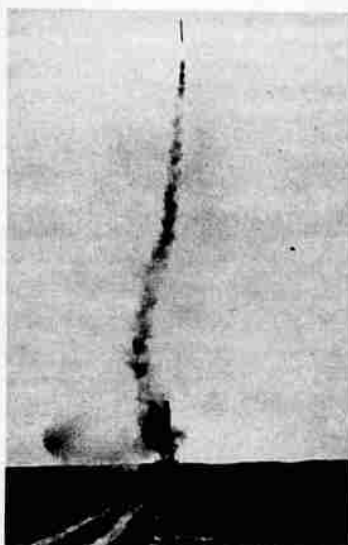




New wing of Roswell (N.M.) Museum will be dedicated to Dr. Goddard.



predicting that, with multi-stage rockets, man might reach beyond the atmosphere, out into space, and as far as the moon.

Newspapers gleefully picked it up, nicknamed him "Moony" Goddard, and pictured him as a crackpot. Goddard shrugged and went back to his laboratory, but the unhappy publicity did little to encourage him to seek publicity, and his lone-wolf research was a factor in his anonymity.

Goddard's 1926 rocket—the first successful liquid-fueled rocket in history—appears today as primitive as the Wright brothers' first plane. The rickety-looking missile had failed several times but Goddard, still undaunted, said, "I'll be satisfied if it clears the launching tower."

It cleared the tower and then some, rising 41 feet and traveling 220 feet in distance, all within 2.5 seconds, or about 60 miles an hour.

Goddard tested larger versions within the next few years and one of them, on July 17, 1929, created so much noise and scared so many people that "Moony" Goddard was eventually asked to leave town. By this time, however, he had attracted the attention of another pioneer named Charles Lindbergh, who persuaded the Guggenheim Foundation to grant Goddard \$25,000 for further study.

With this money Goddard was able to set up a laboratory and testing grounds on a ranch near Roswell, N. M.; there he made some of his most important contributions to rocketry. Some of his "firsts" included the use of gyroscopes for stabilizing control, centrifugal pumps, and inserting rudder-like vanes in the exhaust stream, a trick later used to steer the German V-2 rockets which bombed London during World War II.

Ironically, Goddard received his greatest tribute from the Germans who made the V-2—a missile which, except for its size, was essentially the same as Goddard's advanced models. Willy Ley, an early associate of the German scientists and now an American rocket expert, has admitted that Goddard "anticipated our earliest experiments by at least six years." In fact, he said, they had heard of Goddard's work, but all attempts to exchange information with him were "curtly declined."

Goddard continued his lonely ways until World War II and then became a Navy consultant for jet-assisted take offs.

Goddard died in 1945, the same week the Army began testing captured V-2s at White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico, about 100 miles from the spot Goddard chose for his pioneer efforts.

Goddard has not been altogether forgotten, however. Next Saturday a new wing, the "Goddard Memorial Wing," will be dedicated at the Roswell Museum, establishing a permanent space-age memorial to Dr. Robert Goddard, the man who started it all.

(Advertisement)

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