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# SPACE CENTER Roundup

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## JSC community remembers former deputy director

**R**emembered by many as a wonderful human being and a man of great integrity, former Johnson Space Center Deputy Director Sigurd A. Sjoberg died on March 26. He was 80 years old.

“Sig,” as he was fondly known, didn’t like to work in the limelight; he much preferred to work behind the scenes, working on issues and problems throughout his long and distinguished career with the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics at Langley, and then here in Houston at JSC. People depended on him to get things done. His skills in both engineering and management earned him the respect of the international community.

He started his career at the Flight Research Division of the Langley Aeronautical Laboratory of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in 1942. He worked on many of the WWII airplanes, which included the Bell Aircobra. He was prominent in extending this era of airplanes to the use of jets and was responsible for testing the Navy F9F jet fighter among others. He spent several years at Edwards Air Force Base during the late '40s flight testing the Bell X-1 and X-2 and was the NACA project engineer on the Douglas D-558, which extended the supersonic speed range.

Sjoberg was a NACA expert in the development of automatic stability and control and helped develop the F-101 adaptive autopilot test program. Due to his experience and renown, Dr. Sjoberg was chosen to assist in the evaluation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization aircraft in France during 1957. During the evaluation, comparative tests were performed on a number of European fighters. Using the data submitted by test pilots regarding the handling qualities of the aircraft, Sjoberg submitted recommendations in the evaluation group’s final report.

In 1959, Dr. Sjoberg joined NASA’s Space Task Group as the operations coordinator of the Flight Operations Division, and later as assistant to the chief of Flight Operations. He helped develop the basic concepts of the Mercury Project, and by integrating the data, launch support, recovery, and range instrumentation requirements of the various aerospace industries and governmental agencies into an operational support system for Project Mercury, Dr. Sjoberg contributed to the success of the first American manned space flights.

As the Manned Spacecraft Center was being established in Houston, Dr. Sjoberg became the manager of Operations, Planning, and Development in the Flight Operations Directorate. He provided technical and managerial direction to guide the design, development, and construction of the Mission Control Center needed for the more challenging Gemini and Apollo missions. Sjoberg viewed the greatest accomplishments of the Gemini Program to be the human space flight experience gained and the operations expertise perfected. He believed that the United States could not have gone to the Moon without it.

Concurrently, Dr. Sjoberg led the planning and establishment of a worldwide Manned Space Flight Network for the tracking, support, and recovery of American manned space missions. He was heavily involved in the final decisions on the number, location, and configuration of tracking stations around the world. As the Apollo missions developed, Dr. Sjoberg was heavily involved in the decision of where and when to locate how many tracking ships around the world for the recovery of the Apollo crews. His studies included the cost of each vehicle, and its associated instrumentation to ensure the best recovery system, and that every craft used was required. His expertise allowed a significant savings and avoided potential delays in America’s pursuit of the Moon. Before lunar operation began, Sjoberg personally visited many of the ships and



NASA JSC Photo S70-35013

From left, Donald Slayton, Director of Flight Crew Operations; Howard Tindall, Deputy Director, Flight Operations; Sigurd Sjoberg, Director, Flight Operations; Christopher Kraft, Deputy Director of MSC; and Robert Gilruth, Director of MSC, discuss a prototype of the “mail box” device that was designed to remove carbon dioxide from the Apollo 13 Command Module.

*Sig was a major contributor to the success of the Johnson Space Center. This country owes a great deal to him for his contributions to the space program.*

– Chris Kraft



NASA JSC S67-23639

Sigurd Sjoberg

installations around the world to assure that they were prepared to support the Moon landings, and to emphasize to the individuals involved the importance of their roles.

Appointed to the position of deputy to the director of Flight Operations in 1965, Dr. Sjoberg had associate responsibility for directing mission planning and operational control of the Gemini missions while also managing the mission planning and flight control preparation for the Apollo missions.

For the Apollo missions, Dr. Sjoberg provided technical direction for outlining the trajectory requirements for the lunar missions, and the ground and on-board guidance computer programs needed to make complex maneuvers. The Apollo spacecraft needed to be able to perform lunar orbit insertion, lunar landing, lunar ascent, lunar orbit rendezvous, and transearth injection very precisely.

In December 1969, Dr. Sjoberg became the director of Flight Operations. With the new position came the responsibilities of directing the development and implementation of flight operations support for current and future American manned space missions. The Apollo 13, 14, and 15 missions flew under Sjoberg’s guidance. When an oxygen tank exploded damaging the Command and Service Module during Apollo 13, all power and

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