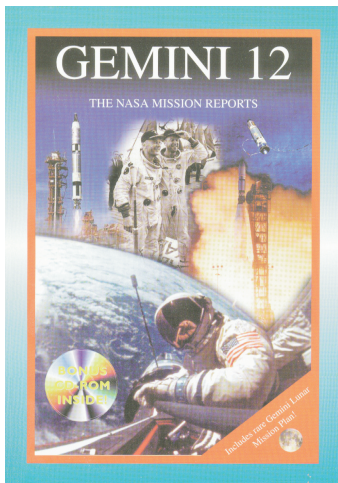


Book review in February 2005 issue of

# THE OBSERVATORY

A REVIEW OF ASTRONOMY

University of London Observatory



**Gemini 12: The NASA Mission Reports**, edited by R. Godwin (Apogee Books, through Gazelle, Lancaster), 2003. Pp. 264+CD-ROM 25.5 x 17.5 cm. Price £23.95/\$29.95 (paperback; ISBN 1 894 95904 3).

Today, *Gemini 12* is a mere footnote in the annals of human spaceflight, but back in 1966 November it was the key to America's progress in meeting President Kennedy's call to land a man on the Moon before the decade was out. As the last of the two-man missions that were designed to pave the way for the Apollo flights to the Moon, there was tremendous pressure on the crew of *Gemini 12* to demonstrate that NASA had learned how to achieve orbital rendezvous and docking, and conduct extravehicular activities.

This new addition to the Apogee space-archives series details the most successful mission of the Gemini series, through pre-launch news releases, the press kit, and the transcript of the crew's technical debriefing. Astronomers may be interested to learn that the crew succeeded in observing a solar eclipse. Onboard experiments included an ultraviolet camera/spectroscope, an exobiology package designed to collect micrometeoroids and expose micro-organisms to the space environment, and a photographic study to search for dust or other material at the Earth-Moon libration points.

Also included is a CD-ROM, which includes an interview with mission commander James Lovell, a restored version of the 16-mm film footage taken during Buzz Aldrin's EVAs, a NASA documentary on the mission, hundreds of still images taken during the mission, and the complete surface-to-air transcript from lift off to splashdown. A valuable addition to the library of any space buff.

— PETER BOND

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