

AVIATION WEEK

& SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Lufthansa Makeover

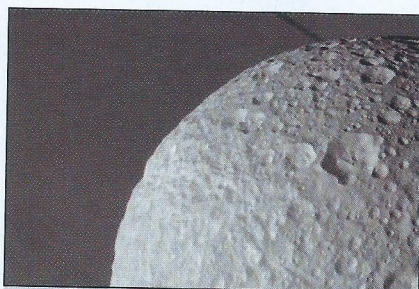
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Net-Centric: Fast & Cheap

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Lufthansa Airbus A340-300 is parked at a gate at Frankfurt airport. The German carrier is revising its strategy and now is focusing more on the core airline business rather than a wide-spread portfolio of subsidiaries. Europe's second largest airline is under assault from strong growth among low-fare carriers and is struggling to find the right path to continued prosperity (see p. 40). Ingrid Friedl photo for Lufthansa.

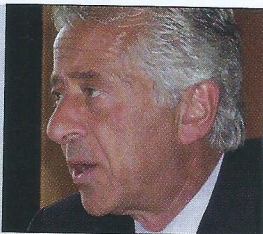


13 Images shows Mimas to be so battered that its craters have craters.



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52 AirVenture 2005 draws 700,000 visitors and 10,000 aircraft.

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A TRIBUTE

The international aviation and aerospace journalism community last week lost a role model—a professional the likes of which we probably will never see again, as one *Aviation Week Group* editor put it. Philip J. Klass, who served *Aviation Week & Space Technology* readers tirelessly for half a century, died of cancer on Aug. 9. He was 85.

Phil, as he was affectionately known to friends and colleagues, was a commanding presence in his field. Not because of his physical stature, but because of his style—he was unpretentious and a gentleman in every sense—and his contribution to aviation and aerospace journalism, and perhaps aviation and aerospace itself.

Contrary to popular opinion, he did not coin the word “avionics,” and he was quick to correct anyone who tried to credit him with doing so; he liked to say he only popularized the word. What he did do was lead *Aviation Week’s* coverage of military and commercial avionics through most of the Cold War, distinguishing himself and the magazine.

An electrical engineer by training, Phil joined *Aviation Week* in 1952 and pioneered the type of in-depth, authoritative stories that helped establish the magazine as the undisputed leader in its field. At the dawn of the jet age, Phil reported on the revolution from vacuum tubes to semiconductors, helping *Aviation Week’s* readers understand where these and other emerging technologies would take the aerospace industry. His encyclopedic knowledge of avionics subjects, and particularly the arcane world of electronic warfare, was legendary among his fellow writers, news sources and loyal *Aviation Week* readers. He could recite from memory detailed histories of one electronic warfare program after another and explain on any level how the systems worked.

Covering the superpowers’ arms race, he revealed the capabilities of then-top secret U.S. and Soviet spy satellites and became one of the world’s best informed reporters on that “black” world. Phil even coined the name “Big Bird” for the massive KH-9 spacecraft that carried several recoverable reconnaissance film pods, and the name stuck among intelligence operatives. On more than one occasion, Phil would be told to show up in a particular Washington hotel room, where a knock on the door would be followed by the entry of the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency or the director of the National Security Agency. But make no mistake—he kept more national security secrets than he revealed, and his coverage often omitted details of U.S. systems too sensitive for publication at the time.



AWST FILE PHOTO

Philip J. Klass 1919-2005

Following his retirement in 1986, Phil continued to write for the magazine as a contributing editor. Throughout, he was relentless in his drive to serve those who relied on *Aviation Week* as a vital source of exclusive information.

“For Phil, it was all about the reader,” recalls Harold McGraw, 3rd, chairman, president and CEO of The McGraw-Hill Companies, the parent of *Aviation Week*, and publisher of the magazine when Phil was still senior avionics editor. On his second day on the job, McGraw, seeking to get to know the editors better, paid a visit to *Aviation Week’s* Washington bureau where Phil was based. Sitting in Phil’s office, McGraw was struck by the many piles of neatly stacked papers that lined the perimeter. “What are all of those?” McGraw asked. Phil’s response: “These are all ideas for stories that I have to develop. My readers have to know.” The encounter made a lasting impression on McGraw. “He was the best at what he did and displayed an overwhelming responsibility to his readers, whom he held in such high re-

gard,” McGraw says.

Of course, anyone who was fortunate enough to have known Phil also knows that avionics and *Aviation Week* weren’t his only passions. His avocation was debunking sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects.

It was after speaking on an IEEE panel in 1966 that touched on the question of UFOs when Phil began investigating reported sightings. A popular book published that same year discussed glowing fireballs near high-tension power lines, and that such phenomena might be UFOs. Phil postulated that ball lightning and power line coronas were the more likely explanations. Phil went on to become a leading skeptic of alleged “UFO sightings,” traveling far and wide to conduct firsthand investigations.

In 1976 Phil, astronomer Carl Sagan, science fiction writer Isaac Asimov and other notables co-founded the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. Altogether, Phil wrote six books debunking reports on UFO incidents and published *The Skeptics UFO Newsletter* in his spare time. He recently donated all of his UFO papers to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.

Phil, who was beloved by all who knew him, will be missed. Failing health forced him to stop contributing regularly to *Aviation Week* several years ago. But just knowing he was there—as a sounding board, as a mentor, as a friend, as a member of an extended family of current and former “Av Week” reporters and editors—was no less comforting. Like a favorite uncle.