



Walking to Olympus: An EVA Chronology (Monographs in Aerospace History)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration, David S. F. Portree, Robert C. Trevino

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Spacewalkers enjoy a view of Earth once reserved for Apollo, Zeus, and other denizens of Mt. Olympus. During humanity's first extravehicular activity (EVA), Alexei Leonov floated above Gibraltar, the rock ancient seafarers saw as the gateway to the great unknown Atlantic. The symbolism was clear - Leonov stepped past a new Gibraltar when he stepped into space. More than 32 years and 154 EVAs later, Jerry Linenger conducted an EVA with Vladimir Tsibliyev as part of International Space Station Phase I. They floated together above Gibraltar. Today the symbolism has new meaning - humanity is starting to think of stepping out of Earth orbit, space travel's new Gibraltar, and perhaps obtaining a new olympian view - a close-up look at Olympus Mons on Mars. *Walking to Olympus: An EVA Chronology* chronicles the 154 EVAs conducted from March 1965 to April 1997. It is intended to make clear the crucial role played by EVA in the history of spaceflight, as well as to chronicle the large body of EVA "lessons learned." Russia and the U.S. define EVA differently. Russian cosmonauts are said to perform EVA any time they are in vacuum in a space suit. A U.S. astronaut must have at least his head outside his spacecraft before he is said to perform an EVA. The difference is based in differing spacecraft design philosophies. Russian and Soviet spacecraft have always had a specialized airlock through which the EVA cosmonaut egressed, leaving the main habitable volume of the spacecraft pressurized. The U.S. Gemini and Apollo vehicles, on the other hand, depressurized their entire habitable volume foregress. In this document, we apply the Russian definition to Russian EVAs, and the U.S. definition to U.S.EVAs. Thus, for example, Gemini 4 Command Pilot James McDivitt does not share the honor of being first American spacewalker with Ed White, even though he was suited and in vacuum when White stepped out into space. Non-EVA spaceflights are listed in the chronology to provide context and to display the large number of flights in which EVA played a role. This approach also makes apparent significant EVA gaps -for example, the U.S. gap between 1985 and 1991 following the Challenger accident.

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