



## Spacesuit: A History through Fact and Fiction

*Brett Gooden*

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Recipient of the American Astronautical Society's 2012 Eugene M. Emme Astronautical Literature Award

The space suit is an icon of space flight. It is the very symbol of interplanetary exploration – of pioneering adventure, of excitement and danger, and of man's quest to learn more of other worlds.

This book follows the remarkable history of the space suit through science fiction and fact. With an absorbing blend of drama and detail, Brett Gooden explains how this seemingly impossible dream gradually evolved into the complex suits of today and how the quest continues for the 'Mars and Beyond' suits of tomorrow.

Man has dreamt of flying into space and walking on other planets for hundreds of years. But the risks to the human body involved in making this a reality only were only first recognized when, in the 1800s, an adventurous few climbed high mountains and took the first tentative steps into the sky under hydrogen filled balloons.

Gradually it became clear that to leave the earth's atmosphere and gravity, our frail bodies would need protection from many dangers. Jules Verne, in his epic novel *Around the Moon* in 1872, recognized this need and was one of the first to suggest that some form of suit, similar to that used by deep sea divers, might allow his space voyagers to venture safely into the vacuum outside their spaceship.

In the period between the World Wars, daring pilots, competing with each other, ventured higher and higher into the thinner atmosphere. They challenged the physiologists and engineers to provide them with special suits to achieve this goal.

At the same time, cheap pulp fiction magazines pumped out colorful adventures of humans in space. Their eye-catching cover illustrations became the archetypical feature of these 'pulps' and allowed artists to give vent to their wildest fantasy. Nevertheless, their inventive dreams for space suits fed back to the scientific community. Fiction influenced fact.

Complemented by astonishing and detailed illustrations, this book unlocks the seemingly impenetrable secrets of how the space suit was made into a practical and essential device. How simple everyday items such as the car tire, the caterpillar and the concertina provided critical clues that eventually brought the space suit to reality.

This is the fascinating, extraordinary and often bizarre story of the Space suit – through Fact and Fiction.

## REVIEWS

finely detailed and analytical...will engage, inspire, and inform readers from advanced middle school through adults, regardless of their foreknowledge on the subject. Spacesuit, the book and the object itself, is an inspiring microcosm of astronautical history and engineering

Spacetimes

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