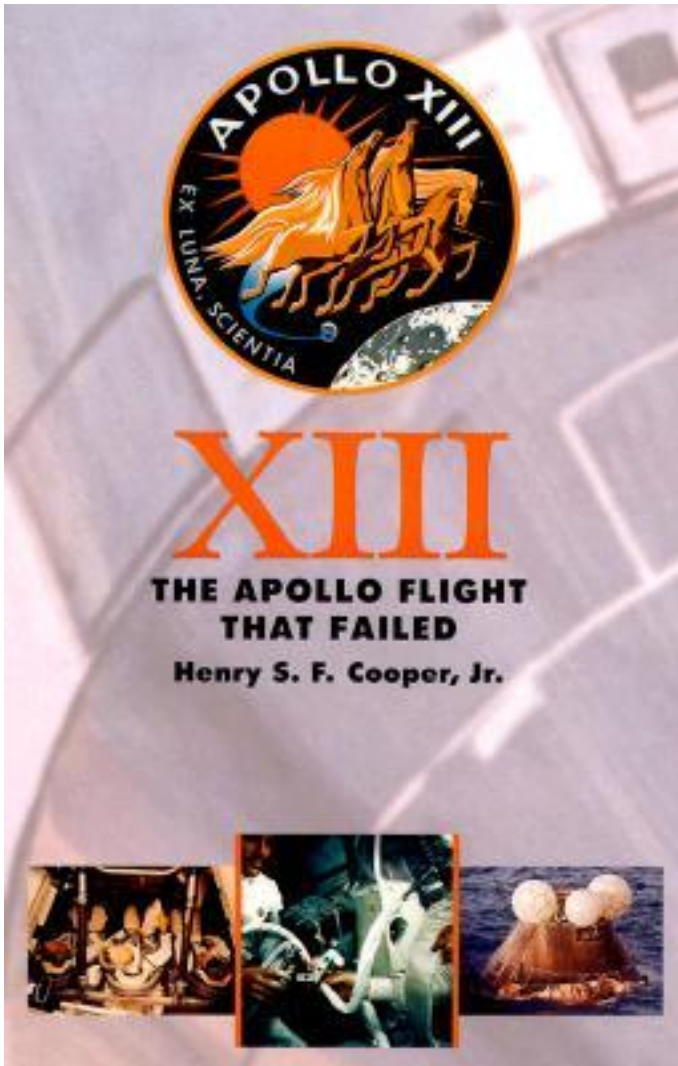


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**Henry S.F. Cooper Jr.**

**Thirteen: The Apollo Flight That Failed**



Title: Thirteen: The Apollo Flight That Failed

Author: Henry S.F. Cooper Jr.

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## Description

On April 13, 1970 an explosion rocked the moon-bound Apollo 13 craft, 205,000 miles from Earth, damaging engines and life-support systems. This minute-by-minute account of the only manned NASA mission to have malfunctioned outside Earth's orbit describes the entire episode.

## Insightful reviews

Tuula: Tells what happened during the Apollo13. Reads bit like logs of the flight have been lived up a bit, but makes a good and coherent story, which swaps between the space and the control room. Stays in very "center", very analytical take.

No matter how many backup systems there is, there is still risk that something goes wrong. Book mentions that couple of learnings for future missions were made based on this one, and would have liked get that kind summary at the end.

Heather Domin: (I was offered a copy of *Thirteen* by the publisher and downloaded it via NetGalley.)

There was something about the style and structure of this book that I couldn't quite put my finger on; about a third of the way through I remembered that it was originally published in 1972, and that explained it. It's not sensationalized or heavily dramatized, nor is it structured like a novel in short punchy chapters; instead it's a very factual, linear account, chronicling every minute of the mission in a style that reminded me of the newscasts of the day, allowing the drama of the story to come through without forcing it. But the biggest difference is that the Apollo 13 story did not yet have the legendary status in 1972 that it has today, so there are no star players or big Hollywood moments in this version of events; every minute and every person is equal, from the astronauts and mission control directors to the random guys in the back room chain-smoking over flight plans. That was pretty refreshing, actually. I learned a lot from this book, and was absorbed from beginning to end. I'm grateful I was offered a copy -- it's a valuable addition to my space history library.

