INVENTOR & MAKER OF THE WEEK

Margaret Hamilton

PIONEER OF NASA INFLIGHT SOFTWARE FOR MOON LANDINGS

Margaret Hamilton was born in 1936. She grew up in the American Midwest and says it was her British father who taught her to ask "what if?" and "why not?"

She loved maths and started her career developing computer software at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1961 she was excited to hear that NASA wanted to land people on the moon for the first time.

Margaret became the lead programmer on NASA's ground breaking Apollo onboard flight software. She led the team that was behind landing astronauts on the moon for the first time in 1969 and then returning them safely.

She worked on every crewed mission and names Apollo 8 and Apollo 11 as her favourites. She is said to have had such a thorough approach that there were no software bugs during any of her crewed missions.

Hamilton also used the term 'software engineering' for the first time. This gave computer programming the recognition and respect it deserved.

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