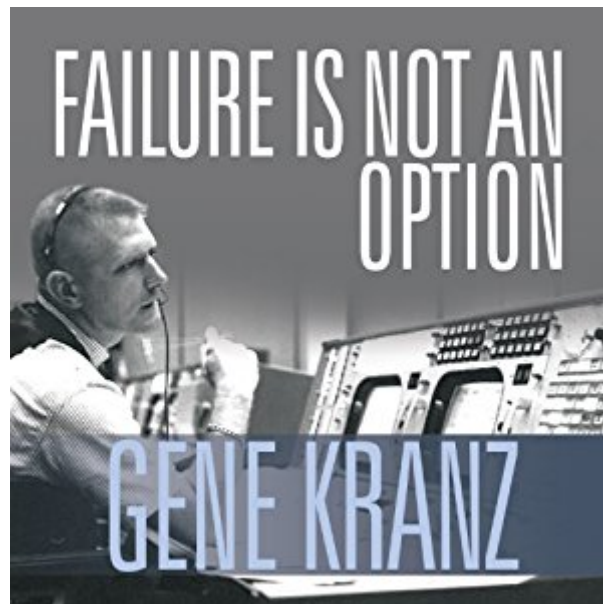


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Failure Is Not An Option: Mission Control From Mercury To Apollo 13 And Beyond



Synopsis

Gene Kranz was present at the creation of America's manned space program and was a key player in it for three decades. As a flight director in NASA's Mission Control, Kranz witnessed firsthand the making of history. He participated in the space program from the early days of the Mercury program to the last Apollo mission, and beyond. He endured the disastrous first years when rockets blew up and the United States seemed to fall further behind the Soviet Union in the space race. He helped to launch Alan Shepard and John Glenn, then assumed the flight director's role in the Gemini program, which he guided to fruition. With his teammates, he accepted the challenge to carry out President John F. Kennedy's commitment to land a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s. Kranz was flight director for both Apollo 11, the mission in which Neil Armstrong fulfilled President Kennedy's pledge, and Apollo 13. He headed the Tiger Team that had to figure out how to bring the three Apollo 13 astronauts safely back to Earth. (In the film *Apollo 13*, Kranz was played by the actor Ed Harris, who earned an Academy Award nomination for his performance.) In *Failure Is Not an Option*, Gene Kranz recounts these thrilling historic events and offers new information about the famous flights. What appeared as nearly flawless missions to the moon were, in fact, a series of hair-raising near misses. When the space technology failed, as it sometimes did, the controllers' only recourse was to rely on their skills and those of their teammates. Kranz takes us inside Mission Control and introduces us to some of the whiz kids - still in their twenties, only a few years out of college - who had to figure it all out as they went along, creating a great and daring enterprise. He reveals behind-the-scenes details to demonstrate the leadership, discipline, trust, and teamwork that made the space program a success.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The fact that Apollo 13 did not appear in the book until page 306 of 380 pages put a great deal of NASA and their missions in perspective for me. Apollo 13 is well known by those who remember, and a generation that learned about it through the movie, and great books like, Tom Lovell's "Lost Moon". I hope as many people know about the tragedy of Apollo 1, and The Challenger is still rather fresh in the public's mind. Apollo 13 was an incredible accomplishment by all involved, and the 3 men who persevered to make it back are nothing short of remarkable. Those on the ground took everything so personally, but the crew actually had to live through it. However the book puts this mission into perspective by taking the reader through the Mercury and Gemini programs as well. Alan Shepard was the first to climb on a rocket that had a bad habit of exploding. I don't know what the "Right Stuff" actually is, but he had to make from it. And the Mercury Astronauts that followed all had experiences that were way up on the terror scale for non-astronauts/test pilots. That is one of the most eye opening parts of this book, every mission was so new, that the majority had problems that were potentially fatal. You will read about the first moon landing, I never knew what happened on that one. Manned mission hit by lightening, a mission coming back with engines still on because who knew if the heat shield was still there. Every mission is just incredible from the complexity, and despite this, the rate of success. I especially admired the manner that Mr. Kranz discussed the blown hatch on Gus Grissom's flight. The movie did a grave injustice to a man who subsequently died doing his job.

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