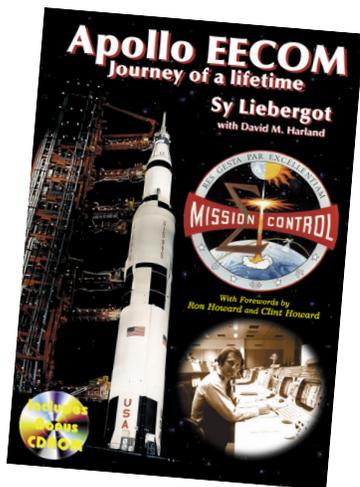


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Astronomy

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Apollo EECOM - journey of a lifetime

Author: Sy Liebergot

Publisher: Apogee

ISBN: 1-896522-96-3

Price: £23.95

A moving and absorbing book which I could not put down. Sy Liebergot was a NASA flight controller - one of the men at the consoles who

called "GO!" at critical moments

throughout the Apollo programme when the mission Controller shouted "EECOM?" The acronym stands for Electrical, Environmental and Communication systems. It was Sy's quick thinking, as much as anything else, that made it possible for Apollo 13 to return safely home after the explosion 200,000 miles from Earth. As the crew's life-saving oxygen leaked away he called for the Command Module's surge tank to be isolated. At first the Flight Controller did not understand why. Without this tank and its small reserve of oxygen, Apollo 13's re-entry would not have been possible.

Sy, whose grandparents were Russian immigrants, survived a brutal and poverty-stricken boyhood in New Jersey and got to NASA via the US Army and North American Aviation. Sitting at his console in Mission Control, Houston, he describes his embarrassment during Apollo 7, the first manned flight in the series, at "the astronaut tantrums and insubordination". The Flight Controller became so enraged that he at first targeted their final splashdown into a hurricane near Hawaii. "We were mightily relieved when splashdown in the Pacific brought an end to 10 days of bickering", writes Sy. Chris Kraft, the Flight Director, ruled that the crew would never fly again. Discipline between astronauts in orbit and ground control has never been breached again!

Reginald Turnill

**"A moving
and absorbing book
which I could not put down."**



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