



What do all of these
have in common?

A black and white portrait of Mary Golda Ross, an elderly woman with short, wavy hair, looking slightly to the left. The portrait is partially obscured by a large red arrow pointing towards the right.

THIS WOMAN

MARY GOLDA ROSS

CHEROKEE

AEROSPACE ENGINEER

1908 - 2008

Born in 1908 and raised in rural Oklahoma, Mary Golda Ross was the great-granddaughter of Cherokee Chief John Ross.

- When she was young, her parents recognized her academic ability and sent her to live with her grandparents in the Cherokee capital, Tahlequah, OK.
- She learned Cherokee culture and developed a passion for math.
- Mary became a teacher in rural Oklahoma, earning an advanced degree in mathematics during the summers.

**Mary said,
“The world is so
technical, if you plan
to work in it, a math
background will let
you go farther and
faster.”**

During World War II, Mary was hired by Lockheed to work with the team of engineers that developed the P-36 Lightning fighter.



The P-38 fighter was a key aircraft in battles over Europe and in the Pacific.

Mary Golda Ross: The First Native American Aerospace Engineer and Space Race Pioneer

Posted on November 1, 2021 by [A Mighty Girl Staff](#)



In 1949,
Mary Golda Ross
completed an advanced course
in aeronautical engineering at UCLA
and became
the first Native American engineer.

This opened new doors for her...

Lockheed assigned Mary to an elite team of engineers, working on ...



**POLARIS
MISSILE**

laris A3 launch...



**AGENA LAUNCH
VEHICLE**

it took people and materials
to space

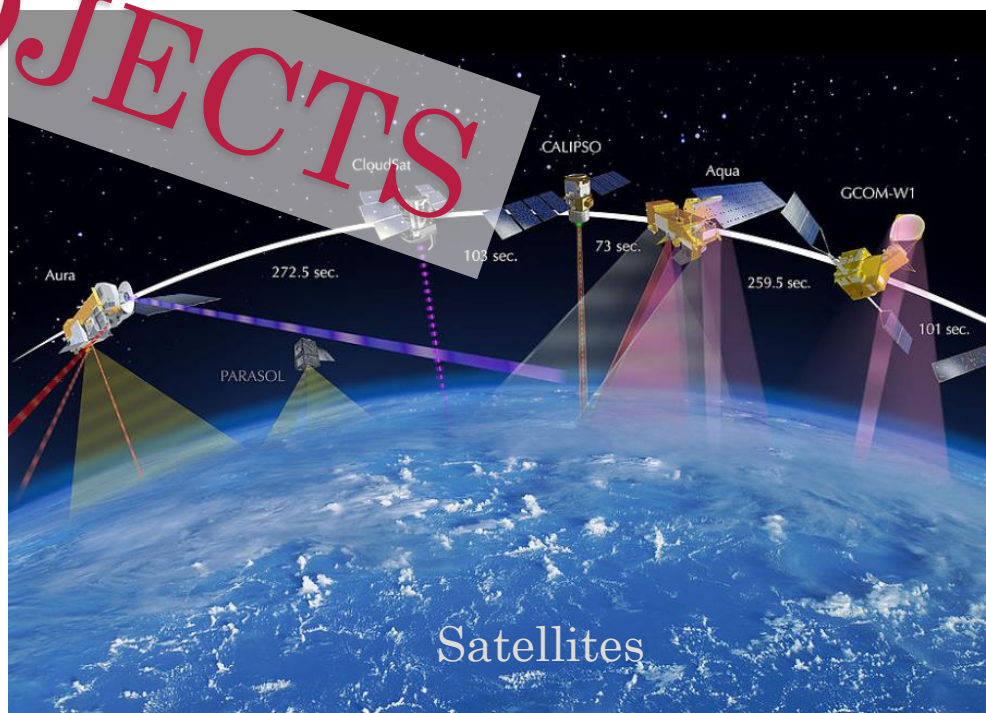
Much of her work is so important, it's still classified...

MARY'S PROJECTS

Interstellar travel
travel between stars



Venus and Mars fly-by's



Satellites



Mary Golda Ross
lived 99 years.
After she retired,
she continued to
teach and mentor
young women who
were passionate
about math and
engineering.



She is featured on the \$1 Sacagawea US coin



CLASSIFIED

The Secret Career of MARY GOLDA ROSS,
Cherokee Aerospace Engineer

TRACI SORELL

**Mary Golda Ross' accomplishments
have been celebrated...**



AND THIS!! August 9, 2018

Books have been written about her

Ad Astra per Astra

Oklahoma-based artist America Meredith, a citizen of the Cherokee nation, commemorated Ross in a painting entitled, *Ad Astra per Astra*, now in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian. The title is a play on the popular Latin phrase, Per Aspera ad Astra (“through hardships to the stars”). Meredith’s title translates as “to the stars through the stars” which draws from Cherokee cosmology about how spirits long ago lifted young boys into the sky, thereby forming the Pleiades. Meredith depicts Ross standing before a starry night sky with the RM-81 Agena to her right and a seven-pointed star (the seven clans of the Cherokee) overhead, symbolizing her dedication to her culture and career.

From Air and Space

<https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/mary-g-ross-aerospace-engineer>

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