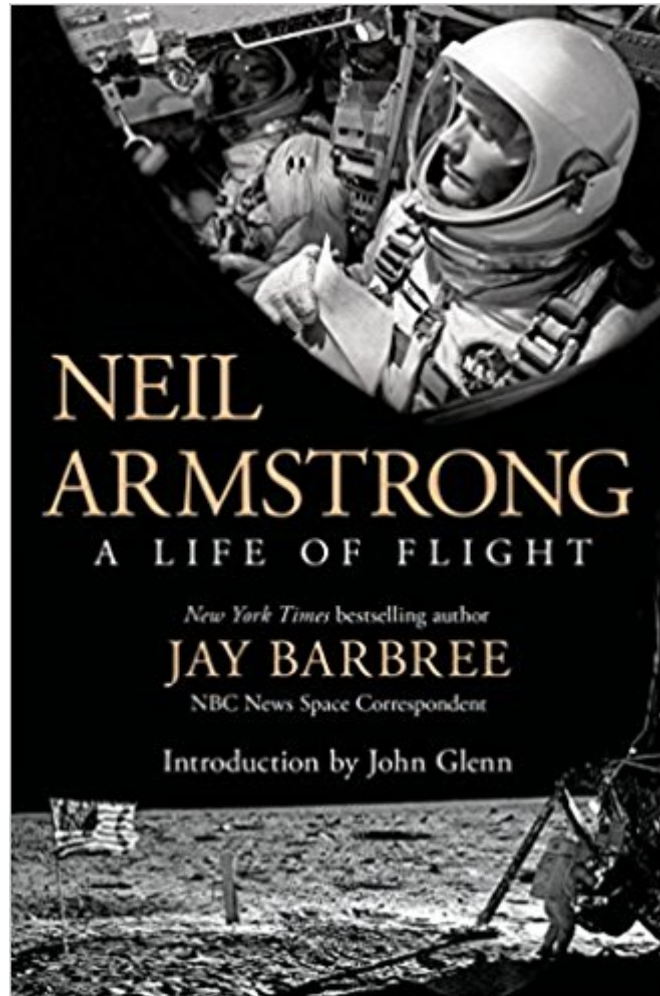




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# Neil Armstrong: A Life Of Flight



## Synopsis

Much has been written about Neil Armstrong, America's modern hero and history's most famous space traveler. Yet shy of fame and never one to steal the spotlight Armstrong was always reluctant to discuss his personal side of events. Here for the first time is the definitive story of Neil's life of flight he shared for five decades with a trusted friend — Jay Barbree. Working from 50 years of conversations he had with Neil, from notes, interviews, NASA spaceflight transcripts, and remembrances of those Armstrong trusted, Barbree writes about Neil's three passions — flight, family, and friends. This is the inside story of Neil Armstrong from the time he flew combat missions in the Korean War and then flew a rocket plane called the X-15 to the edge of space, to when he saved his Gemini 8 by flying the first emergency return from Earth orbit and then flew Apollo-Eleven to the moon's Sea of Tranquility. Together Neil and Jay discussed everything, from his love of flying, to the war years, and of course his time in space. The book is full of never-before-seen photos and personal details written down for the first time, including what Armstrong really felt when he took that first step on the moon, what life in NASA was like, his relationships with the other astronauts, and what he felt the future of space exploration should be. As the only reporter to have covered all 166 American astronaut flights and moon landings Jay knows these events intimately. Neil Armstrong himself said, "Barbree is history's most experienced space journalist. He is exceptionally well qualified to recall and write the events and emotions of our time." Through his friendship with Neil and his dedicated research, Barbree brings us the most accurate account of his friend's life of flight, the book he planned for twenty years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Though a famous, much chronicled astronaut, Neil Armstrong wanted to write his own story with the help of NBC reporter Barbree, who'd covered every one of his missions. But Armstrong, who died in 2012, was such a self-effacing man, he couldn't bring himself to write a book focusing on him alone. He'd talked to Barbree for years about the chief passions of his life, flying and his family. Drawing on those long talks and with the cooperation of Armstrong's family, Barbree offers an intimate portrait of a man grateful to have spent his life doing what he loved. Armstrong talked to Barbree about his two marriages, the death of his baby daughter, the close fellowship among pilots and astronauts, and the astonishing experiences of his space exploration missions. Timed to coincide with the forty-fifth anniversary of the Apollo 11 space launch, Barbree's book includes many never-before-seen photos, a look back at the competition to win the space race with the Soviets, and Armstrong's vision for the future of space exploration. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Much of Barbree's writing has a "you are there" immediacy, because he was present for many of the book's key events. During his more than half-century as space correspondent for NBC News, Barbree witnessed and reported on each and every launch of the U.S. human space program. He is at his best when describing the visceral thrill of rocket flight, the lifeless majesty of the moon, and the visual splendor of Earth from space. These poetic passages are made all the more poignant by his close brush with becoming an astronaut, as a finalist in NASA's failed-to-launch "Journalist in Space" program.