Brian Clegg: Most of us probably think we know all we need to know about the Apollo 13 mission – after all, we've seen the movie (which isn't bad at all) – but inevitably the Hollywood treatment skims over a lot of fascinating detail, while this book, written just two years after the event, gives us the true nitty gritty.

I found it absolutely fascinating, seeing the disaster unfold in slow motion, with all the messiness of real life. For instance, the ground controllers, unaware that an explosion had taken place and had disabled a lot of the equipment went quite a while making incorrect assumptions, still hoping they could get the mission to the moon. In fact what the book makes clear is that in some ways the astronauts were just bit part players and it all the different individuals on the ground who were making the decisions and calculations and generally trying to sort things out.

On the whole this works very well – by relaying the conversations on the ground, the arguments

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between the different specialists and so on, we get a real, in-depth feel of what really happened here. This makes it a genuine page turner, as the reader feels to be present as the disaster unfolds. The only downside of this is that we are showered with with acronyms for all the different controllers, referred to, for instance, as CAPCOM, TELMU, FIDO, EECOM, GUIDO, RETRO and so on. To add to the confusion, because there are four shifts of controllers, there are four persons per title, leading to a cast that it is very difficult to keep sorted in the mind.

I have two niggles with the book – one small and one significant. The small one is the author's affectation of spelling re-entry as reëntry, which is for some reason very irritating. The big one is the science, which the author clearly hasn't got a clue about. Two specific examples. He says 'One amp-hour on the spacecraft's twenty-eight volt current (sic) would keep a 40-watt bulb burning for one hour.' Anyone with high school science should be able to see at least two things wrong with that. But the biggest howler is 'so it was difficult for the computer to work out vectors, a vector being a point in space where the spacecraft was known to have been'. It's not rocket science. Well, okay, it is rocket science, but it is not exactly postgrad physics to realise that a vector is not a point in space.

The book doesn't suffer particularly from its age – in fact it is only apparent in two ways. One is that it thinks the computers of the day are impressive bits of kit (dwarfed as they now are by any smartphone), and the other is that when the book was written it seems that one of the most iconic quotes of modern times (misquoted though it often is) had not become well-known. There is no direct reference to Swigert's 'Okay Houston, we've had a problem here.' (Or Lovell's near repeat 'Houston, we've had a problem.') All Cooper says is 'First, Swigert reported over the radio that the seemed to have a problem.'

Although I can only give it three stars because of the bad science, I have no doubt that anyone interested in the history of space flight should give this book a go.

Andrew: I listened to this publication through Audible. Thirteen is a ancient examine the occasions of Apollo 13, what used to be alleged to be the 3rd project via NASA to land at the moon. The booklet covers the time from previous to liftoff till splashdown six days later. it is a very technical piece, facing the proof and stepping into plenty of information and trivia in regards to the spaceship structures and the way the venture is organized. in case you are keen on NASA and spaceflight, it is going to be very interesting. If not, you could end up bored or overwhelmed. It's now not all dry and critical though, because the writer contains a few firsthand reminiscences from the astronauts and floor crew, explaining how they felt and what was once dealing with their brain at various components of the mission. it is a glance you aren't getting via observing a film or simply interpreting concerning the events, and it truly is drastically appreciated. Overall, I certainly loved 13 and might suggest it to any NASA enthusiast. It will get down into the weeds, so if that is anything you enjoy, provide it a read!

Celia: The e-book is especially technical and occasionally challenging to follow... yet, i actually beloved the publication since it portrayed the triumph of teamwork and ingenuity in fixing how you can get an injured house automobile and its helpful staff again to earth. I am additionally inspired with the author's aspect within the reenactment of the 4 days of the explosion and following the explosion. He has the timeline outlined all the way down to the second!! i like it too

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whilst i will examine the true that means of a word, instead of what i've been erroneously considering for lots of years. Case in point: INSOLUBLE capability tough to solve. It doesn't suggest can't be dissolved in a liquid. move figure!!

Niknik: A extra technical examine the Apollo thirteen project quite often from the point of view of undertaking Control. Interesting yet a section dry after having obvious the dramatized model of Ron Howard's "Apollo 13" such a lot of times. Still, it's totally attention-grabbing to profit approximately the entire occasions that happened to maintain the project from changing into a tragedy and the superb quantity of labor it took to convey the astronauts domestic safely!

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