

# NASA HISTORY: NEWS & NOTES

NASA History Office • NASA Headquarters • Washington, D.C. 20546

This past holiday season has climaxed a busy and productive year for the NASA history program, one which has seen several new publications as well as a number of new opportunities for NASA sponsored historical research and writing in aerospace history.

Please Note the Following Proposal Deadlines!  
(Projects are described in this Newsletter)\*

AHA Fellowship	February 1, 1986
New Series	March 1, 1986 June 1, 1986
"Small Studies"	February 15, 1986 June 15, 1986 October 15, 1986
Goddard Space Flight Center History	March 15, 1986
Space Station - International Aspects	March 1, 1986

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\* Scholars planning to make proposals should contact the NASA History Office as soon as possible for instructions.

Our previous newsletter noted the publication of Alex Roland's two volume history of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Model Research (NASA SP-4103, \$26 the set), Richard P. Hallion's On the Frontier, a history of advanced flight research at Dryden Research Center (SP-4303, \$10), and A Spacefaring People, a collection of essays edited by Alex Roland and designed and priced for use as collateral reading (SP-4405, \$3.50.)

"Just off the press" is Elizabeth A. Muenger's Searching the Horizon: A History of Ames Research Center (SP-4304), available from the Government Printing Office for \$13 (pb); to order, use the GPO stock number, S/N 033-000-0096-6. Located in California's "silicon valley," Ames Research Center has generated major advances in high-speed aeronautical research and space technology. Betsy Muenger's history of the 40 year old NASA center traces the operational and managerial changes at this R & D institution and their relation to its research.

## University Press Publication of New Series

The NASA History Office has begun negotiations with a distinguished university press to publish our New Series in NASA history: a series of historical monographs treating NASA's aeronautical and space programs from

broad perspectives, both historical and contextual, and intended for academic and general audiences. University press publication of this series has long been a goal of both the History Office and the History Advisory Committee, which helped us obtain agency approval for this important step.

Historians interested in doing a volume for the New Series should contact Sylvia D. Fries, NASA Historian, as soon as possible. (Telephone: 202-453-2999, or write to Dr. Fries at Code LBH, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC 20546). Deadline for New Series proposals will be January 1 and June 1 of each year, but we will consider current proposals until March 1 and again after the June 1 deadline.

Subject, time (up to 30 months), and compensation are all negotiable. Proposals will receive peer evaluation on the basis of intrinsic merit and the proposer's qualifications and experience. Ph.D. in history and successful publication experience preferred.

#### American Historical Association Fellowship Program

For some time scholars have pointed out to us a need for additional support for historians interested in NASA-related history, but not necessarily in doing a book-length study for the NASA History Series. Realizing the difficulty of entering upon a new field of research without support during the release from routine teaching that such an effort would require, the History Office has arranged through the good offices of the American Historical Association a postdoctoral fellowship program in aerospace history.

Fellows will be selected by a committee appointed by the American Historical Association, the Society for the History of Technology, the History of Science Society, and the Economic History Association. Stipend is \$23,000, plus up to \$1,000 for relocation and travel expenses, if needed. Request further information (and application forms) from: Fellowship in Aerospace History, American Historical Association, 400 A Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003. The deadline for application is February 1, 1986.

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University press publication of our New Series and the postdoctoral fellowship program are only two of the promising results of a two-year collaboration between our office and NASA's History Advisory Committee.

#### "Small Study" Support

The committee has also recommended offering historians support for "small study" opportunities: research and writing efforts leading to preparation of scholarly journal-length articles. Since November 1985 we have been receiving proposals for sponsored research and writing in NASA-related aerospace history. Awards may be up to the level of \$9,500, depending on the nature and scope of the project proposed. Proposals will be considered

three times annually, and should be submitted by the following deadlines: February 15, June 15, and October 15. Before preparing proposals, historians should discuss their ideas with Sylvia Fries, using the telephone number and address noted above.

### NASA's Historical Documents and Archives

When the NASA History Advisory Committee met last June, it urged NASA to give top priority to historical documentation as a responsibility of the agency's history program. The NASA History Office in Washington contains an invaluable collection of non-record historical documents, an essential starting point for any serious research in NASA-related history. This collection has been developed and maintained by Lee D. Saegesser. But all extended, substantive research in federal R & D programs eventually leads to the "official records" collections of the National Archives and Records Administration located in Washington, DC and in federal records centers throughout the country. The breadth and depth of those collections, and their practical accessibility, depends to a large extent on records managers throughout the federal government and, of course, in NASA.

The NASA History Office is taking steps to ensure the continuation and accessibility not only of our own documents collection, but also of all NASA "official records." We have begun informal but active support of NASA's own Records Management staff efforts, especially in the area of electronically generated documents.

And in November the History Office added to its staff James P. Delaney, an historian and assistant archivist. Jim comes to us with several years' experience at the National Archives and the Defense Mapping Agency; he holds an M.A. in history from Catholic University. His quiet, good-natured presence has been a welcome addition to our office. He will be working with Lee to develop a folder inventory of our collection, a task begun by our summer employee, Margaret Rung, who is now employed at History Associates, Inc.

