
Richard Nakka's *Experimental Rocketry* Web Site

Who I am

As far back as I can remember, I have always had, for lack of a better word, a passion for rockets. Perhaps it's because I grew up during the golden age of space exploration, when rockets were nothing less than the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe. Or perhaps I was simply fascinated by the sheer power and spectacle of them. Anyway, way back when I was a teenager, I one day stumbled upon the book *The Amateur Scientist* (Stong, 1960), which was a collection of rather unconventional science projects compiled by *Scientific American*. It had, as one of the projects, an amateur rocket. That particular chapter opens with the following passage:

"If, during a weekend drive in the country, you should happen to see a thin trail of white smoke shoot 100 feet into the air, you may well find a group of scientific amateurs near the bottom of it. They will be equally proficient in handling explosive chemicals, differential equations, and machine tools. In short, they are amateur rocket experimenters. Occasionally, they dream of setting foot on the moon, and people who live nearby wish they would!"

After reading this inspiring passage, I was determined to build one myself! Unfortunately, my first attempts literally fizzled. It was not until some years later, when I stumbled upon another book, *Rocket Manual for Amateurs* (Brinley, 1960), that I came upon the key to success, that is, a profoundly simple, but very effective rocket propellant. Not long after, I had succeeded in developing some remarkable rocket motors, and the rest is, as they say, history, and the makings of this Web Site.

Oh yes, in answer to the question that led you here--who I am. My name is Richard Nakka and I conducted my early rocketry work while still in high school. On the urging, or should I say insistence, of my high school physics teacher, I entered the local Science Fair with my "Experiments with Rockets" project, which ended up capturing first prize. This led to my entry in the province-wide [Science Fair](#) later that year. Out of 475 entries, my rocketry project took first overall prize.

I then studied engineering at the University of Manitoba, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1984. In

fact, I wrote my graduation thesis on *Solid Propellant Rocket Motor Design and Testing*, which was inspired by my rocket experimentation.

I live in Winnipeg, Manitoba with my wife Pauline and our two senior (but very active) cats, Baby and Beau. I worked for 23 years at Bombardier Aerospace (Toronto) and have recently begun employment at [Boeing Winnipeg](#), where I am positioned as an Engineering Specialist in aerostructures, working on the *787 Dreamliner*.

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