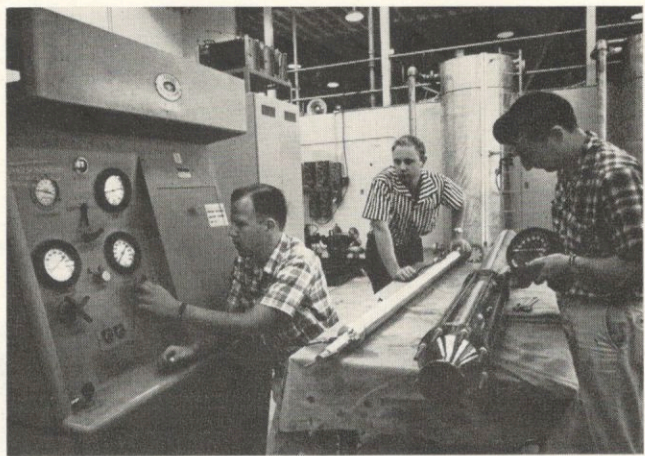


# Rocket Research Is Still

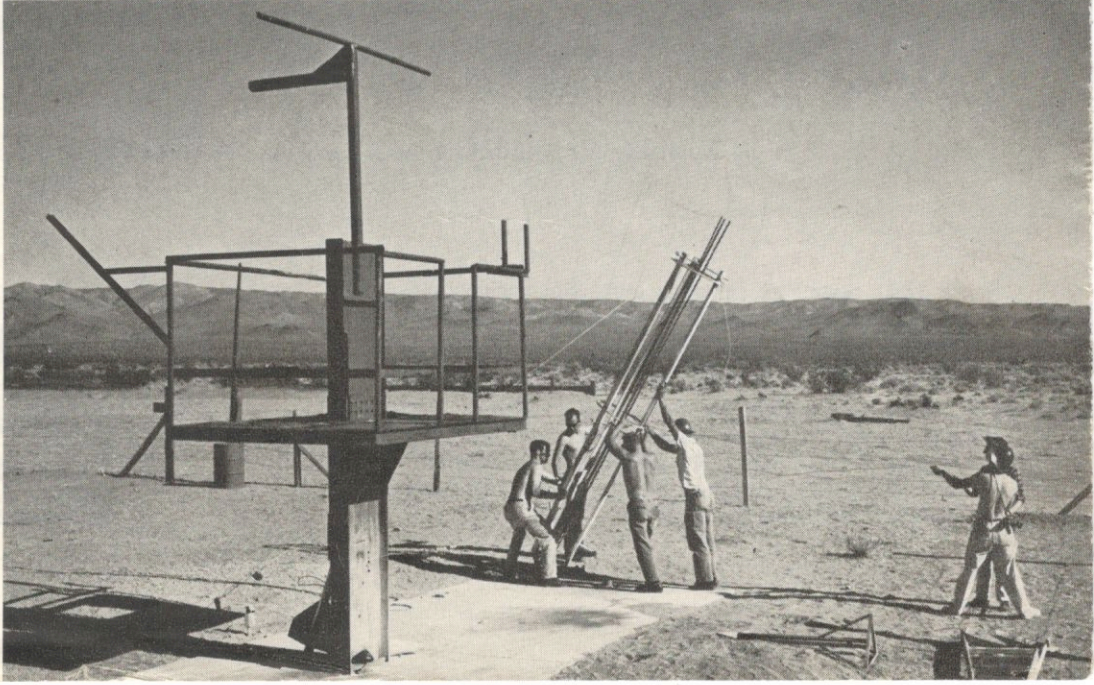
Testing a rocket system for future launching, Ron Nelson (at dials), Calvin Van Wagner (center) and David Thalimer use laboratory at California Polytechnic College in Pomona, where Ron and Cal are students. This rocket, which they hope will reach 50,000 feet altitude, is the final step in a research study they are making on liquid rocket fuels.



Mounting two parachutes in nose cone, Matthew McEnerney and Larry Larson prepare for recovery of camera-equipped cone. Chutes will open automatically when rocket begins to fall earthward. Larry, who now works as static-test technician in a missile research center, hopes eventually to become an engineer specializing in propulsion of huge rockets.



Preparing to fire a 75-pound rocket, young scientists lower launching rack to ground and insert heavy missile. Launcher is then turned upright and electric firing mechanism attached to rocket engine. Steel platform in foreground is a static rocket test stand built by the rocketeers.



**Test launching** is conducted with full safety precautions. Testers take shelter in blockhouse, which has shatterproof window facing launching pad. Director of firing is licensed by state as "pyrotechnic operator," and each test is approved by state fire marshal and county fire-prevention chief. Club also carries accident insurance and has a high wire fence completely surrounding its 40-acre desert firing range.

# Their Hobby

In March 1957, FRIENDS reported the activities (top, opposite page) of the Glendale, California, chapter of the Reaction Research Society. At that time it was an organization of about 50 teen-age rocket enthusiasts who were building and test-firing single-stage, solid fuel missiles and hoping to become space scientists someday. Recently, FRIENDS made a return visit to Glendale and found many signs of progress. Several rocketeers, now in their late teens and early 20s, are already in college and well on the way to becoming rocket engineers. Progress is evident on the firing range in the form of a new cement blockhouse, an assembly and storage building, a concrete launching pad, a distant-viewing shelter reinforced with railroad ties and a network of observation points for visual tracking, which are linked to the central blockhouse by a telephone system. The young scientists have improved their rockets, too. They now build and launch sophisticated two- and three-stage rocket units, some powered by liquid fuels and equipped with elaborate nose cones that contain cameras, flares, telemetry systems and recovery devices. They also scientifically evaluate the results of their experiments—on fuel problems, exhaust velocities or optimum designs, for example—and publish the findings in technical papers. The one thing that has not changed is the rocketeers' continuing attention to safety. In 16 years and hundreds of missile launchings, they have maintained a perfect no-accident record.

