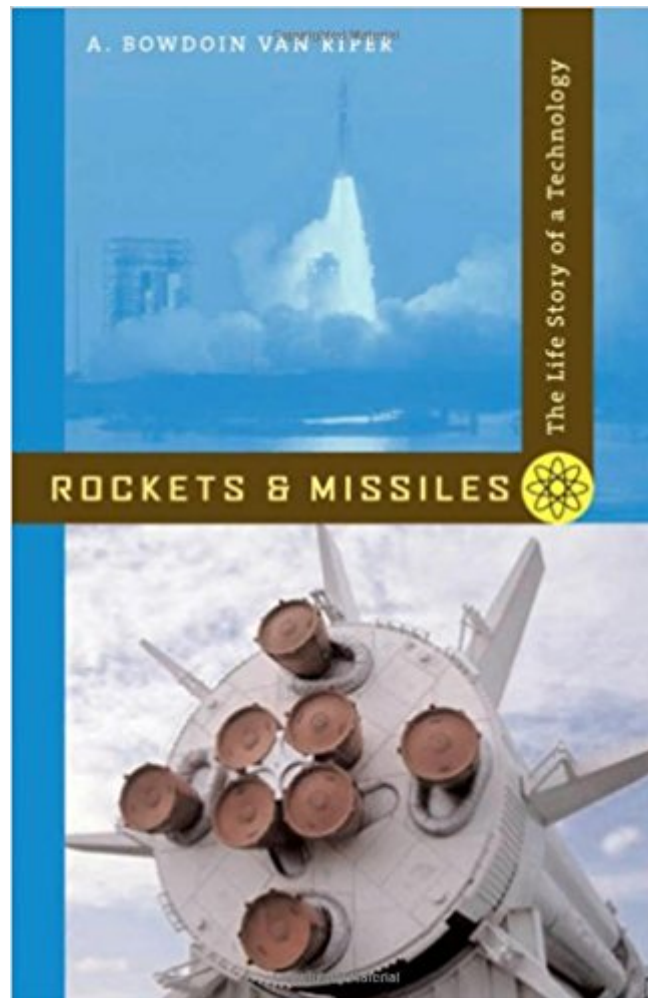




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Rockets And Missiles: The Life Story Of A Technology



Synopsis

Beginning with World War II, missiles transformed the art of war. For the first time, cities of warring nations were vulnerable to sudden, unannounced, long-distance destruction. At the same time, rockets made possible one of the great triumphs of the modern age--the exploration of space. *Rockets and Missiles* traces the history of the technology that led to both the great fear of global warfare, and the great excitement of the Space Age. Beginning with the origins of rocketry in medieval and early modern Asia, the volume focuses on rocketry in late-20th-century Western Europe, Russia, and the United States, and also covers the spread of rocket technology in East Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. *^ ^* *Rockets and Missiles* covers everything any student or interested layperson would need to understand the history of rocketry. The introduction reviews basic principles of physics and basic elements of chemical rocket technology. Chapters trace the history of rockets from their origins to the present day, with a particular emphasis on the years since World War II. All three principal uses of rocket technology are covered in detail: missiles as long-range strategic weapons and short-range tactical weapons, and rockets as launch vehicles for sending payloads into space. The book concludes with a survey of several types of non-chemical rockets now under development for use in outer space. While *Rockets and Missiles* covers the development of the technology, including how rockets improved in performance, reliability, and versatility. The book also stresses the impact of rocket technology--both military and civilian--on everyday life.

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Customer Reviews

This . . . text provides clear explanations of what is often thought of as almost incomprehensible: rocket science. It covers aspects of technological, social, governmental development and control, and the political implications of rockets and missiles. *Rockets and Missiles: The Life Story of a Technology* is recommended for public and academic libraries. Whether one is interested in rockets, missiles, sociology, technology or history, this book will be an asset. -- E-Streams" This volume provides a concise, clear history of rockets and missiles from ancient times to the present... Van Riper does an exemplary job in lifting out the critical points from a mass of potentially intimidating detail, and explaining these in terms that lay persons can grasp... In sum, this book recommends itself as a lucid history of missile technology for the general reader." (Richard Beyler H-Net Reviews)

A. Bowdoin Van Riper, an adjunct professor at Southern Polytechnic State University, is the author of *Looking Up: Aviation and the Popular Imagination*; *Science in Popular Culture: A Reference Guide*; and *Men among the Mammoths: Victorian Science and the Discovery of Human Prehistory*.

This book offers a interesting overview of the history of rocket technology in the 20th century. Some technical details of the technology are also presented. Of particular interests are the vivid accounts of Apollo spacecraft, Space Shuttle, Intercontinental ballistic missiles, Submarine-launched ballistic missiles, Tactical guided Patriot missiles, Missile defense and Arms control. Missiles have evolved in the past decades and major changes have been made in their design. In contrast, improvements of the propulsion systems have been incremental only. However, the robot probe (Deep Space 1) was launched by an innovative propulsion system (a small ion engine) to study comet Borredly in 1998. This technology demonstrator may be evaluated for use on future spacecraft!

In a concise manner, the author gives a history of rocketry and missiles. Starting with black powder used by the Chinese. But then rapidly the narrative passes to the Europeans, who used and improved it in their interminable wars. Naturally, most of the book is about the 20th century. Relating the advances made by both sides in World War 2. Then in the Cold War, rockets become exoatmospheric. Some were used for research, to carry satellites into orbit, or launch probes into high altitudes. But others were ICBMs. The book relates the frantic arms race between the US and Soviet Union, with Britain, France and China playing only bit parts. The space race is described, where we see the massive Saturn 5s that were used to launch moon missions. Unfortunately, if you read between the lines, progress in rocket propulsion has largely stalled. The end of the Cold War

removed one major motivation. But also, the chemical and mechanical technologies appear to have plateaued, leaving us with still every high launch costs per kilo of payload.

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