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Author: Dr. Charles Lundquist
University of Alabama in Huntsville, United States

ROCKETRY MENTORS, ROCKETRY PRACTITIONERS AND UNIQUE SPACE PIONEERS

Abstract

The Apollo missions to the Moon will be one of the few events of the 20th Century that will be acknowledged in history for many centuries in the future. Historians and the Apollo participants themselves agree that an essential factor in the success of the lunar missions was the ‘team’ circumstances that prevailed. Hence, it is historically valuable to identify those team members who began their space careers in Germany and, after World War II, came to the United States and ultimately provided the experienced core of the Apollo rocket transportation team. It is informative to compile three lists of these core team members. The first list has those individuals who worked and gained experience in Peenemuende and who subsequently came to Huntsville, Alabama to work for the U.S. Army. The majority of them held advanced degrees from prestigious European universities. In the process of leading the development of the Redstone, Mercury-Redstone, Jupiter and Juno rockets, they mentored a large number of native U.S. citizens and some selected immigrants. This first list is arbitrarily titled ‘Rocketry Mentors’. The second list has those Rocketry Mentors who subsequently were at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, or at the Kennedy Space Center after its formation, during the 1960’s when the Saturn-Apollo rockets were developed and used to carry men to the Moon. During this decade, this core of rocketry professionals was by then very experienced in execution of new rocket developments and uses. Thus, this second list is titled ‘Rocketry Practitioners’. The third list has those few Rocketry Practitioners who, prior to their participation in developments in Peenemuende, were involved in the early rocket investigations at either Raketenflugplatz or Kummersdorf. In their lifetime, and with their active participation, these individuals had the unique opportunity of seeing youthful dreams realized when mankind first traveled successfully and repeatedly to another body in our Solar System. This list is therefore titled the ‘Unique Space Pioneers’.