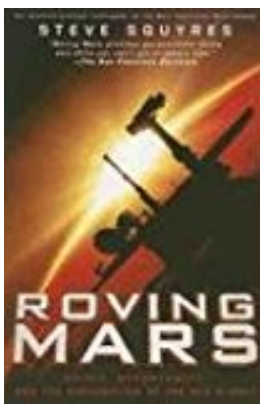


[PDF] Roving Mars: Spirit, Opportunity, And The Exploration Of The Red Planet

Steve Squyres - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Roving Mars: Spirit, Opportun
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Cornell University scientist Squyres is the principal investigator on the Mars missions that landed the rovers *Spirit* and *Opportunity* in January 2004. Expected to operate for only a few weeks, they are still going strong a year and a half later. But as Squyres recounts, their development was plagued with problems, and shortly before the launch of *Spirit*, it looked like the missions might be scrubbed; the giant landing airbags had failed in test after test. *Spirit* has

endured a communications breakdown and a troublesome rear wheel, but *Opportunity* quickly found geological evidence for the existence of water millions of years ago. Squyres relates the toll that monitoring the rovers took on his colleagues. The Martian day is 39 minutes longer than a day on Earth, so the team had to reset their watches and their internal clocks to work, eat and sleep like Martians. Squyres communicates the excitement and the anxieties involved in a project of this magnitude, steering clear of technical jargon, though more casual science buffs might want to fast-forward occasionally in early chapters packed with detail on the ins and outs of NASA's approval process for proposals and institutional politicking. 16 pages of color illus. not seen by PW. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the edition.

From NASA's two rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*, which are currently driving around Mars, have been astoundingly successful; but as Squyres recounts, they came close to staying earthbound. Buffeted by budgetary and technical problems, the rover missions received the green light only in 2001, giving the engineers and scientists just two years to get ready for a 2003 launch. The resulting freneticism of prelaunch preparation permeates Squyres' blow-by-blow narration of his work, which concentrated on several instruments. A geologist designated as the lead scientist for the missions, Squyres had to negotiate with engineers to fit his stuff on their spacecraft--a fundamental antagonism in the space--exploration business. In fact, Squyres bluntly states he distrusted the lead engineer, Peter Theisinger. The working out of their differences, amid other examples of mollification between engineers and scientists, depicts the daily human drama (from Squyres' viewpoint) of diagnosing and solving technical problems, an angle that ought to augment the author's base readership of space-program fans. Couched in conversational prose, Squyres' enthusiasm for exploring Mars shines brightly. *Gilbert Taylor*
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