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HIGH POWER **ROCKETRY** *Magazine*

The Rocket Team

Frederick J. Ordway III and Mitchell R. Sharpe
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The Rocket Team is the group of German rocket scientists that developed the A4 (AKA V-2) and later the Saturn V. The book sheds light on the events that placed the Rocket Team in the USA at precisely the right time in history by telling the story of the German V weapons program. The V-2 program was able to strike England with 1,115 V-2s, and other targets with an additional 2,145 successful V-2 launches. In all, the total German V weapon effort was more costly than America's Manhattan Project, and much less effective.

In the months following the fall of Germany, chaos reigned supreme among the Allied armies at the field level. The book describes intelligence errors and how even with thousands of rockets constructed, it took months to find operable V-2's in Germany. Like the search for WMD in Iraq! Another reminder is the fact that the Allied army continued to suffer casualties in Europe for 18 months after the end of the war. The Rocket Team's biggest fear was an attack by the SS in an effort to kill them before they fell to the Americans.

When the Rocket Team heard that Germany was to be partitioned after the war, they decided to throw their fortunes in with the West. Using clever and bold ruses, they preserved the hard earned data and documentation of their efforts as well as enough hardware so that the Americans could begin where they left off and enjoy the benefit of their experience gained from both successes and failures.

Von Braun worked very hard to keep his team together for their transfer to the Americans. The scientists were to be transported to the US to assist with the war against Japan. The credibility of this story declined as the war with Japan came to an end.

The book is full of tidbits of information that shed light on American and Soviet projects and events of the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. Here is a sampling:

Book Review by: Steve Ainsworth TRA 2454

— With German help, the Soviets investigated the German idea of an "antipodal bomber" (See the American Dyna-Soar) but decided it was not technically possible at that time.

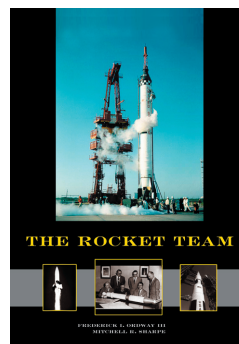
— The V-2 combustion chamber was cooled by the emission of a film of fuel onto the walls of the chamber, and operated at a pressure of only 227 psi. HPR motors of today operate at pressures closer to 1000 psi.

— 1947 saw the first V-2 launched from the Soviet Union. The first successful V-2 launch from the US occurred May 10, 1946.

— In 1951, the Germans in Russia were given the assignment to design a gyroscope using the concepts of an oscillating pendulum rather than a rotating wheel. This is very similar to the piezo gyroscopes now manufactured by Futaba for the radio controlled helicopter hobby!

— A French company had manufactured the V-2's carbon steering vanes for the Germans during the war but refused to make them for the US because they did not want to admit that they helped the Germans!

Wow, what a wealth of information packed into 311 pages. Including a detailed bibliography and many old photographs. The 2003 edition even includes a bonus DVD so you can watch the V-2 launches yourself!



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