

55th IAA HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)
Scientific and Technical Histories (2)

Author: Dr. Mike Pavelec
Air University, United States, mikepavelec@hotmail.com

SCIENTIFIC DIFFUSION AND THE END OF WORLD WAR II

Abstract

The diffusion of space technology began in earnest at the end of World War II. In the final days of the war, the victorious Allies implemented efforts to capture the world's leading rocket scientists, the data that had been produced, and the artifacts that remained from the highly successful German rocket programs. This paper will analyze the German successes during the war, the Allied attempts to gather up defeated German equipment and personnel, and the outcomes of the German wartime programs on both civilian and military uses for space at the start of the Cold War. Based on primary and secondary research, and with a historical approach, this project will offer a comparative analysis of the three Allied programs to capture German scientists and data, incorporate the information and people into existing rocket programs, and the ultimate outcomes of German rocket influence on American, Soviet, and British programs after the war. I will contend that the German military successes during World War II were even less important than the civilian uses of the technology in the emerging Cold War. The "conquest of space" for peaceful civilian purposes was more significant for the history of the technology. The diffusion of German technology at the end of the war was a significant event in the history of technology as well as important in the eventual forays into space. As part of a bigger project on the early space race, the opportunity to convey my research interests will allow me to develop ideas and research for future publication on the significance of the technological evolution of rocketry and space science on the Cold War and human society as a whole.