

Book review in November 2005 issue of

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Buckbee, Ed. The real space cowboys, by Ed Buckbee with Wally Schirra. Apogee Books, 2005. 167p DVD-10 ISBN 1-894959-21-3 pbk, \$29.95.

This book provides a glimpse into the lives of the astronauts from the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions. Author Buckbee is a former NASA public affairs officer who personally knew many of these crew members. Many excerpts from taped interviews with these astronauts are included, and the conflicts between the engineers and Mercury 7 pilots are discussed (e.g., why should chimpanzees fly before humans?). Alan Shepard, the first US astronaut to fly into space, receives prominent treatment as does Wernher von Braun, the German immigrant who was the chief engineer and architect of the manned space program. Evidently, von Braun was superlative in selling the value of the space program to the American public as well as to influential politicians. The book, like most in the Apogee series, contains a double-sided DVD that alone is worth the price. The DVD has NASA documentaries on the early space program along with a wealth of other materials, including an interview with von Braun from the early 1970s and the humorous tribute to Shepard prepared by astronaut Wally Schirra. Summing Up: Recommended. General readers. --
- J. Z. Kiss, Miami University



ISBN 1-894959-21-3



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