



Read the passage carefully. Then answer each question in a full sentence, citing evidence from the text where asked.

Hollywood's Secret Inventor



Hedy Lamarr was known worldwide as a glamorous film star during Hollywood's Golden Age, but her most remarkable contribution wasn't on screen. Born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in Vienna, Austria, in 1914, she became famous for her beauty and acting talent. However, Lamarr was also a brilliant inventor with a keen interest in science and engineering. During World War II, she was deeply concerned about the Nazi threat and wanted to use her intelligence to help the Allied forces.

Working with composer George Antheil, Lamarr developed a "Secret Communication System" in 1941. This innovative system used "frequency hopping" to prevent enemy forces from jamming Allied torpedoes. Imagine a radio signal quickly jumping between different frequencies; this made it nearly impossible for the enemy to detect or block. They received a patent for their invention in 1942. Despite its potential, the U.S. Navy initially dismissed the idea, partly due to prejudice against Lamarr's celebrity status and her gender, not seeing her as a serious scientist.

Her groundbreaking work, a true innovation, was largely overlooked for decades. The technology was too advanced for its time and wasn't widely implemented during World War II. It wasn't until the 1950s that the concept was rediscovered and developed further. Eventually, Hedy Lamarr's frequency hopping patent became a foundational principle for modern wireless technologies like Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and GPS. Her legacy is immense, connecting her wartime invention to the everyday devices we use today.



Though she received little recognition or financial reward for her invention during her lifetime, Lamarr was posthumously inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2014. Her story challenges the idea that intelligence and creativity are limited to certain professions or appearances. It reminds us to look beyond stereotypes and acknowledge the diverse contributions that have shaped our world.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) What was Hedy Lamarr's primary profession that made her famous?

(2) In the story, what does the word "innovation" mean in the context of Hedy Lamarr's communication system?

(3) What is the author's main purpose in telling Hedy Lamarr's story?



(4) Why did the U.S. Navy initially dismiss Hedy Lamarr's invention despite its potential?

(5) According to the text, what modern technologies use the foundational principle of Hedy Lamarr's invention?

(6) Do you think learning about overlooked inventors like Hedy Lamarr today fully makes up for the lack of recognition they received during their lifetime?

(7) How does Hedy Lamarr's experience of being overlooked connect to the idea of fairness in today's world?