### Goddard Space Flight Center History

We have reopened our competition for a three year position, advertised last spring, for a historian at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) in nearby Greenbelt, Md. GSFC is responsible for NASA's basic and applied scientific experiments using unmanned spacecraft and sounding rockets. The historian selected will be expected to develop a historical documents collection at GSFC and research and write a history of the Center. Salary, project duration, and project related expenses are negotiable; Ph.D in the history of technology or science preferred. Selection will be based upon peer and NASA evaluation of proposals submitted by March 15, 1986. (Interested historians should contact us by February 1, 1986.)

## Space Station History

With the support and encouragement of NASA's Space Station Program office, the NASA History Office has initiated a Thucydidean venture--though, we trust, without the need for swords and shields! We now have three historians working at capturing the record--oral, as well as written and graphic--of NASA's current program to transmute the visions of Jules Verne, Hermann Oberth, Wernher von Braun, and other space pioneers into modern reality. Whatever kind of space station may go aloft in the next decade, NASA's program is the culmination of almost 30 years' effort to design and place in orbit a permanent manned facility. It is a unique real-time case study for historians of a large scale technological program, surrounded by contending institutional and political interests, attempting to master the organization and technologies upon which it depends for its success.

Hard at work, and beginning to write, is Howard C. McCurdy of American University who, assisted by his graduate students, has been researching the White House decision to support a space station and the ensuing deliberations on Capitol Hill. Adam Gruen, who completed a Guggenheim Fellowship at the National Air and Space Museum in September, will pick up where Howard leaves off, serving as the space station program historian. (The total project has its own office at NASA Hq, which will be Adam's home away from home here.) Meanwhile, covering the bases at NASA's Johnson Space Center, where much of the space station action will occur, is Roger Bilstein of the University of Houston.

Historians of international space policy and politics take note: As part of the Space Station History project, we expect to offer to a qualified scholar a contract to research and write a small monograph on the international negotiations and agreements affecting the U.S. space station, which will involve the European, Japanese, and Canadian space programs in space station research, development, and operations. This promises to be an interesting story and the NASA History Office is prepared to offer an historian a year's support to a historian to research it, and tell it. If interested (or if you know of someone who is qualified and might be interested), please contact Sylvia Fries as soon as possible; deadline for proposals is March 1, 1986. (Tel: 202-453-2999)

### Meanwhile....

NASA-supported historians are busily generating the documentation and historical record, analytic and narrative, of a rich diversity of subjects in modern aerospace history. Among them: Paul Hanle, Robert Kargon, and Robert Smith, who are working on a three year project to document and describe the development of NASA's Hubble space telescope, to be launched from the Space Shuttle in the late summer of 1986. The Hubble telescope, an extraordinary achievement in optical instrumentation, will provide astronomers a view into the heavens of unprecedented magnitude.

Also working in the area of space science are Karl Hufbauer, whose work on the history of the exploration of the Sun has been reported here before, and Craig B. Waff, recently relocated from New Jersey to Pasadena, CA, to serve as project historian for the Galileo project (NASA's probe of the planet Jupiter, scheduled for launch from the Space Shuttle in May of 1986).

Jim Tomayko has just submitted his manuscript on the development and use of onboard computers in space flight; it is being sent out for critical reading while Jim moves from Wichita State University to Carnegie-Mellon University's new Software Engineering Institute.

Also doing aerospace history with support from NASA are Virginia Dawson, working on a history of NASA's Lewis Research Center; A. Michal McMahon, working at NASA Headquarters on the agency's relations with the university, industrial, and defense communities; Joe Guilmartin and John Mauer at Johnson Space Center, developing a chronology of the Space Transportation System (alias "Shuttle"); and Dave Compton, researching and writing a history of post-1969 Apollo missions to the moon. Jim Hansen, whose history of Langley Research Center is in press, is spending a year as Langley Research Center historian before moving on to Auburn University.

While engaged in their own work, historians participating in the NASA history program are extending the reach of their scholarship by presenting papers, publishing articles, and receiving awards. For example, Craig Waff's article, "Comet Halley's First Expected Return: English Public Apprehensions, 1755-58," is scheduled to appear in the February, 1986 issue of the Journal for the History of Astronomy, while the September, 1985 issue of Aerospace Historian contains Jim Hansen's "The Cowling Story at Langley Laboratory, 1926-1936." "The Commonality Chimera," a paper by Richard P. Hallion which explores the question of joint military service aircraft, has won the Air Force Systems Command Commander's Distinguished Paper Award as well as the Lt. Col. Roy Mace Trophy Award. Virginia Dawson and Michal McMahon will be giving papers in early March at the meeting of the Midwest JUNTO for the History of Science and Technology, and Michal will be reading a second paper at a Workshop in "The Military in Academic Science" at The Johns Hopkins University in April.

Please, as always, let us know about your activities, presentations, papers, and awards, so that we can spread the word!

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Finally, we would like to extend a word of appreciation to the Space History Group and Pamela Mack of the Albatrosses, aerospace history section of the Society for the History of Technology, for their vigorous efforts to build a community of space historians within our broader discipline.