

OMNIPRESENT KGB

The first NASA administrator T. Keith Glennan caught attention of the Soviet spies and collaborators in the United States in the early 1950s when President Truman appointed him to the Atomic Energy Commission.

An FBI's double agent and well-known Hollywood producer and musical director Boris Morros described that his KGB controller "instructed ... [Morros] to investigate the new AEC commissioner's [Glennan's] political leanings and the state of personal finances." Morros was tasked, as a Soviet spy, to "also find out, of course, whether there were any shady incidents in his [Glennan's] past. Was he a heavy drinker, for example? Did he have a mistress? Who was she? What about his secretary? Was Keith honest? Could he be bribed?" (Morros 1959, 143)

When NASA was activated, it absorbed 8000 scientists, engineers, and technicians of the 43-year-old National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. The operating NACA's facilities included Wallops Station (now Wallops Flight Facility), Wallops Island, Virginia; Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory (now Langley Research Center), Hampton, Virginia; Lewis Flight Propulsion Center (now Glenn Research Center), Cleveland, Ohio; Ames Aeronautical Laboratory (now Ames Research Center), Moffett Field, California; and High Speed Flight Station (now Hugh L. Dryden Flight Research Facility), Edwards Air Force Base, California.

Administrator Glennan promptly requested transfer of the ABMA's technical personnel and JPL to NASA. This was another major

blow to the Army, which rivalled in severity of consequences the Secretary Wilson's 200-mile missile range limitation in 1956. The Army's space capabilities and ambitions that were propelled into the public focus by the successful launch of Explorer I and follow-on satellites were threatened again. As a first step, JPL was transferred from the Army jurisdiction to NASA on 3 December 1958.

In the meantime the von Braun group at Redstone studied, with the support of ARPA, the possibility of clustering several engines in order to determine whether it would be possible to produce thrust of one million pounds (2.4 MN). The Army refused to give up this prominent technical group for the new space agency, and a protracted bureaucratic battle ensued. In August 1959, the Defense Department decided that such large rocket engines would not be needed for military objectives and finally signed an agreement with NASA in December 1959. On 1 July 1960, von Braun and his organization of 4000 employees were transferred from the Army to NASA. Von Braun was appointed director of the newly formed *Marshall Space Flight Center* (MSFC) in Huntsville, Alabama.

Another NASA field center emerged in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., when NASA absorbed 150 personnel from the Project Vanguard, creating the NASA-Vanguard Division. This group soon combined with more NRL space engineers and scientists and with the groups from other institutions, forming the *Beltsville Space Center*, now *Goddard Space Flight Center*, in Greenbelt, Maryland. Beginning with 216 employees at the end of 1958, the new center had grown to almost 3500 by 31 December 1963.

Building on the satellite programs inherited from the Navy and the Army, NASA initiated a number of programs focused on study of space environment

**Emerging
NASA**

**NACA
Centers**

**Transfer
of JPL**

**Marshall
Space
Flight
Center**

**Beltsville
Space
Center**

Blazing the Trail

The Early History of Spacecraft and Rocketry

Mike Gruntman

AIAA, Reston, Va., 2004

ISBN 156347705X; 978-1563477058

505 pages with 340 figures

Index: 2750+ entries, including 650 individuals

This book presents the fascinating story of the events that paved the way to space. It introduces the reader to the history of early rocketry and the subsequent developments which led into the space age. People of various nations and from various lands contributed to the breakthrough to space, and the book takes the reader to far away places on five continents.

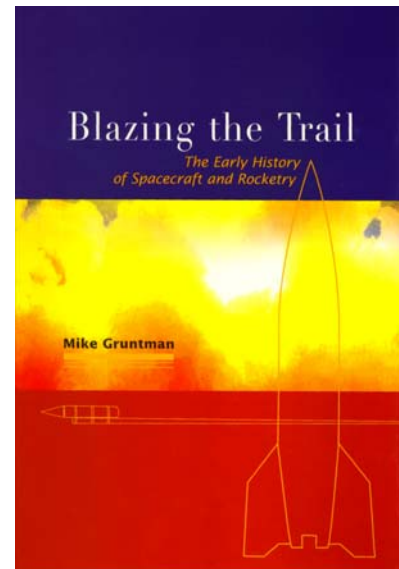
This world-encompassing view of the realization of the space age reflects the author's truly unique personal experience, a life journey from a child growing on the Tyuratam launch base in the 1950s and early 1960s, to an accomplished space physicist and engineer to the founding director of a major U.S. nationally recognized program in space engineering in the heart of the American space industry.

Most publications on the topic either target narrow aspects of rocket and spacecraft history or are popular books that scratch the surface, with minimal and sometimes inaccurate technical details.

This book bridges the gap. It is a one-stop source of numerous technical details usually unavailable in popular publications. The details are not overbearing and anyone interested in rocketry and space exploration will navigate through the book without difficulty. The book also includes many quotes to give readers a flavor of how the participants viewed the developments. There are 340 figures and photographs, many appearing for the first time.

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Book details (including **index** and **reviews**) at: <http://astronauticsnow.com/blazingthetrail/>

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