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The Last of NASA's Original Pilot Astronauts: Expanding the Space Frontier in the Late Sixties (Springer Praxis Books)

Colin Burgess, David J. Shayler

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Resulting from the authors' deep research into these two pre-Shuttle astronaut groups, many intriguing and untold stories behind the selection process are revealed in the book. The often extraordinary backgrounds and personal ambitions of these skilled pilots, chosen to continue NASA's exploration and knowledge of the space frontier, are also examined.

In April 1966 NASA selected 19 pilot astronauts whose training was specifically targeted to the Apollo lunar landing missions and the Earth-orbiting Skylab space station. Three years later, following the sudden cancellation of the USAF's highly classified Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) project, seven military astronauts were also co-opted into NASA's space program.

This book represents the final chapter by the authors in the story of American astronaut selections prior to the era of the Space Shuttle. Through personal interviews and original NASA documentation, readers will also gain a true insight into a remarkable age of space travel as it unfolded in the late 1960s, and the men who flew those historic missions.

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