

Obituary HANS-KARSTEN MEIER



10.10.1925 - 05.08.2011

On the 5th of August 2011 Prof. Dr. HANS-KARSTEN MEIER died unexpectedly at the age of 85. After his second hip replacement and successful rehabilitation he was about to return home when he passed away during the night. Together with his wife and the families of his two sons many friends and colleagues attended the funeral to say farewell in his home village of Koenigsbronn near to Oberkochen.

Born in 1925, H.-K. MEIER grew up in Cuxhaven at the mouth of the Elbe River and was recruited to World War II while still a schoolboy. Consequently it was 1948/49 before he could finish school with the university entrance diploma and start studying geodesy at Hanover University. At this time the situation in German universities was still anything but normal. After passing the examinations in the spring of 1953 he became an assistant to Prof. RICHARD FINSTERWALDER in Munich. In only two years he finished his doctoral thesis on the deflection of the vertical in high mountains. In July 1955 KURT SCHWIDEFSKY, at that time head of the "Bildmess-Abteilung", engaged him for the development of photogrammetric instruments at CARL ZEISS in Oberkochen.

No other person after WW II influenced and guided the development of aerial mapping cameras as much as MEIER. His focus was on the continuous improvement of the image geometry and image quality of the overall taking process while considering the need for a higher angle of aperture and for colour photography. In support of this work he wrote and presented many scientific papers. Besides the RMK family of cameras he played a major part in the design and development of the PSK precision comparator and the GIGAS-ZEISS Orthoprojector. When he took overall technical responsibility for the geodesy (Geo) and photogrammetry (Bms) department in November 1968 he had to pass his beloved scientific and laboratory work to his younger colleagues and concentrate on management and strategy. During the 1970s and 1980s he took the right decisions with respect to the optimization and extension of the total station family in "Geo", the entry into and refinement of the analytical stereoplotter and orthoprojector in "Bms", and the completion of the line of aerial reconnaissance cameras.

In February 1981 HANS-KARSTEN MEIER became one of two divisional managers for the Surveying Division, being collectively responsible for the overall economic success of the geodetic and photogrammetric activities at CARL ZEISS in Oberkochen. Besides his management obligations he still found time for scientific activities and for keeping contacts to the photogrammetric profession. Between 1969 and 1987 he co-managed, together with FRITZ ACKERMANN, the world renowned Photogrammetric Week jointly organized by Stuttgart University and Carl ZEISS. Beginning in 1972 he lectured at Stuttgart University where in 1978 he was appointed honorary professor. His outstanding expertise resulted in his appointment to positions in, or on to the board of, several national and international organizations including DIN/ISO, FIM, DLR, ESA and DGPF, and in his authorship of more than 100 publications.

For his meritorious contribution to the photogrammetric profession he received the TEAM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD of ESA in 1984, the ALBRECHT-MEYDENBAUER-MEDAL of DGPF (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photogrammetrie, Fernerkundung und Geoinformation) in 1986, Honorary Membership of the British Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society (RSPSoc) in 1988 and Honorary Membership of the DGPF in 1990.

After his retirement in April 1986 he continued to work for photogrammetric standardization for another decade. He also fulfilled his long-term dream and obtained a private pilot licence. After his longstanding hobby of sailing with yachts off shore he was now able to explore the third dimension without photogrammetry but with his own motorized glider.

HANS-KARSTEN MEIER was internationally respected and well known for his characteristic sense of humour. He enjoyed actively discussing professional matters and commenting on current affairs and the events of the day with common sense. The photogrammetric community will miss a valuable member and friend.

DIERK HOBBIE, Königsbronn