The first bear to travel in space was a female black bear named Marfusha, who was launched into orbit aboard the Soviet spacecraft Korabl-Sputnik 2 on March 9, 1961. Marfusha was not alone on this mission; she was accompanied by a dog named Zvyozdochka, or Little Star, and some mice. This mission was part of the Soviet Union's ongoing effort to explore space and beat the United States in the space race. While the bear did not perform any scientific experiments during the flight, her presence demonstrated the Soviet Union's technological capability and added to the country's prestige in the eyes of the world. Despite the fact that Marfusha's fate is not entirely clear, her historic journey into space paved the way for future animal astronauts and human space exploration.