

Soviet Union Launched First Woman Into Space Without a Toothbrush

September 18, 2015



Valentina Tereshkova preparing for her first spaceflight on June 16, 1963.

Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to have flown in space, revealed she had no toothbrush and was forced to clean her teeth with her fingers during her three-day mission in the Vostok-6 spacecraft in 1963, British newspaper *The Independent* reported Thursday.

Tereshkova, 78, shared the details of her space mission at the opening of an exhibition at London's Science Museum devoted to the Soviet Union's space program titled "Cosmonauts: Birth of the Space Age," the report said.

"Unfortunately it is a fact," she was cited by *The Independent* as saying. "But I was resourceful, as any woman would be. ... I had my hands and water," Tereshkova said.

She also recalled that the engineers had wrongly configured the craft for re-entry, and she had to call ground control to correct the error. "Forgetting the toothbrush was nothing" in comparison to that, because the mission could have ended in disaster, she said.

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