about 9 minutes. Both monkeys returned to Earth in a good condition. Able, however died 4 days after his space flight due to complications during and operation. Baker lived until 1984.





Belka and Strelka spent a whole day in space aboard Sputnik 5 in 1960 along with a rabbit called Marfusha, 42 mice, 2 rats, flies, plants and fungi.

All animal astronauts survived the mission.

*A Russian animated feature film called Belka and Strelka - Star Dogs was released in 2010.*







On 31 January 1961, Ham the Chimp was launched in a Mercury capsule aboard a Redstone rocket. His mission was Mercury-Redstone 2. The chimp had been trained to pull levers to receive rewards of banana pellets and avoid electric shocks. His flight demonstrated the ability to perform tasks during spaceflight.







<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0beLt0zdngI>

A short film about  
Ham the space chimp.





FreakingNews.com



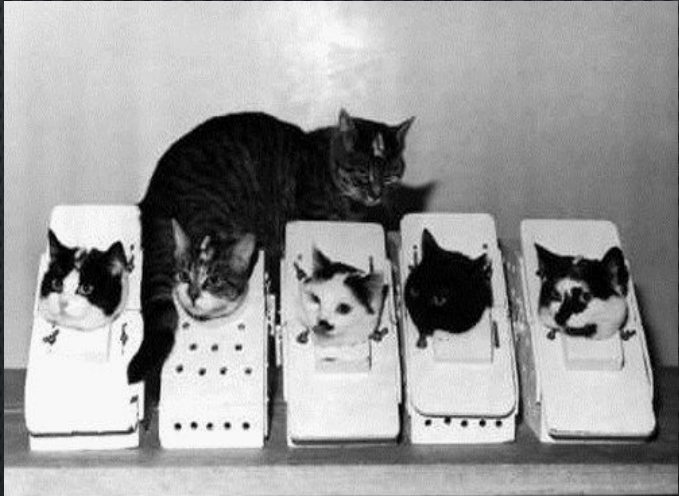
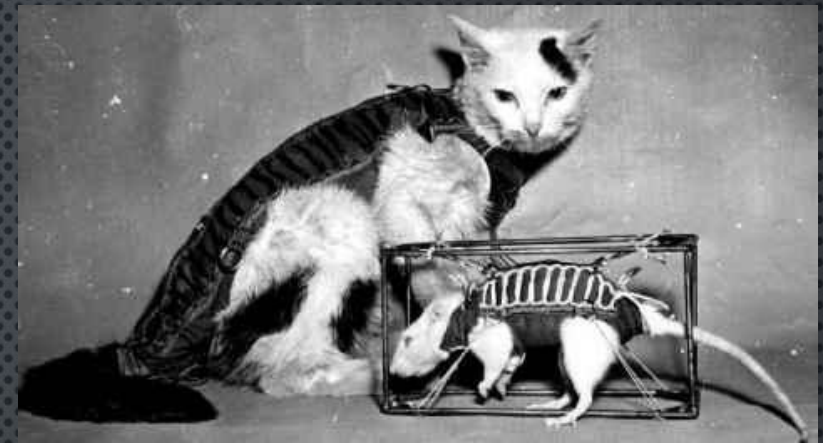
Ham returned to Earth safely and became somewhat of a celebrity in the USA. 3 months later, Enos the chimp became the first chimpanzee in orbit on 29 November 1961, in another Mercury capsule, an Atlas rocket, Mercury-Atlas 5. It is rumoured that Enos was so grateful to get out of his spaceship that as soon as he was let out, he went around shaking all the NASA scientist's hands.



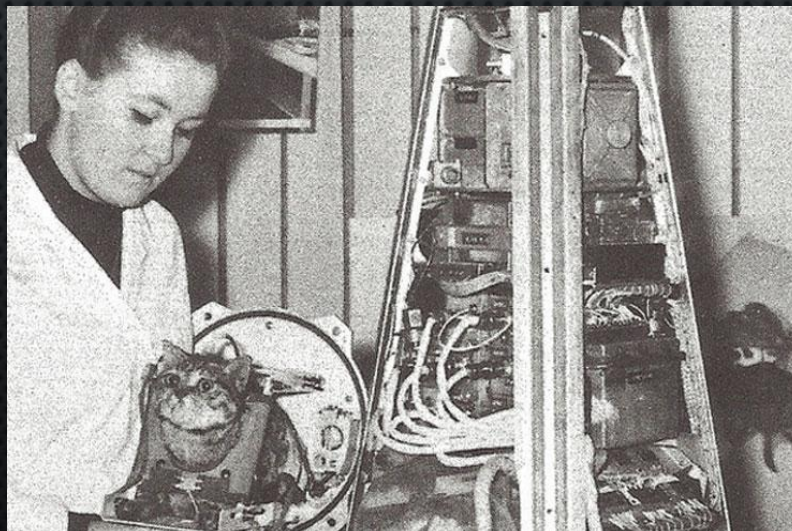




In 1962, France joined the space race. After sending some rats into space, they continued their programme by sending a series of cats into space on a series of spacecrafts.



The first cat in space was called Fellicette.







The first tortoises in space were a pair of Russian tortoises that were launched by the Soviet Union (Russia) in 1968. The Zond 5 spacecraft on which they were stowed away, actually flew around the Moon and back to Earth, making planetfall in the Indian Ocean. That means these were two of the first animals to ever enter deep space (joining the pair on its epic journey were wine flies and mealworms...) And best of all? They survived the trip.





Although race to space walk and then walk on the moon ended a long time ago, scientists continue to send animals into space.

Over the last 40 years, the following animals have been sent into space (along with the usual array of dogs, rats and monkeys):

Bull frogs, tree frogs, newts, crickets, mice, rats, frogs, newts, fruit flies, snails, carp, medaka, oyster toadfish, sea urchins, swordtail fish, gypsy moth eggs, stick insect eggs, brine shrimp, quail eggs, and jellyfish, butterflies

They have also launched Tardigrades into space. I had never heard of them. But they look like they are from another planet.

