

Book review in April 2005 issue of

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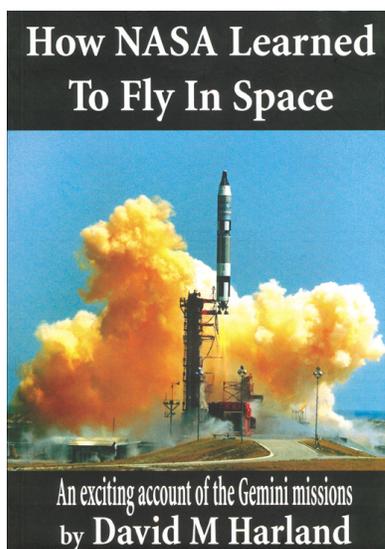
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Harland, David M. **How NASA learned to fly in space: an exciting account of the Gemini missions.** Apogee Books, 2004. 288p ISBN 1894959078 pbk, \$25.95

Harland offers an excellent history of the Gemini program and an enjoyable read. The title really tells it all. The Apollo program got all the glory, but it was the Gemini program that taught NASA everything it needed to know to make it to the moon successfully. After a brief introduction to put the Gemini program in historical context, Harland takes a chapter to describe each flight. Each mission had specific goals to accomplish; these included learning basic maneuvering, space walking, orbital rendezvous and docking, and how to precisely land from orbit. We learn how the specific mission goals changed as NASA learned from previous missions. The use of edited transcripts throughout effectively re-creates the drama of the moment. Harland less successfully explains orbital rendezvous, but does explain enough so we can share in the astronauts delight at success and frustration at failure. This book is a must read for anyone interested in the space program and the history of manned space flight. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. General readers; lower division undergraduates. -- *D. B. Mason, Albright College*



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