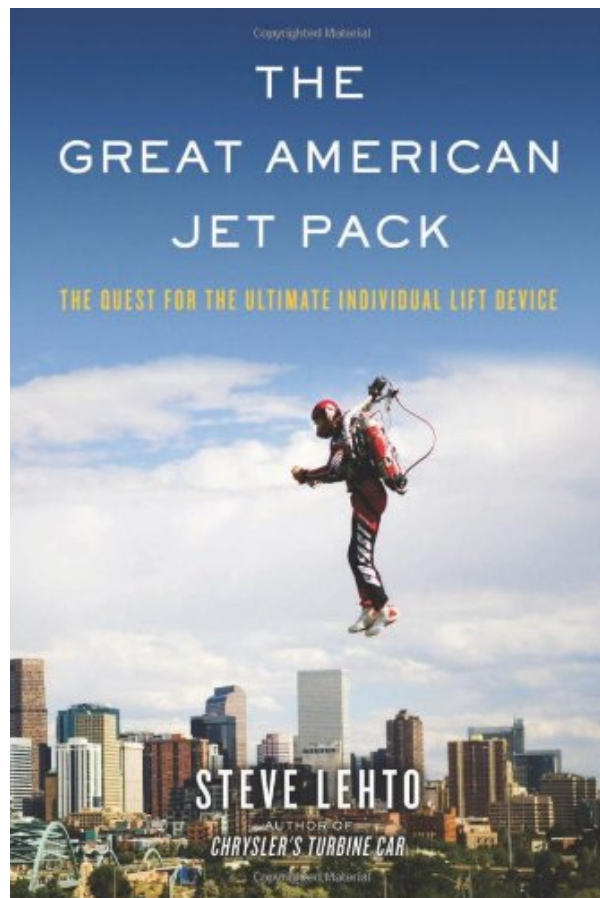
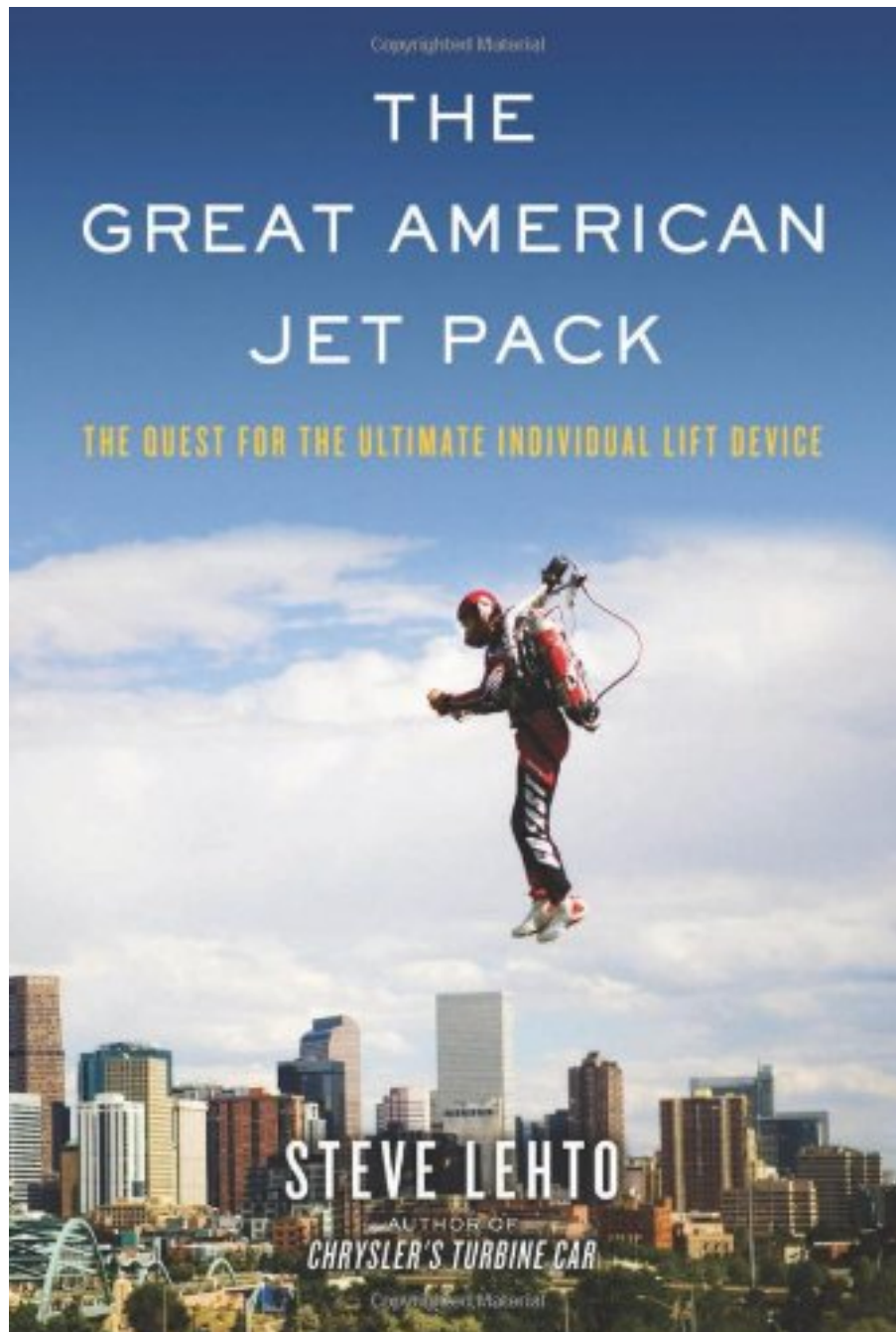


