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Exploration and Engineering: The Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Quest for Mars (New Series in NASA History)

Erik M. Conway

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Although the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, has become synonymous with the United States' planetary exploration during the past half century, its most recent focus has been on Mars. Beginning in the 1990s and continuing through the Mars Phoenix mission of 2007, JPL led the way in engineering an impressive, rapidly evolving succession of Mars orbiters and landers, including roving robotic vehicles whose successful deployment onto the Martian surface posed some of the most complicated technical problems in space flight history.

In *Exploration and Engineering*, Erik M. Conway reveals how JPL engineers' creative technological feats led to major breakthroughs in Mars exploration. He takes readers into the heart of the lab's problem-solving approach and management structure, where talented scientists grappled with technical challenges while also coping, not always successfully, with funding shortfalls, unrealistic schedules, and managerial turmoil.

Conway, JPL's historian, offers an insider's perspective into the changing goals of Mars exploration, the ways in which sophisticated computer simulations drove the design process, and the remarkable evolution of landing technologies over a thirty-year period.

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