Fritz Von Opel Encyclopedia Article

Fritz Von Opel

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Fritz Von Opel

1899-1971

German automotive engineer who created and piloted one of the first rocket-propelled aircraft. No doubt influenced by his grandfather, Adam Opel, who was known for producing everything from sewing machines to bicycles to automobiles, Fritz von Opel test drove his rocket-propelled car, the Opel-Rak 1, in 1928. One year later he tested a glider that was powered by 16 rockets, designed in part with Max Valier and Friedrich Wilhelm Sander, flying the first official rocketed airplane. His work on these projects lay the foundation for modern rocketry and space exploration.