THE GREAT AMERICAN JET PACK: THE QUEST FOR THE ULTIMATE INDIVIDUAL LIFT DEVICE BY STEVE LEHTO



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From Booklist

Gilligan flew one on the island. So did James Bond, fleeing from some baddies. So did Professor John Robinson, while he was lost in space. First thought up by sf writers back in the 1920s and turned into reality in the mid-1960s, the jet pack was the latest in a long line of personal flying devices that included flying shoes, wearable rockets, and a flying platform. It almost immediately entered the public consciousness, becoming a sort of pop-culture icon, the device that was going to completely change the way people got from place to place. It hasn't yet, but as Lehto says, the story of the jet pack—of, indeed, the quest for the perfect personal lift device—is really part of the larger story of “man's dream of flying.” It's a fascinating tale, full of wild ideas and serious science (with, yes, a little kidnapping, torture, and murder), and Lehto tells it very well, focusing on the people for whom creating a functional small-scale flying machine was not just a puzzle to be solved but a calling. --David Pitt

Review

"While personal-flight prototypes edge from pipe dream to purchase order, this well-documented history provides a satisfying substitution." —Kirkus Reviews

About the Author

Steve Lehto is the author of *Death's Door: The Truth Behind Michigan's Largest Mass Murder*, a 2007 Michigan Notable Book; *Chrysler's Turbine Car*; and *Michigan's Columbus: The Life of Douglass Houghton*.

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For a few decades, jet packs seemed to be everywhere: on Gilligan's Island, Lost in Space, Thunderball, and even the opening ceremony of the 1984 Olympics. Inventors promised we'd all be flying with them now, enabling us to zoom around effortlessly in the sky and getting us to work without traffic jams and trains. What happened to the jet pack?

In *The Great American Jet Pack*, Steve Lehto gives us the definitive history of this and related devices, explaining how the technology arose, how it works, and why we don't have them in our garages today.

These individual lift devices, as they were blandly labeled by the government men who financed much of their development, answered man's desire to simply step outside and take flight. No runways, no wings, no pilot's license were required. Soaring through the air with the wind in your face and landing anywhere there was room to stand—could this be done? Yes, it could be, and it was.

But the jet pack was perhaps the most overpromised technology of all time. From the rocket belt to the jet belt to the flying platform and all the way to Yves Rossy's 21st-century free flights using a jet-powered wing, this book profiles the inventors and pilots, the hucksters and cheats, the businessmen and soldiers who were involved with these machines. And it finally tells a great American story of a technology whose promise may, one day, yet come to fruition.

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- 240 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Jet Packs and Flying Platforms

By James D. Crabtree

Steve Lehto does an excellent job of telling the story of personal flight devices, machines which exist more in the imagination than in reality... although they DO, indeed, exist in reality.

Lehto starts with the Bell Rocket Belt, the 1960s invention which allowed a man to fly without an airplane... if only for 21 seconds. Unfortunately, the brute force needed to fly a person without lifting surfaces narrowed the possibilities down to hydrogen peroxide rocket motors. And even THAT was limited and less than ideal. Lehto also looks at the Thiokol Flying Belt, the Hiller platforms, WASP and the jet pack. The author's style is very engaging, technical enough to explain the problems involved without making the layman's eyes glaze over and is well-woven. Even though I've already done some reading on this topic I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Illustrated with photos and drawings.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Fun Read with Many Well-Researched Stories

By J. Robideau

How could I resist picking up a book about Jet Packs? While technically all the devices covered in this book aren't "jet" packs, the term "jet pack" is a nice, compact reference that brings a smile to our faces. The subtitle is absolutely accurate: "The Quest for the Ultimate Individual Lift Device". This is a quest that isn't quite finished. This book outlines the course of that quest and pays homage to the innovators who have come before.

The author starts with the early aspirations of science fiction writers and proceeds to tell the stories of a dizzying array of "Individual Lift Devices" and rocket men:

- Flying Shoes and Hovering Platforms
- The Hiller and de Lackner Flying Platforms
- The Rocket Belt
- The Bell Rocket Men
- The Sud Ludion and the Pogo
- William P. Sutor: Rocket Man
- The Jet Flying Belt
- The WASP
- The Pretty Bird
- Ducted Fan Lift Devices

- Hal Graham
- Jetlev
- Jetman: Yves Rossy

The author concludes with a "State of the Jet Pack" address in which he sums up the current efforts and the problems that still need to be addressed.

"The Great American Jet Pack" has some great stories and I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the history of the innovations around the "jetpack".

This book was well formatted for reading on my Gen4 Kindle device

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

WASP II

By Scott Watson

I found the book to be well written and based on real solid research, being able to read the interview with Ray LeGrande and Mark Voss provided an in depth look into project management and the events which disbanded the Jet Pack demonstration team. There is no technical obstacle to building and flying a jet pack or WASP II which is a ILD/VTOL platform you stand on like a modern day Segway, if you want to see it in flight watch the 2012 WASP Project video on youtube.

For in depth information review: 1940 to 1986 STOL/VTOL, VTOL Aircraft, VATOL Rocket Belts US development.

AFWAL-TR-86-3071, VOL 1 Author Bernard Lindenbaum

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Lehto can be your buddy all the same.