



Smithsonian  
*National Air and Space Museum*

Rolf Engel Collection

2009

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway  
Chantilly, VA 20151  
NASMRefDesk@si.edu  
<http://airandspace.si.edu/research/resources/archives/>

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	

---

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Rolf Engel Collection
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.0856
<b>Date:</b>	(bulk 1935-1936)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.23 cubic feet ((1 box))
<b>Creator:</b>	Engel, Rolf.
<b>Language:</b>	German

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Rolf Engel, Gift

### Preferred Citation

Rolf Engel Collection, Accession XXXX-0856, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

Material is subject to Smithsonian Terms of Use. Should you wish to use NASM material in any medium, please submit an Application for Permission to Reproduce NASM Material, available at [Permissions Requests](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

Rolf Engel was born on August 10, 1912 in Menz/Ruppin, Germany. In 1928, along with Wernher von Braun, Engel joined the newly formed Berlin Section of the Verein Für Raumschiffahrt (German Rocket Society), where he participated in liquid propellant rocket experiments at the Raketenflugplatz (Rocket Airfield) with people like Rudolf Nebel, Willy Ley, Klaus Riedel and von Braun. Engel also worked as chief technical assistant to Johannes Winkler, who launched the HW-1 rocket on February 20, 1931 at a military parade ground near Dessau. This event represented the first launching of a liquid propellant rocket by someone other than Robert Goddard. From 1932 to 1935, Engel founded two research groups, Research Institute for Rocket Technology and Versuchsabteilung (Experimental Department), but they were short-lived due to lack of funding. In 1939, Engel was named technical director of Versuchsanstalt Für Strahltriebwerke (Research Center for Jet Engines) where work primarily focused on the development

of fin-stabilized, solid propellant liquid rockets. During World War II, Engel was a member of the Ministry of Armament's Commissions on Ammunition, Armament, and Ballistic Missiles and also a member of the Reichsforschungsrat (National Research Council). From 1946 to 1952, Engel worked in France as a consultant for ONERA (Office National d'Etudes et de Recherches Aéronautiques). From 1952 to 1957, he worked in Egypt advising the Egyptian Air Force as Director of CERVA (Compagnie des Engines à Réaction pour Vol Accélééré). From 1957 to 1962, Engel lived in Rome, Italy and served as a consultant to various guided missile manufacturers including SISPRE (Societa Italiana per lo Studio della Propulsione a Reazione) and Bombrini Parodi-Delfino. In 1962, Engel returned to Germany where he was named Director of the newly-formed space division of the Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm (MBB) consortium in Munich. In 1971, Engel retired from active professional life for health reasons, although he published several books throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Rolf Engel died in 1993 at the age of 81.

---

## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of files for eight different projects related to rockets conceived by Hermann Oberth, Rudolf Nebel, Franz Mengerling, Reinhold Tiling, and some unattributed work. The rockets discussed in the project files includes Mirak and Doppelstaber (this may be another name for the Repulsor), as well as several other types. The files contain drawings, notes, and photographs. All materials are in German. There is also a set of photocopies of many of the images which includes a small amount of caption information for some of the images.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Astronautics
- Mirak Research Rocket (Germany, 1930s)
- Repulsor Research Rocket (Germany, 1931)
- Rocketry
- Rockets (Aeronautics)
- Space flight

Types of Materials:

- Photographs
- Technical drawings
- Technical notes

Names:

- Oberth, Hermann, 1894-1989