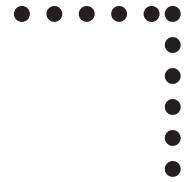


# QUEST

THE HISTORY OF SPACEFLIGHT QUARTERLY



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## Boeing's Proposed LEM, 1962



### THE THREE HEROES OF SPACEFLIGHT:

THE RISE OF THE TSIOLKOVSKII –  
GODDARD – OBERTH INTERPRETATION  
AND ITS CURRENT VALIDITY

### TELSTAR:

THE FIRST COMMUNICATIONS  
SATELLITE

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**Front Cover Credit:**

Boeing artist Jack Olson's 1962 painting of Boeing's proposed LEM. Credit: Boeing



Fifty years ago, in 1962, employees at JPL gathered by the *Mariner Venus* probe. Image courtesy of Art LeBrun

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the late 1940s to justify the military use of satellites (17) ignores historical reality, since Air Research and Development Command was established in 1950. Kalic erroneously credits NASA with early military satellite programs, such as *Transit* (90), and the military with NASA satellites, such as *Tiros* and *Nimbus* (117, 127). Although he touts The Outer Space Treaty (OST) of January 1967 as the culmination of presidential efforts to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and surely knows it banned only “nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction,” Kalic’s phraseology repeatedly implies the OST ensured space would remain free of all weapons, or at least “aggressive” weaponry.

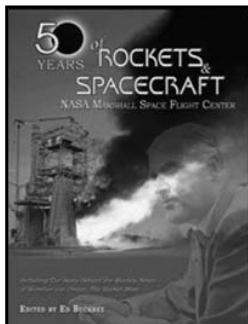
How successive presidents from Harry Truman through Lyndon Johnson shaped national space policy generally and the militarization of space particularly, in terms of both conti-

nity and evolution, remains worthy of detailed investigation. Kalic’s *US Presidents and the Militarization of Space, 1946-1967* should prompt further study, particularly because he asserts his “reinterpretation” of the development of space policy “contradicts the popular opinion that the United States sought to weaponize space” and that it “calls into question the traditional interpretation of the space race as an action-reaction paradigm” (120). Some readers might perceive such statements as straw men to make a perspective appear more uniquely pathbreaking than it really is.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# 50 YEARS OF ROCKETS AND SPACECRAFT / NASA MARSHALL



Edited by Ed Buckbee

Acclaim Press, 2009

ISBN 978-1-935001-17-1

Pages: 224

Price: \$44.95

This is not an academic book, and it would not be fair to review it as one. It is a commemorative publication issued by the Marshall Retiree Association. As such, *50 Years* is a compilation of somewhat disparate elements. A large-format, attractively produced glossy book with a color photo section near the front, it opens with letters from politicians, et cetera, regarding the then-upcoming 50th anniversary of Marshall’s official founding on 1 July 1960. The most intellectually substantial section is a history of the center taking up 58 pages in the middle of the book. It is a competent survey, based, one must assume, on Andrew Dunar and Stephen Waring’s excellent official history, *Power to Explore: A History of Marshall Space Flight Center, 1960-1990* (Washington, DC: NASA, 1999). Coverage is extended through to about 2008, however, with more discussion of Shuttle, Space Station, and *Constellation*—a program not yet cancelled at the time of publication. Inevitably the last sections read basically like public relations copy for Marshall’s role in that project.

Unsurprisingly, a critical view of anything in Marshall’s past is absent or very subdued, notably in discussions of the *Hubble* mirror flaw and the *Challenger* accident. Perhaps a little surprising is the apparent accidental omission of the Mercury-Redstone project in the history section, and the prob-

ably intentional omission of Marshall’s role in the civil rights battles of the mid-1960s in Alabama. The latter is surprising, because it is covered by Dunar and Waring and casts some favorable light on Wernher von Braun’s role in speaking against segregation—this in a book that, reflecting the dominant view in Huntsville, is suffused with von Braun hero worship.

Other sections include obituaries of former center engineers and leaders (curiously including Hermann Oberth, who was never at Marshall, but only at Redstone Arsenal in the Army years), a timeline section from 1950–1970 (reflecting the book’s blurring of the Army and NASA periods and its emphasis on von-Braun-era nostalgia), a collection of images of von Braun’s often pungent or humorous “Weekly Notes” comments to his key managers during the 1960s, and a 66-page collection of memoirs and anecdotes from retired Marshall engineers and scientists. Those latter stories might be a useful source to future historians, although they must taken with a grain of salt (due to the usual errors of fact in memory-based testimony) and are rather hard to mine, as they are not indexed and not systematically organized.

In sum, this book may be of use to those interested in the history of Marshall, although for the first three decades of the center’s existence, reading should begin with Dunar and Waring.

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