Korolev, Sergei Encyclopedia Article

Korolev, Sergei

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Contents

Korolev, Sergei Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Korolev, Sergei.....3

Korolev, Sergei

Russian Engineer and Designer 1907-1966

Sergei Pavlovich Korolev was the chief designer of launch vehicles during the early years of the Soviet Union's space program and the driving force behind the development of the R-7 ("Semyorka") **rocket**, which launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, and the first man and woman into orbit. Korolev was born in 1907 and as a youth was greatly influenced by the writings of Russian space pioneer Konstantin Tsiolkovsky. In 1931 Korolev helped organize the Moscow-based Group for the Study of Reactive Propulsion, which in 1933 launched its first successful liquid-fueled rocket.

When World War II ended in 1945, Korolev headed the development of an "all Soviet" long-range missile, based on the German V-2. After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Korolev headed a design team that developed an intercontinental missile—the R-7—which was fueled with liquid oxygen and kerosene. Later he won the support of Communist leader Nikita Khrushchev for a strong rocket program. Korolev directed the Soviet human lunar program during the 1960s, but he died in 1966 from massive hemorrhage after surgeons discovered colon cancer. Only after his death did Soviet officials acknowledge Korolev's accomplishments.

See Also

Cosmonauts (Volume 3);; Tsiolkovsky, Konstantin (Volume 3).

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