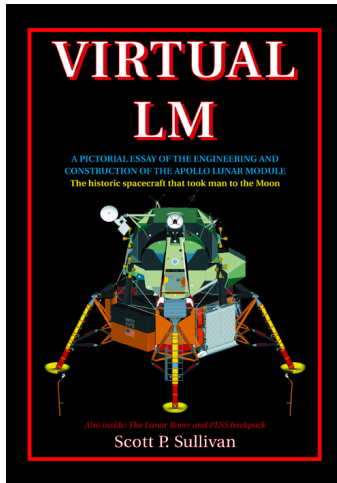


Online Book review July, 2005 at *International* **SPACE REVIEW**

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Virtual LM: A Pictorial Essay of the Engineering and Construction of the Apollo Lunar Module, Scott P Sullivan, Apogee Books (<http://www.cgpublishing.com>), 2004, 249pp, £22.95, \$29.95, \$42.95CDN, ISBN 1-894595-14-0 [softback]

This has to be the most unusual space history book of 2004. It is the second in a series of "virtual books" by Scott Sullivan, following Virtual Apollo. Precisely what is meant by "virtual" is unclear, but since this is mostly a picture book, we must suppose that it has something to do with the fact that there is virtually no text. The subtitle says it all: "A Pictorial Essay of the Engineering and Construction of the Apollo Lunar Module".

Indeed, this book is a celebration of the space vehicle that took twelve men to the surface of the Moon in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The book itself has not been possible until recently because of the technology required to produce the hundreds of colourful diagrams and the CD-ROM bound inside the rear cover. It is yet another example of what this publisher can produce and sell for relatively little money. Every page is in colour and printed on high-gloss paper and the quality of reproduction is little short of astounding, given the low price of the package.

Following some introductory text, the book contains multiple views of the lunar module, both in renderings and photographs. It then proceeds to 'zoom in' to the internal structure, showing what appears to be every strut and angle bracket, every cable and connector. Although there has been some simplification for clarity, one feels that, short of the engineering drawings, one has everything here to re-build the lunar module (LM). As far as the LM's interior is concerned, you will find 'virtually' every panel, switch and dial, labelled for your edification! For completeness, it also includes a section on the lunar roving vehicle (LRV), so for those who have wondered how they crammed a car inside a small section of the LM, this is the book.

The CD contains a copy of the Apollo Operations Handbook (over 1700 pages in total!), selected mission checklists and photos of various lunar modules - flight and training models - to show what the real thing looks like. The photos are definitely not the pretty publicity shots one is used to, but the hardcore engineering that went into the LM.

This is the power of the CD-ROM used to best effect. On balance, it is hard to think of a reason why anyone interested in the history of mankind's greatest expedition should not want to own this book. <<<

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