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ALDO ZEOLI, CHIEF OF ARGENTINE ROCKETEERS

Abstract

Aldo Zeoli was an Argentine Air Force officer who was in charge of organizing the development of a family of solid rockets in Argentina. Interestingly, in Argentina, it was the Air Force who was tasked with the development of scientific rockets for peaceful purposes, since at that time, the military had an almost monopoly in development and manufacturing of aerospace systems in their Instituto Aerotecnico, located near the city of Cordoba. Zeoli, an aeronautical engineer and avid reader of technical papers and books in English, took the task of the development, not only of bi-basic and composite solid propellants, but also the design of rockets, recovery systems, and even the planning of launching facilities, like the launch bases of Chamical and Celpa Atlantico in the Argentine South Atlantic Coast. Zeoli, who was born in 1916, and received his professional engineer diploma in 1943, started to work as a project engineer, but the director of the Instituto Aerotecnico saw his potential and encouraged him to enter in the Air Force as an officer. He travelled to the UK to specialize in engines at the Power Jets Company in Lutterworth. This company at that time organized courses for military officers of other countries. After his return in 1960 he was put in charge of the Departamento de Vehiculos Espaciales y Armamento (Department of Space Vehicles and Weapons). There Zeoli was in charge of the development of a family of solid rockets propellants and was a major proponent of the development of a indigenous satellite launch vehicle.