

The Final Mission

Preserving NASA's Apollo Sites

LISA WESTWOOD, BETH LAURA O'LEARY,
AND MILFORD WAYNE DONALDSON

"An excellent overview of artifacts and sites in both terrestrial and extra-terrestrial environments."

—**P. J. CAPELOTTI**, author of *The Human Archaeology of Space*

"Artfully blends archaeology and historic preservation into a history of the Cold War space race. A compelling argument for preserving America's twentieth-century space heritage."

—**TODD A. HANSON**, author of *The Archaeology of the Cold War*

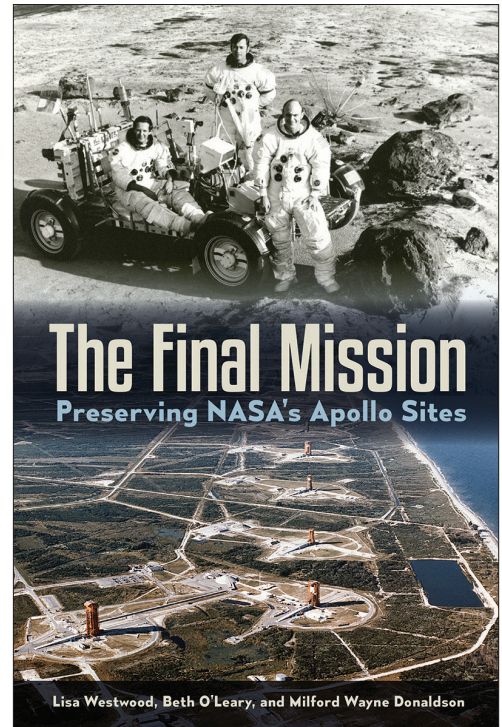
The world will always remember Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin for their first steps on the moon, yet few today hold in respect the sites that made these and other astronauts' journeys possible. Across the American landscape and on the lunar surface, many facilities and landing sites linked to the Apollo program remain unprotected. Some have already crumbled to ruins—silent and abandoned. *The Final Mission* explores these key locations, reframes the footprints and items left on the moon as cultural resources, and calls for the urgent preservation of this space heritage.

Beginning with the initiation of the Space Race, the authors trace the history of research, training, and manufacturing centers that contributed to lunar exploration. From the early rocket test stands of Robert H. Goddard, to astronaut instruction at Meteor Crater, to human and primate experiments at Holloman Air Force Base, innumerable places proved critical to developing the equipment for exploring space, surviving the journey, and returning to Earth safely. Despite their significance to the history of human spaceflight, many landmarks face the threat of damage or destruction. Most alarming is that the rapid advancement of technology renders stations obsolete long before they are deemed worthy of preservation. Moreover, the lack of precedence for protecting off-planet artifacts poses a unique challenge for space archaeology. While NASA's 2011 recommendations for spacefarers suggest avoiding close proximity to this cultural landscape, the authors advocate stronger routes of preservation and present models for safeguarding space history—both on Earth's surface and beyond.

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