

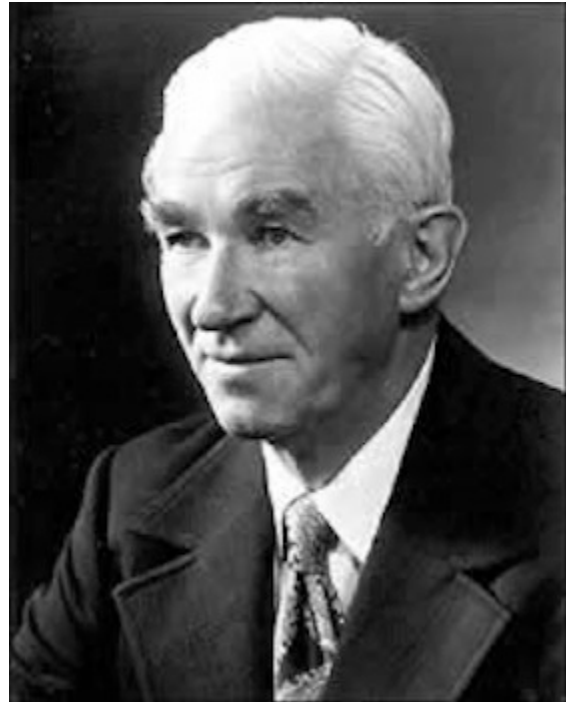
## Steinhoff, Ernst August Wilhelm

Austrian-German engineer in WW2, member of the Rocket Team in the United States thereafter.

*Born:* 1908-01-11. *Died:* 1987-02-12. *Birth Place:* Traysa.

German expert in guided missiles, worked at Peenemuende on submarine-launched rockets during World War II. Member of the German rocket team, arrived in America under Project Paperclip on 16 November 1945 aboard the *Argentina* from La Havre. As of January 1947, working at Fort Bliss, Texas. Died at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

New Mexico State Biography: Ernst A. Steinhoff



Steinhoff, Ernst  
Steinhoff, Ernst August Wilhelm

Ernst A. Steinhoff was born on February 11, 1908 in Treysa, Germany. After graduating high school in Kassel, in 1929, he enrolled in the Darmstadt Institute of Technology in Darmstadt, Germany. He received three degrees there: a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautics in 1931, a Master of Science in Meteorology in 1933, and a Doctor of Engineering degree in Applied Physics in 1940.

Ernst Steinhoff served as Department Head of the Aeronautical Engineering Department at the Bad Frankenhausen Polytechnical College at Bad Frankenhausen, Germany, from October 1933 through October 1936. He was then Chief of the Flight Mechanics and Flight Performance Measurements Division of the German Research Institute for Motorless Flight at Darmstadt. He held this position until June 1939, when he was appointed Director for Flight Mechanics, Ballistics, Guidance and Control, and Instrumentation at the German Army's Rocket Research Center at Peenemünde. There he was in charge of planning, development and testing of missile guidance systems and automatic controls. Steinhoff proved himself a good manager and administrator and he remained at Peenemünde, working on submarine-launched rockets, and V-2 rockets.

With the fall of Nazi Germany in May 1945, Dr. Steinhoff, along with Wernher Von Braun and about 350 other men, became a member of the rocket-pioneering group of German scientists and engineers brought to America by the U.S. Army in what was known "Operation Paperclip." Their contributions to postwar rocket research built the platform from which America launched rockets to the Moon in the late 1960's.

After a short assignment to the Ballistics Research Laboratories at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Aberdeen, Maryland, Dr. Steinhoff was Section Chief in charge of the Steering section of Ordnance Research and Development Division at Ft. Bliss, Texas from 1945 to 1950. He continued to work on guidance control systems there, responsible for the operation of V-2 missile flight termination systems in rocket firings in 1946 and early 1947.

In 1949, Ernst Steinhoff transferred to Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, but also worked closely with nearby White Sands Proving Ground, now White Sands Missile Range (WSMR). He played a prominent role in the early planning for range instrumentation to support missile firings from Holloman. He was widely recognized for his work in real time computing for missile flight guidance and control. His work led to more efficient processing of data from WSMR instrumentation. He left the Federal service in 1956 to work in the private sector of the aerospace industry.

Dr. Ernst Steinhoff returned to Holloman to be the Chief Scientist at the Air Force Missile Development Center in 1963. He remained there until 1972, when he retired to Alamogordo, New Mexico. He died there on December 2, 1987, at the age of seventy-nine.

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*Country:* [Austria](#), [Germany](#), [USA](#). *Bibliography:* [1980](#), [394](#), [6063](#).