



Return to Earth

By Buzz Aldrin, Wayne Warga

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Return to Earth By Buzz Aldrin, Wayne Warga

Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin's courageous, candid memoir of his return to Earth after the historic moon landing and his personal struggle with fame and depression.

"We landed with all the grace of a freight elevator," Buzz Aldrin relates in the opening passages of *Return to Earth*, remembering Command Module *Columbia's* abrupt descent into the gravity of the blue planet. With that splash, Aldrin takes readers on a journey through the human side of the space program, as one of the first two men to land on the moon learns to cope with the pressures of his new public persona.

In honest and compelling prose, Aldrin reveals a side of instant fame for which West Point and NASA could never have prepared him. One day a fighter pilot and engineer, the next a cultural hero burdened with the adoration of thousands, Aldrin gives a poignant account of the affair that threatened his marriage, as well as his descent into alcoholism and depression that resulted from trying to be too many things to too many people.

He didn't realize that when he landed on his home planet his odyssey had just begun. As Aldrin puts it, "I traveled to the moon, but the most significant voyage of my life began when I returned from where no man had been before."

Return to Earth is a powerful and moving memoir that exposes the stresses suffered by those in the Apollo program and the price Buzz Aldrin paid when he became an American icon.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A frank, sometimes poignant depiction of [Buzz Aldrin’s] descent from fame into alcoholism and a depression . . . as much about what followed his moon voyage as what preceded it.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

“Distills the worldview—in space and on Earth—of this American icon.” —*Bookmarks*

“[*Return to Earth* is a] courageous memoir. It is also a powerful and moving story [that] helps to open the door to understanding some of the stresses on those associated with the Apollo program. They accomplished a remarkable feat—perhaps the greatest in human history—but the price they paid was great as well.” —Dr. Roger D. Launius, Senior Curator, Division of Space History, National Air and Space Museum

About the Author

Buzz Aldrin (b. 1930) is an American astronaut, and the second person to walk on the Moon. Born in Montclair, New Jersey, he turned down a full scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in favor of an education at West Point Academy, where he graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. After receiving a commission by the United States Air Force (USAF), Aldrin flew sixty-six combat missions during the Korean War, after which he continued his education at MIT before becoming an astronaut in 1963.

Unlike most of the others chosen for that role, Aldrin was never a test pilot, but attracted the attention of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) with his success in the USAF and his graduate work at MIT. Aldrin flew on Gemini 12, and was selected—along with Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins—for Apollo 11, the first mission to the surface of the Moon. Since retiring from NASA, he has done charity work and written numerous books, including *Encounter with Tiber* (1996), his first science fiction novel.

Wayne Warga (1937–1994) cowrote *Return to Earth* with astronaut Buzz Aldrin, and *Natalie: A Memoir by Her Sister* with Lana Wood. Warga was a correspondent for *Life* magazine in Cuba and Central America and a prolific entertainment journalist and writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Entertainment Tonight*, and *USA Today: On TV*. He later wrote the Jeffrey Dean Mysteries: *Hardcover* (1985), *Fatal Impressions* (1989), and *Singapore Transfer* (1991).

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