



## From the Chief Historian



This summer has proven a constant reminder of the inevitability and speed of the march of time. It hasn't been simply the flitting away of those lazy days of summer vacation, the passing of yet another birthday, or the demolition of another historic wind tunnel complex at Langley, but a combination of events that has made me increasingly mindful of the need to cherish what we have.

Particularly striking this summer has been the news of the loss of two great friends of NASA history. Elsewhere in this issue, you will see a short appreciation of Fred Ordway. Fred passed away at his home in Huntsville, Alabama, on 1 July. Having pored through his books as a boy, I had the great pleasure of getting to know Fred personally over the last couple of years—and it was really quite a pleasure. He was a gentleman of the old school and someone who had never lost his boyish enthusiasm about space exploration.

You will also find, elsewhere in this issue, a message from Rio Phair—the sister of Curtis Peebles. Enthusiastic and energetic, Curtis worked for many years on aerospace history at Dryden (now Armstrong) Flight Research Center and was the author (or coauthor) of three NASA history publications. He dropped out of sight about a year ago, and many of you may have heard rumors about what happened. Rio contacted us early in the summer and confirmed that Curtis is now in care and suffering from irreversible memory loss. For anyone who has suffered with an aging

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## Call for Papers

### The NACA Centenary: A Symposium on 100 Years of Aerospace Research and Development

The Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum (NASM) and NASA's History Program Office invite proposals for papers to a special symposium commemorating a century of aerospace research and development. On 3 March 1915, the United States Congress established the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) "to separate the real from the imagined and make known the overlooked and unexpected" in the quest for flight. In honor of that centennial, NASA and NASM will team to present a symposium on the history of the NACA. This historical symposium will be held in Washington, DC, on 3–4 March 2015.

All are invited to submit proposals. Major themes to be addressed in the symposium include the following:

- The NACA organizational and institutional structure and evolution
- The NACA model of public-private partnerships in aerospace research

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The SHFG, founded in 1979, is a nonprofit professional organization that promotes the study and broad understanding of the history of the United States Government. It also serves as the voice of the federal historical community. The Thomas Jefferson Prize commemorates the third President of the United States and the author of the Declaration of Independence, who was a firm believer in the study of history and the preservation of historical records.

## Battlefield Cosmos: The Militarization of Space, 1942–1990

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By Tom Reichard, Freie Universität Berlin ([tom.reichard@fu-berlin.de](mailto:tom.reichard@fu-berlin.de))

The dawn of the Space Age was marked by a military operation. On 3 October 1942, an A4 rocket, later known as the V-2, launched from the Peenemünde Army Research Center in Northern Germany, reached an altitude of 84.5 kilometers, and became the first humanmade object to breach what was regarded as the boundary of outer space. From its inception, spaceflight was closely intertwined with rocketry, embodying the now-familiar dual-use character of space technology. The coalescence of space exploration and the military was not limited to actual spaceflight; it also applied to scientific research and unrealized ventures into outer space, as well as to fictional works about cosmic battles and alien encounters.

Covering the period from the 1940s to the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the “Embattled Heavens: The Militarization of Space in Science, Fiction, and Politics Conference” was held by Freie Universität Berlin in April 2014; it set out to realign perspectives on the Cold War and the Space Age. The conference chose an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the military in the history of outer space in three closely intertwined fields of study: science, fiction, and politics.

Space provided a place for the spatial expansion of human conflict; at the same time, it affected the way conflicts on Earth were conceived. After two disastrous world wars and the ensuing formation of a global age, the infinity of outer space equally provided the background for scenarios of sustained and perpetuated conflict, the ultimate threat of universal destruction, and a quest for transcendence. The specter of nuclear war and the worldwide divide between two rival superpowers led to global fears of destruction. Having undergone several transformations, the militarization of space made possible the onset of an age in which getting lost became increasingly difficult and avoiding surveillance almost impossible. With the ever-growing impact of commercial space technologies and satellites on the everyday life of millions of people around the globe, an end to the military dimension of outer space is not in sight.

For a detailed program, abstracts of all presentations, and biographical information on all speakers, please consult <http://www.heavens.geschkult.fu-berlin.de>.

## Recent Publications and Online Resources

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### NASA Publications

*Archaeology, Anthropology, and Interstellar Communication*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch (NASA SP-2013-4413, 2014). Addressing a field that has been dominated by astronomers, physicists, engineers, and computer scientists, the contributors to this collection raise questions that have been overlooked by physical scientists about the ease of establishing meaningful communication with an extraterrestrial intelligence, given humanity's often dismal attempts to communicate with other cultures during first encounters. This book is available as a free download at [http://www.nasa.gov/connect/ebooks/archaeology\\_anthropology\\_and\\_interstellar\\_communication.html](http://www.nasa.gov/connect/ebooks/archaeology_anthropology_and_interstellar_communication.html).

*Historical Analogs for the Stimulation of Space Commerce*, by Roger D. Launius (NASA SP-2014-4554, 2014). These case studies explore six historical episodes of government support for commercial activities. This book is available as a free download at [http://www.nasa.gov/connect/ebooks/historical\\_analogs\\_detail.html](http://www.nasa.gov/connect/ebooks/historical_analogs_detail.html).

*Aeronautics and Astronautics: A Chronology, 2010*, by Meaghan Flattery (NASA SP-2013-4037, 2014). This book is available only as a free download at <http://history.nasa.gov/sp4037.pdf>.

### Commercially Published Works

Compiled by Chris Gamble

*Bold They Rise: The Space Shuttle Early Years, 1972–1986*, by David Hitt and Heather R. Smith (University of Nebraska Press, June 2014). This book tells the story of the Space Shuttle through the personal experiences of the astronauts, engineers, and scientists who made it happen—in space and on the ground, from the days of research and design, through the heroic accomplishments of the program, to the tragic last minutes of Challenger. In the participants' own voices, we learn that to which so few are privy: what it was like to create a new form of spacecraft, to risk one's life testing that craft, and to witness a friend's death. A "guided tour" of the Shuttle—in historical, scientific, and personal terms—this book provides a fascinating, richly informed, and deeply personal view of a feat without parallel in the human story.