

# NASA HISTORY: NEWS & NOTES

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## OUR WASHINGTON SUMMER

As we in Washington endure periods of sweltering heat, historians keeping watch over the fortunes of the U.S. space program are stimulated by the important issues underlying the current congressional deliberations over the NASA Budget. The outcome is not yet clear, but how NASA's Space Station program fares in the federal budget may signal the place of a strong civilian space program in the public's priorities, not to mention the relative weight of manned versus unmanned programs. Meanwhile, as NASA prepares to return the Shuttle to flight in late summer, we wish we could be everywhere all at once. We do what we can: the Space Station, whatever its future, will have a history--thanks to Adam Gruen (program historian), Howard McCurdy (American University), who has just completed a study of the strategies Space Station supporters used to obtain the White House's blessing on the program, Tom Lewin and V.K. Narayanan (University of Kansas), who are examining the early Space Station management, and John M. Logsdon (George Washington University), who is studying the international dimensions of the program.

## NASA HISTORICAL DESK REFERENCE NOW AVAILABLE

At long last students of post-World War II America have available a historical desk reference providing brief summaries (with budget, technical, and management information) of NASA's programs and projects from 1958 through 1978. Published in June, the three volume NASA Historical Data Book (NASA SP-4012) combines a reprinted edition of the long out-of-print NASA Historical Data Book: NASA Resources, 1958-1968 with two new volumes on NASA's programs and projects (1958-1978) written by Linda N. Ezell. The three volume set is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 for \$57.00 the set. When ordering, be sure to provide the GPO stock number: 033-000-01017-6.

Since we expect to continue the Data Book as a series and have begun work on the next volume (1979-1988), we would welcome your suggestions of any improvements that might make this reference work more useful. Please direct those suggestions to the Director, NASA History Division, NASA, Washington, DC 20546.

## AHA TAPS 1988-89 AEROSPACE HISTORY FELLOWS

The American Historical Association has recently awarded two fellowships in aerospace history. The 1988-89 Aerospace History Fellows are Eric M. Schatzberg, a graduate student in the University of Pennsylvania's Program in the History and Sociology of Science, and Michael A. Dennis, a graduate student in the Department of the History of Science at The Johns Hopkins University. Eric Schatzberg will be exploring the process of technical choice in the development of transport aircraft during the 1920s and 1930s; Michael Dennis is investigating the "guided missile's nursery," the university laboratory, with a special focus on the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory and the MIT Instrumenta-

tion Laboratory. Schatzberg and Dennis were selected from a strong field of applicants that marked this second year of the AHA Aerospace History Fellowship Program, which is funded by NASA. Melvin Kranzberg (Georgia Institute of Technology), Robert Wohl (University of California at Los Angeles), William H. Becker (George Washington University), Edward W. Constant (Carnegie-Mellon University), and Alex Roland (Duke University) served as this year's fellowship selection committee.

#### NASA HISTORIANS MEET AT GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Scholars working on NASA funded historical research and writing met at the Goddard Space Flight Center for an intensive two-day workshop this past April 14 and 15. The meeting's first (and only public) event was a lecture by 1987-88 AHA aerospace history fellow Glenn Bugos, who spoke on the results of his research on the testing of the F-4 Phantom II, a process that reveals the influences on engineering practice of the design interactions between the Department of Defense and its contractors. His talk stimulated much discussion with the audience, which included not only historians but some veteran NASA aeronautical engineers.

The remaining day and a half was consumed with informal presentations and intensive conversations about the many research projects under way by NASA sponsored scholars Roger Bilstein (revising and updating Orders of Magnitude), Karl Hufbauer (a history of solar science), Craig Waff (history of Project Galileo), Jim Capshew (history of Goddard Space Flight Center), Virginia Dawson (history of Lewis Research Center), V.K. Narayanan and Tom Lewin (study of early Space Station management), Adam Gruen (Space Station program history) Howard McCurdy (history of NASA's Organizational Culture), and Sylvia Fries (career history of NASA's Apollo Era engineers). As a result of the broad scope and varying stages of progress of these projects, the workshop served as an excellent practicum in doing the history of large-scale research and development institutions.

Also at the workshop were Don Hess and Janet Kovacevich from the history office at Johnson Space Center, and Mike Wright and Tom Gates, who are serving as historians at Marshall Space Flight Center. All four brought an impressive array of bibliographical and documentary search information for historical documents at their own centers. The exchanges among the workshop participants were candid, sympathetic, collegial, and above all, enlightening. It was a high-light of our Spring here, and we are grateful to GSFC director Dr. John W. Townsend, Jr., Jan Ruff (history coordinator at GSFC) and Jim Capshew for their hospitality for the two days.

