

THE “FACE OF NASA MISSION CONTROL” CHRONICLES HIS CAREER WITH VALUABLE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP AND TEAM CHEMISTRY

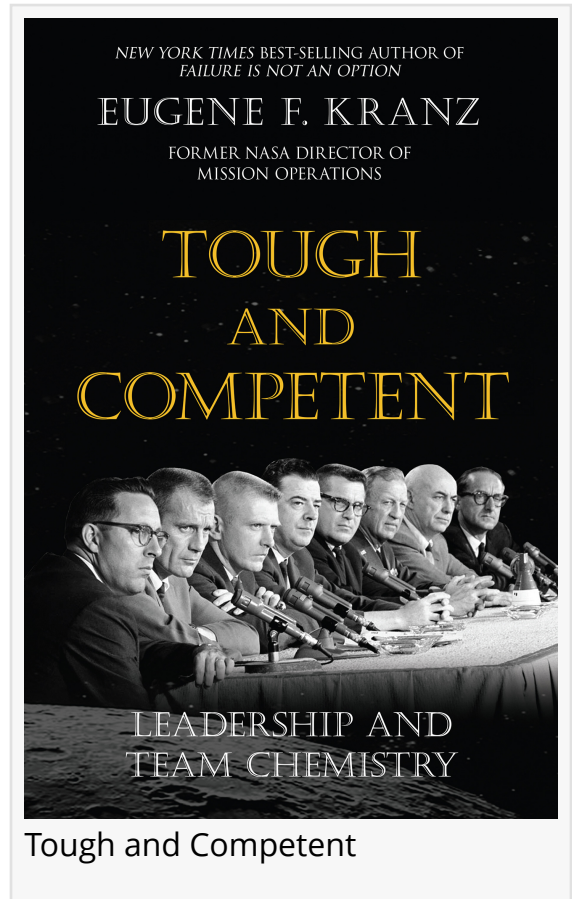
TOUGH AND COMPETENT by Eugene F. Kranz

UNITED STATES, August 21, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- If one was to establish a role model for high-risk leadership, the name of the NASA legendary mission controller Gene Kranz would appear. He began as a young leader in Mercury Control in the 1960s and his career covers the complete arc of manned spaceflight missions. He's probably best known as the leader of the “Tiger Team” flight controllers who in 1970 returned a crippled spaceship safely to Earth – a nail-biting role made famous by actor Ed Harris in the movie “Apollo 13.”

The core lesson of his new book, [TOUGH AND COMPETENT](#), is that leadership and culture, not hardware and software, are the critical assets to manage and control high risk ventures. Kranz documents the leadership and teamwork principles that emerged from an organization of novice, part-time engineers in NASA Mercury Control. By July 1969, when faced with the stress of the Apollo 11 mission to land Americans on the moon, they had matured into a group of hardened individuals empowered to make the split-second decisions to land with only 17 seconds of fuel remaining.

What had changed? Team chemistry, IT! is the unifying soul of operations that emerged from the leadership, working, and social environment to achieve organizational excellence. Mission Control could quickly address the risks and complexity of spaceflight operations. The intangible element, IT!, elevates performance to where the impossible becomes commonplace.

IT! was born in a bare-bones warehouse floor work environment where learning by doing



developed the materials for flight. Controllers spanned diverse backgrounds: Philco tech reps, farm boys, Native Americans, and junior college grads who became self-made engineers. A free exchange of knowledge developed expertise among colleagues. Everyone brought unique viewpoints and skills which coalesced into IT!

In relaying his long tenure at NASA, Kranz narrates the development of IT! and how it began with a watershed moment. When he addressed a stunned team after the tragic loss of Apollo 1, Kranz delivered his "Kranz Dictum" that "Tough" and "Competent" were the new tenants of Mission Control.

"Tough means we are forever accountable for what we do or what we fail to do," writes Kranz. "We will never again compromise our responsibilities. . . . Competent means we will never take anything for granted."

Moving innovation forward was never simple. From Gemini to Apollo launches, the Skylab program, and the stunning loss of the Challenger crew, Kranz was the face of NASA leadership. His views on lessons learned through decades of Mission Control are valuable for any innovation-based organization.

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Gene Kranz shows how his leadership is authentic, relatable, and adaptable. A flight plan for generations to come."

Amy Spowart, President and CEO, National Aviation Hall of Fame

Praise is already pouring in for TOUGH AND COMPETENT.

"Kranz captures the essence of the development of leadership and team chemistry, the IT! of the Control teams who worked around the clock to overcome a seemingly impossible challenge to provide a great Hollywood ending to our mission." --Fred Haise, Astronaut, Apollo 13

"A checklist for personal and organizational greatness.

There is no organization I can think of that would not benefit from this book." --Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Mitch Utterback, U.S. Army Special Forces

"For innovators surfing the edge of chaos, your mentoring guide to become a 21st century leader." --Captain Richard Champion de Crespigny AM, Pilot in Command, Qantas flight QF32



Eugene F. Kranz

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TOUGH AND COMPETENT is available on [Amazon](#) and other popular retail outlets where books are sold.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NASA veteran Eugene "Gene" Kranz is best known as leader of the "Tiger Team" flight controllers who returned the damaged Apollo 13 spaceship safely back to Earth on April 17, 1970. He was portrayed by Ed Harris in the 1995 movie "Apollo 13." Born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, Kranz holds a BS in Aeronautical Engineering from Parks College of Saint Louis University and served in the U.S. Air Force as a fighter pilot and a flight test engineer before joining NASA in 1960. He assumed Flight Director duties for the Project Gemini and Apollo missions, including leading the controller team for America's first lunar landing during Apollo 11 in 1969. In 1983, Kranz assumed NASA Director of Mission Operations overseeing a workforce of more than 5,000.

After serving in Mission Control for over 100 launches and effectively overseeing the complete arc of U.S. manned space missions, Kranz retired in 1994 turning to motivational speaking and writing. His book on the early manned space program, *Failure Is Not an Option*, was a New York Times bestseller and adapted as a 2004 History Channel documentary on Mission Control.

Kranz has received numerous awards, including the National Space Trophy and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and he is enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame. His alma mater, Central Catholic in Toledo, displays his NASA Ambassador of Exploration Award alongside other personal NASA mementos. In 2021, the city of Toledo honored its native son when it renamed its airport in honor of Kranz. A Texan for over five decades, Kranz and his wife Marta are the proud parents of six children.

Eugene Kranz

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