



Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering Department
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<http://mae.ucdavis.edu/research/spaceEd/>

2007-2008 Monthly Seminar Series on Space Research

18 October, 15 November, 17 January, 21 February, 17 April, 15 May
3rd Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES ABOUT WERNHER VON BRAUN IN CONNECTION WITH A PANEL FLUTTER PROBLEM ON THE SATURN SPACE LAUNCH VEHICLES

Dr. Max F. Platzter

*Professor Emeritus of Mechanical & Astronautical Engineering
Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA*

Date: 18 October 2007 Thursday Time: 4:10-5:00 pm Location: 1062 Bainer
Refreshments will be provided at 4:00 p.m.

ABSTRACT

Hosted by: Professor Nesrin Sarigul-Klijn

As director of the NASA George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, Dr. von Braun was responsible for the development of the Saturn space launch vehicles which made it possible to land astronauts on the moon starting in July 1969. During the development and operation of these vehicles there was not a single launch failure. After a brief introductory review of Dr. von Braun's career Prof. Platzter will describe an aeroelastic phenomenon encountered on the Saturn vehicles, i.e. panel flutter, and the steps taken by Dr. von Braun to minimize the risk to the astronauts. Apart from the engineering aspects of panel flutter, this example provides instructive insight into Dr. von Braun's leadership methods and engineering philosophy. Prof. Platzter will conclude his talk with observations about the lessons to be drawn from the success of the Saturn rocket flights and the space shuttle failures.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Platzter is a graduate of the Technical University of Vienna, Austria, where he completed his PhD studies under the guidance of Professor Klaus Oswatitsch. He joined the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center on its founding day, 1 July 1960, at the beginning of the Saturn rocket development program. As assistant to the Chief of the Aerodynamics Branch and, later, as Chief of the Unsteady Aerodynamics Section, he was responsible for the investigation of unsteady aerodynamic and aeroelastic launch vehicle problems. He discovered the possibility of panel flutter and was assigned responsibility for its investigation. In July 1966 Dr. Platzter joined the Lockheed-Georgia Research Center in Marietta, Georgia, where he directed the Aeromechanics Research Group during the development of the Lockheed C-5 Galaxy transport plane. He joined the faculty of the Naval Postgraduate School in August 1970, where he served as professor of aeronautics and astronautics until his retirement in June 2004. He authored or co-authored over 80 journal articles in aerodynamics, aeroelasticity, flight mechanics and propulsion. He received the NASA Superior Achievement Award, signed by Dr. Wernher von Braun, and the Naval Postgraduate School Distinguished Professor Award. He was elected a Fellow of AIAA and ASME. He is currently the editor of the international review journal "Progress in Aerospace Sciences".

For more information about

***SpaceED (Space Engineering Research and Graduate Program) or the seminars please contact
Professor Nesrin Sarigul-Klijn at (530)-752-0682 or nsarigulklijn@ucdavis.edu***

Members of the campus community and visitors from the region are welcome to attend the seminar series.

Sign-in is required at the event. SpaceED seminar will replace MAE297 seminar on 3rd Thursdays.

SpaceED seminars are supported in part by



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