



WERNHER VON BRAUN--THE ROCKET MAN

Presented by Ed Buckbee

History has embraced few uncommonly gifted scientists—think in the caliber of Galileo and Thomas Edison--as well as few uncommonly gifted managers. History has rarely welcomed an individual who is equally gifted in both disciplines. Wernher von Braun, considered by many to be one of the most successful and effective managers of a U.S. peacetime technology program, was certainly such an individual.

Ed Buckbee, former NASA public affairs official, spokesman and colleague of the famous rocket scientist, takes you behind the scenes with a close-up look at the father of America's moon landing program. You meet the man that convinced President John F. Kennedy that we could beat the Russians in an all out race to the moon. That race would begin in Huntsville, Alabama, at von Braun's rocket factory.

Buckbee introduces the multi-faceted von Braun, the master architect of America's manned space program; the man who made dreams come true while letting others see the stars from a vantage point he himself had hoped to one day share. In von Braun, Buckbee provides insight about a man who committed--heart and soul--to living in a new frontier. His words, "late to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise," aptly described his approach to securing his dream. Von Braun, the rocket scientist and visionary of space flight, convinced presidents to spend millions exploring space for peaceful purposes. Von Braun's eloquence and resolve were renowned and unrelenting, even after landing man on the moon.

Von Braun was a public relation man's dream and the darling of the press corps covering the moon-landing program. His ability to sell his dreams and vision to the Americana public was unique. Congressmen and senators trusted him. They sought him out to answer their question, "Can we beat the Russians to the moon?"

Buckbee presents von Braun's story with photography, interviews, and personal notes rarely seen and experiences that he can relate because--he was there. During the height of the Saturn- Apollo program, when von Braun was director of

the Marshall Space Flight Center, he implemented a particularly effective management tool called the weekly notes. Von Braun's managers solicited weekly notes from each of their subordinate organizations. As the notes passed through the chain of command at the Marshall Center, additions or deletions were made based upon the importance of the issue. Von Braun reviewed the notes and made his notations in the margins. The notes, with von Braun's comments, were then returned to the organization deemed responsible for responding to von Braun's inquiry. The notes were his direct personal channel—his email-- with his laboratory directors and project managers providing insight to his management style, his personality and his hands-on approach to leadership. The subjects covered in the notes can be categorized as programmatic, strategic, institutional, political or sometimes humorous. The notes have attracted attention from space historians as well as experts in the field of organizational communications and management.

Buckbee takes you inside the rocket factory where the mammoth Saturn V-- a rocket of immense size, power and accuracy-- was conceived, developed and tested. It was to become the moon rocket. You see, hear and feel this mammoth rocket--man's greatest space machine-- being tested prior to being launched on its journey to the moon with American astronauts aboard.

He describes the mood and the efforts of those building and testing the Saturn: "You couldn't go anywhere in a NASA building in those days and not hear three words, '...Man...Moon...Decade.' To watch a Saturn booster test firing was the ultimate fire and smoke show. Generating 7 ½ million pounds of thrust-- equivalent to 160 million horsepower--thousands came to watch and marvel at the immense power of this enormous man-made machine."

Who was this man Wernher von Braun--rocket scientist, visionary, crusade for space? You will learn more about America's moon rocket man from Buckbee's first-hand account.

About the Presenter:

Ed Buckbee, an alumnus of NASA public affairs, a lecturer, producer and author, presents a powerful presentation with rarely seen visuals, personal notes, and interviews. For the past forty years, Buckbee has studied and reviewed the Wernher von Braun collection, which he established as the director at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville, AL. His most recent efforts involved researching and reading nearly 10,000 pages of Weekly Notes produced from 1961-1969 by von Braun and his team for the publication, "50 Years of Rockets and Spacecraft" and the documentary for television, "Wernher von Braun--The Rocket Man." Buckbee teaches university MBA students von Braun's management style. Founder of Space Camp and co-founder of the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, Buckbee authored with the late Wally Schirra, the book entitled, "The Real Space Cowboys." www.air-space.com

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