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SPACE TECH SERIES

Robert H. Goddard

Father of Modern Rocketry

The Rocket That Changed the World

Robert H. Goddard was an American scientist who dreamed of building rockets that could fly very high. As a boy, he read stories about space travel and imagined machines that could leave the Earth. He decided to make that dream real.

On March 16, 1926, in Auburn, Massachusetts, Goddard launched the world's first rocket powered by liquid fuel. The little rocket rose about 41 feet into the air and landed 184 feet away. It flew for only about 2.5 seconds, but it proved that liquid-fueled rockets could work.

Goddard kept building and improving his rockets for the rest of his life, earning 214 patents. Today NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center is named in his honor, and the rockets that carry people to space use ideas he first tested.

SPACE WORDS TO KNOW

- **rocket:** A machine that pushes itself forward by shooting out hot gas from burning fuel.
- **liquid fuel:** Fuel in a liquid form, like a special kind of gasoline, that a rocket burns to go up.
- **patent:** A special paper from the government that says you were the first to invent something.

Part 1 • Reading Comprehension

1. What did Goddard launch on March 16, 1926?

2. In what state did the first flight happen?

3. How high did the first rocket fly?

4. Why is Goddard called the 'Father of Modern Rocketry'?

Rocket Flight Math

On March 16, 1926, Robert's rocket flew 41 feet straight up and landed 184 feet away across the field.

- 1 How many more feet did the rocket travel sideways (184 ft) than it went up (41 ft)? Subtract.

- 2 Add the height (41 ft) and the downrange distance (184 ft) together.

- 3 Goddard flew this rocket in 1926 and kept working until 1945. How many years is that? Subtract.

Part 3 • Think About It

Goddard's first rocket only flew for about 2.5 seconds. Why do you think that short flight was still a very big deal?

