

Bringing Columbia Home: The Untold Story of a Lost Space Shuttle and Her Crew

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Voted the Best Space Book of 2018 by the Space Hipsters, the dramatic inside story of the epic search and recovery operation after the Columbia space shuttle disaster.

On February 1, 2003, Columbia disintegrated on reentry before the nation's eyes, and all seven astronauts aboard were lost. Author Mike Leinbach, Launch Director of the space shuttle program at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center was a key leader in the search and recovery effort as NASA, FEMA, the FBI, the US Forest Service, and dozens more federal, state, and local agencies combed an area of rural east Texas the size of Rhode Island for every piece of the shuttle and her crew they could find. Assisted by hundreds of volunteers, it would become the largest ground search operation in US history. This comprehensive account is told in four parts:

- >> Parallel Confusion
- >> Courage, Compassion, and Commitment
- >> Picking Up the Pieces
- >> A Bittersweet Victory

For the first time, here is the definitive inside story of the Columbia disaster and recovery and the inspiring message it ultimately holds. In the aftermath of tragedy, people and communities came together to help bring home the remains of the crew and nearly 40 percent of shuttle, an effort that was instrumental in piecing together what happened so the shuttle program could return to flight and complete the International Space Station. Bringing ColumbiaHome shares the deeply personal stories that emerged as NASA employees looked for lost colleagues and searchers overcame immense physical, logistical, and emotional challenges and worked together to accomplish the impossible.

Featuring a foreword and epilogue by astronauts Robert Crippen and Eileen Collins, and dedicated to the astronauts and recovery search persons who lost their lives, this is an incredible, compelling narrative about the best of humanity in the darkest of times and about how a failure at the pinnacle of human achievement became a story of cooperation and hope.

Michael D. Leinbach was the last launch director in the space shuttle program at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center, responsible for overall shuttle launch countdown activities until the end of the program in 2011. In November 2004, Leinbach was awarded the prestigious 2004 Presidential Rank Award. He lives in Scottsmeer, Florida.

Jonathan H. Ward works to bring the thrill of the space program to life for the general public as a Solar System Ambassador for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and as a frequent speaker on space exploration topics to interest groups and at regional conferences. He is the author of two previous books on space exploration. He lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Captain Robert L. Crippen, USN, Retired (foreword) was Columbia's first pilot. He received a bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Texas in 1960. He has received numerous special honors, including the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, three Distinguished Service Medals, the US Navy Distinguished Flying Cross, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the FAA's Award for Distinguished Service, the Goddard

Memorial Trophy, the Harmon Trophy, four NASA Space Flight Medals, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Award, the American Aeronautical Society Flight Achievement Award, the National Geographic Society's Gardiner Greene Hubbard Medal, the Aviation Hall of Fame 1981 Al J. Engel Award, American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal, the Society of Experimental Test Pilots Ivan C. Kincheloe Award, and the NASA Exceptional Service Medal. He lives in Orlando, Florida.

Colonel Eileen Collins, USAF, Retired (epilogue) became NASA's first female shuttle commander on a 1999 mission in the Columbia. She holds a master's degree in mathematics and economics from Syracuse University, a master's degree in operations research from Stanford University, and a master's degree in space systems management from Webster University. She is from Elmira, New York. Voted the Best Space Book of 2018 by the Space Hipsters

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"Mike and Jonathan have done a brilliant job capturing the depth of emotion and human engagement of what has been covered by others only as a technical investigative treatment. In doing so, they have made the story very personal for the thousands of people who invested themselves in this critical chapter of space exploration history. This is a valuable contribution about a defining moment that demonstrates NASA's resolve and the selfless generosity of the American spirit."-Sean O'Keefe, former administrator of NASA

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"I was privileged to call Columbia my home in space for eighteen days. Thanks to this moving and heartfelt story, now I know how many thousands gave their all to bring this storied ship and her crew to an honored rest."-Tom Jones, former astronaut and author of Ask the Astronaut and Sky Walking: An Astronaut's Memoir

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