

# Carnet gris

## Christophe Rothmund (28/5/1961-?/9/2026)

Né le 28 mai 1961 à Offenbourg (Allemagne), il est diplômé de l'École nationale d'ingénieurs de Belfort en 1985 et de l'École supérieure des techniques aérospatiales en 1986. Il travaille au LRBA (Laboratoire de recherches balistiques et aérodynamiques) de Vernon en novembre 1986/octobre 1987, puis entre chez Snecma à Vernon en novembre 1987. Il a travaillé sur les systèmes de propulsion d'Ariane-4 et d'Ariane-5 de 1987 à 1992. Il a ensuite été chargé de la communication interne du site de Vernon. En 1996, il a repris des activités techniques au sein du département des projets avancés. Durant cette période, il a travaillé sur des systèmes de propulsion hypersonique, sur un concept de tuyère «aerospike» linéaire pour l'ESA, ainsi que sur divers concepts de lanceurs de future génération. En 2001, il travaille au sein du département Prospective. Christophe était connu comme L'Historien du site de Vernon depuis 1989. Il a publié plus nombreux articles consacrés à l'histoire de la propulsion en France et il a notamment participé aux symposiums d'histoire de l'IAF (History Committee de l'IAA) de 1991 à 2015. Il a été élu membre correspondant de l'IAA en 2009.

### Messages des amis :

-C'est une terrible nouvelle, même si l'on savait qu'il avait de graves problèmes de santé depuis longtemps. Il avait une spécificité rarissime dans le monde, celle de s'intéresser de près à la fois à l'histoire de l'astronautique, et aussi à celle de l'aéronautique! Il fut ainsi naturellement le secrétaire de la Commission Histoire de la 3AF. Et un grand spécialiste de l'histoire des fusées et moteurs-fusées des LRBA & SEP, notamment lors des colloques et Samedis de l'Histoire de la 3AF, et des Symposia IAC History of astronautics. Il laisse donc un riche héritage. Il avait d'abondantes archives, qui doivent contenir de précieux et uniques documents. Espérons que, comme trop souvent, elles ne vont pas disparaître. **Philippe Jung**



Sandra Häuplik-Meusburger, Otfrid Liepack, Vera Gomez, Christophe Rothmund  
au Spring Meeting en mars 2019.

-This is incredibly sad news. Christophe Rothmund was a very active and important figure in the History Committee, and it is very sad to lose him. He was a wonderful colleague and friend to many of us. Let's honour him and his many contributions and activities! I would be very grateful if some of you could write a few lines about him and his work that we could share through our channels. My sincere condolences to all, and especially to his family and friends. Warm regards, **Sandra Häuplik-Meusburger.**

-I am shocked. Thank you for your information. I have good memories working together with Christophe during my early space history days... Yes, rest in peace our friend! **Niklas Reinke**

-That is very sad news. I will have him in my thoughts and prayers...If someone (Christian?) can prepare a little writeup on the life and achievements of Christophe, then perhaps Brian

Odom can place the writeup (with image) in the NASA HQ History Office newsletter ... and we can approach Chris Gainor and Scott Sacknoff about a similar item in Quest. **Mike Ciancone**

-This is such sad news. It is many years since I last met Christophe but he is a man and space authority I will never forget. Thank you for letting us know, Christian. **Doug Millard**, Deputy keeper Science Museum London

-Indeed, this is very sad news. I am grateful to have known him and to have benefited from his knowledge and companionship. He will be greatly missed.

Auf Wiedersehen, mein Freund!!!! **Otfrid Liepack**

-Sad news indeed. Christophe was one of the first members of the History group that I met many decades ago. I remember his wide range of interest. Christian, thank you for informing us. **Randy Lieberman**

-Dear History Colleges, It is indeed sad to know that Christoph is gone. It was my privilege, as ours, to share his way for thought a long time and I am very thankful that we have met in Paris this spring. Another

great friend and cornerstone of French spaceflight history legacy is gone; you will be missed as the others too. **Karl-heinz Rohrwild**

-I too, share with you all my sadness of the passing of Christoph. I remember him from the earliest days of our history group and he will surely be missed. **Frank Winter**

-I only had the chance to interact with Christoph on a few occasions, but he was incredibly generous with his knowledge. When I was trying to find additional sources regarding the French solid-propellant engines used by Argentina in the 1960s, he pointed me in the right direction and shared his vast expertise with grace and enthusiasm. He will be missed. **Pablo De Leon**

-Oh no! Christophe was so kind and generous with me since we met 20 years ago. He believed in me even when I didn't and motivate me to pursue a space career. I will always remember him as a knowledgeable wise person. He shall be missed! **Vera Gomez**

