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DID THE GERMANS LEARN FROM GODDARD? — AN EXAMINATION OF WHETHER THE
ROCKETRY OF ROBERT H. GODDARD INFLUENCED GERMAN PRE-WORLD WAR II MISSILE
DEVELOPMENTS**Abstract**

For almost 70 years now, since the end of World War II, there has been a persistent and widespread popular belief that the work of the American rocketry pioneer Robert H. Goddard (1882-1945) influenced the Germans and that these developments ultimately led to their development of the A-4 (later known as the V-2), the world's large-scale liquid propellant rocket that in turn that led to the development of the space launch vehicle. Moreover, this conception, or misconception as the case may be, also appears in publications of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as well as by aerospace historians.

For the first time, this paper examines and documents this important issue in the history of technology. The paper makes use of a wide range of sources, including interviews and/or statements of several members of the A-4 development team, German documents on the development of the A-4, Goddard's own writings and writings by his supporters, official early-post documents on the development of the U.S. missile program, and others. The paper concludes with a summary of the findings.