• The Washington Post "Barbree's book reminds readers of all that led up to that first step.

• Associated Press "Sit back, put up your feet, and spend some time with Neil Armstrong: A Life of Flight, by Jay Barbree, NBC's longtime space correspondent, who has covered the US manned spaceflight program for more than half a century. To be sure, this is not the definitive, footnote-packed Armstrong biography. Instead, this book has the feel of sitting down with Barbree at a barbeque for an extended conversation.

• The Christian Science Monitor: 1 of the 10 Best Books of July "NBC News space reporter Jay Barbree spent 50 years getting to know astronaut Neil Armstrong. In this biography, Barbree recalls Armstrong's historic moon landing in gripping detail.

• Parade: included in Summer Books round-up "His richly detailed profile of Armstrong covers Armstrong's life and career

with intimacy, humor and heart, from his days as a U.S. Navy pilot through his training for the NASA space program, and ultimately into the commander's seat of Apollo 11. Space hounds and history buffs will dig it, for sure, but even casual readers will be riveted by its comprehensive portrait of a real-life cosmic cowboy who broke the bonds of Earth and put the first American footprint where it had never been before.

— *American Profile* — "With a foreword by John Glenn NBC News space correspondent Barbree got very up-close to the former Navy combat pilot and astronaut, who died in 2012. Notoriously private, Armstrong opened up to the author to reveal his innermost thoughts, telling "what he really felt when he took that first step on the moon, and what life in NASA was like.

— *VFW Magazine* — "Barbree's tone is warm, and he has a boyish enthusiasm for both tricky missions carried out deftly and for near misses barely avoided, both of which figure heavily in Armstrong's professional life.

— *The Columbus Dispatch* — "...intimate and definitive...a celebration of Armstrong's life and times.

— *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* — "An eye-opening and entertaining tale of the race to the moon.

— *Publishers Weekly* — "Veteran news correspondent Barbree offers an intimate view into the life of Neil Armstrong (1930-2012), his friend as well as a national hero and very private person. The author paints a detailed and colorful picture of his subject and an unbiased depiction of the period in which he lived, while also demonstrating reverence for Armstrong as confidant.

— *Library Journal*, starred review — "A wholly admiring assessment of Armstrong the aviator and Armstrong the man.

— *Kirkus Reviews* — "Emerging clearly in Barbree's narrative are Armstrong's humility and integrity - bedrock values that remained with him throughout his life.

— *Aerospace America* — "This is a great book and does much to preserve Neil's legacy.

— *Jim Lovell*, NASA astronaut and commander of Apollo 13 mission — "You'll find the Neil Armstrong I knew in these pages.

— *Gene Cernan*, NASA astronaut and the last man on the moon

First Man was much better, more detailed, more scientific, more meaty. This book is fluff and narrative, especially the contrived conversations and discussions are just too much. I am sure Neil was quiet and dignified, but the man was an engineer and scientist and loved his subject matter. Having attended UC Engineering while he was Dean (not mentioned in the book) and also a resident of his small community, I know the man by reputation pretty well. I just don't think this fluff piece captured the real Neil Armstrong very well.

There are other, and much better, Armstrong biographies out there. This one reads and feels as though it was rushed to press immediately after the astronaut's death, and is absolutely full of inaccuracies. Other reviewers have noted some of these, but I was stunned to see Nikolai Kamanin, a senior figure in the Soviet space program, referred to as 'Lev Kamanin' both in the text and the index. It's a sloppy piece of work, in need of serious editing; there are dozens of problems with commas, leaving the text difficult to read, almost as though, in places, it was dictated into Dragon. Pass on this and read 'First Man' instead.

I mostly quit reading after the statement in the account of Gagarin's launch, "...his weight being increased constantly by the pull of gravity." This guy's a pilot? Armstrong would have laughed his ass off. I gave an extra star because he knew the great man. Better to read the definitive Armstrong history First Man: superb.

Having read most of the available biographies of the Apollo astronauts, this is one of the poorer ones. After hearing an interview with the author on Planetary Radio I was looking forward to what was promised to be an insightful biography from a close friend of Neil's. Instead this book is a simplistic re-telling of the Apollo era, with many inaccuracies and speculations. Almost nothing new is added to the history which is covered much better in other books.

Neil Armstrong is one of my heroes. Unfortunately Mr. Barbree's story is rather shallow and basically 1960's hero worship. Not much technical information. Mr. Armstrong's post-FAA career and life is rather trivialized.

This is an easy read but in my opinion it is a loose summary of some of the material which James Hansen included in his authorized biography, First Man.

Sloppily written and edited, and written as a "buddy" instead of a journalist. Characteristic of other Barbree work.

This is a great book to read but I even though I own the book I could not loan it to my son to read on my Kindle. Should have purchased this book in hard cover.

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