-This is a sad news for all of us. First of all the family has lost a dear member. My sincere condolences. And the space history community has lost an excellent researcher and author of many, many important reports. Christophe was always a reliable support to the work of publishing our history symposia proceedings from the early 1990's for as long as his health permitted. We will all miss you Christophe! In deep respect, **Inge-mar Skoog**

-I was very sad to hear of the death of Christophe. His work on the Soviet and Russian space programs was particularly invaluable, particularly now when there are so many efforts to break up the human space effort into a new "rivalry" and with the loss of the sense that space exploration is for the benefit of ALL mankind, and not to aggrandize of national pride or national power. His voice will be missed among those of us who are attempting to set the record straight on this matter. **William Jones**

-I'm sorry to hear your sad news. I didn't know Christophe personally, only by reputation. My condolences to you, and his friends and family. Best regards **Rob Godwin**

-Please let me add to the profound appreciation and memory of Christophe! He was unfailingly welcoming and supportive and greatly helped me in my early ef-

#### **Paper IAA de Ch. Rothmund 1991-2015**

- IAA-91-678 de 1991 : "Coralie : the forgotten rocket".
- IAA 92-195 de 1992 : "The early days of LOX/LH2 engines at SEP and MBB" par Hopmann Helmut & Rothmund Christophe.
- IAA 93- 675 de 1993 : "The history of the Vikong engine".
- IAA 2.1.612 de 1994 : "From SEPR to SEP 1944-1994".
- IAA 2.2.03 de 1995 : "Etude 4212 : the first french large liquid rocket project"
- IAA 2.3.07 de 1997 : "50 years of rocket propulsion in Vernon".
- IAA 2.2.04 de 1998 : "An overview of french astronautical activities in the 1930's".
- IAA 2.3.06 de 1999 : "History of the French sounding rockets - Part-1: Veronique & Vesta - their development and their operation" par Rothmund Christophe & Lafon Jean-Louis.
- IAA 2.3.04 de 2000 : "Rugged efficiency - A history of French liquid rocket engine developments from Veronique to MS-100 (1950-2000) par Rothmund Christophe & Girault Jean-Philippe.
- IAA 2-3-08 de 2001 : "Simplicity, Reliability and Affordability : 40 years of Upper stage engines at Snecma Moteurs".
- IAA 2-4-07 de 2002 : "Non-conventional propellants & propulsion system research & development at Snecma Moteurs 1946-1975".
- IAA 2-2-04 de 2003 : "40 years of the French-German cooperation in space propulsion".
- IAA 6.15.3.04 de 2004 : "Reusable man-rated rocket engines : the French experience 1944-1996".
- IAA E4.3.05 de 2005 : "60 years of rocket engine test facilities at Snecma Moteurs".
- IAA E4.3.04 de 2006 : "Fluorine rocket engine demonstrators".
- IAA E4.2.07 de 2007 : "The first European cryogenic engine was tested 40 years ago : the HM-4 cryogenic engine history".
- IAA E4.3.06 de 2008 : "The propulsion system of the Ludion one-man hopper : an Anglo-French engine cooperation 40 years ago".
- IAA E4.2.02 de 2009 : "The Diamant-A launch vehicle first stage propulsion system : a liquid propellant engine fitted with a solid propellant gas generator".
- IAA E4.3.06 de 2010/IAA E4.3.03 de 2011/IAA E4.2.07 de 2012 : "The Valois engine and the Diamant-B launch vehicle first stage propulsion system".
- IAA E4.1.05 de 2013/IAA E4.2.05 de 2015 : "BMW rocket engine 1939-1945".

forts to participate in the IACs. It was fascinating and informative to attend panels with him and hear his insights. Best to all, **Andrew Erickson**

-I was shocked and deeply saddened to hear of Christophe Rothmund's passing. For many years, he and I were very close friends, sharing a love of various science fiction franchises alongside our mutual passion for space history - he even got me hooked on bande dessinée! Unfortunately, as some of you will be aware, the mental health impact of his brain tumour and its removal led him to withdraw from many friendships, and I'd had no contact from him since our last meeting in Paris at the IAC in 2022. It has been lovely to read all the good memories of Christophe that are being shared: he was an excellent space historian and a great asset to our Committee when he was in active participation, his papers and discussions always worth reading/listening to, and as has already been mentioned, always willing to share his knowledge and help new members of the Committee. He even very kindly spent a few days showing one of my sisters and her husband around Paris on their visit there about ten years ago, and she has also been sad to hear of his passing. Thank you Christian for letting us know about his passing. Vale Christophe Rothmund: you will be greatly missed my friend! Regards to all, **Kerrie Dougherty**

-I am very sorry to hear that. May he rest in peace! **Hannes Mayer**