#### VIRGINIA DAWSON and MICHAEL DENNIS WIN HISTORICAL ESSAY AWARD

Virginia Dawson was honored at this year's National Space Club dinner on March 18 as a co-recipient of the 1987 Robert H. Goddaard Historical Essay Award. Sharing the honor was Michael A. Dennis, recently named a 1988-89 AHA Aerospace History fellow. Dawson received her award for her essay "The Push from Within: NACA's Lewis Laboratory and the Creation of NASA." Dennis's award-winning essay was entitled "Making Space: Sounding the Territory of the Upper Atmosphere Research Archipelago, 1944-46." The annual National Space Club dinner, by the way, is an extraordinary event. Held this year at the Washington International Hilton Hotel, the event reportedly attracted about 25,000 guests, who endured enormous traffic congestion to dine elegantly and rub shoulders with a vast network of space enthusiasts from industry, government, and academia.

## NASA HISTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

Our advisory committee helped to shake off the winter blues by meeting with us at NASA headquarters in late March. The committee reviewed NASA's current program and projects and explored a number of issues. Chairman Arthur Norberg conveyed to the committee the interest shown by the NASA Advisory Council (of which the history advisory committee is a standing subcommittee) in NASA's history program. The Council, during a meeting held earlier in the month, had recommended to Arthur that NASA place special emphasis on the historical study of NASA failures as well as successes, studies dealing with policy and its effects on technical design, and studies that broaden the frame of reference of NASA history. The committee found that the program was moving steadily forward in each of these directions. As usual, the committee brought to its discussions the combined insights and experience of the scholarly community, which have been an inestimable contribution to our program. NASA History Advisory Committee members are, in addition to Arthur Norberg (director of the Charles Babbage Institute), Daniel J. Kevles (California Institute of Technology), W. Henry Lambright (Syracuse University), Glenn Porter (Hagley Museum and Library), William H. Becker (George Washington University), W. David Lewis (Auburn University), and Richard P. Hallion (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base).

## NASA HISTORY FORECASTS

NASA history advisory committee meetings are always enlivened by discussions of our future--the historical questions that need answering, however tentatively--and the most effective ways to use the limited resources at our disposal. The excellent second year of our fellowship program with the American Historical Association, during which the AHA received a good number of high quality applicants and NASA was able to fund two fellowships, was all we needed to resolve to continue the AHA fellowship program. On the other hand, our "small studies" program has not elicited the responses expected from younger scholars for which it was designed. The program will, however, continue so long as funding is available. Among our reference work series, the Astronautics and Aeronautics chronology will be discontinued after 1985, while the enthusiastic response to the recently published NASA Historical Data Book, 1958-1978 has convinced us that we should begin working on the next volume (for 1979-1988).

The committee also shared our conviction of the importance of two forthcoming projects: a Documentary History of the Space Age (for which we expect proposals in August), and a history of aeronautical research. An announcement inviting proposals to do the aeronautical history will be issued in a few months, and will reflect the committee's urging that the aeronautical research being surveyed not be confined to the NACA and NASA, but include work done in industry and examine the relationship of industrial aeronautical research to its government sponsors.

If schedules are reasonably well kept, we expect to receive a number of long-awaited manuscripts within the next six to nine months, including Karl Hufbauer's history of solar science, Viginia Dawson's history of Lewis Research Center, and Roger Bilstein's revision and updating of our little classic, Orders of Magnitude: A History of NACA and NASA. Already "in press" is W. David Compton's historical study of the post-Apollo 11 missions to the moon. Newly chosen historians (who will be named after their contracts are awarded) will begin work this fall on histories of the Johnson Space Center and the Deep Space Network.

Closer to home (for us) is a commitment to continue exploiting the uses of our new computers to develop a computerized inventory and search system for the historical reference files in our office at NASA headquarters. We took delivery on some spanking new and powerful desk-top computers this spring and have a slightly older IBM XT Personal Computer with printer and Wordperfect software available for visitors' use. Though the wheels of NASA procurement grind exceedingly slow, we do hope to have some extra help in the office by the fall to set up our inventory on a computer "data base."

Meanwhile, Sherrill Kale, who joined us last year as a writer-editor, has taken her talents across the river to the Defense Department. We will miss her, but are consoled with the flattering notion that her experience here will be useful for the kind of work she will be doing at the Pentagon (which must remain a mystery). Rebecca Miller has recently joined us, also as writer-editor. Rebecca will pick up where Sherrill left in preparing the "Aeronautics and Space Report of the President," an annual congressionally mandated summary of all aeronautics and space programs conducted by the federal government. We know that she will assure that the momentum and good cheer that Sherrill brought to us is continued.

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Last but not least: as we try to keep in touch with you, do keep in touch with us. We welcome your visits and your news. And we hope that what remains of your summers is both productive and restorative.

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