



# THE PATHFINDERS

Today, these three lead mankind into a new world..and a new era

## NEIL ARMSTRONG

### The quiet schoolboy who stared at the Moon and dreamed..

**N**EIL ARMSTRONG was a quiet schoolboy of fourteen when he got his first close-up look at the Moon.

He lined up with some of his classmates to peer through a home-made but powerful telescope which amateur astronomer Jacob Zint had installed in a modest do-it-yourself observatory in the back garden of his home at Wapakoneta, Ohio.

#### Fascination

Two weeks later the boy destined to be the first man to set foot on the Moon was back for a second look.

"He got his mother to phone and ask me if he could come along by himself to study the Moon again," said Mr. Zint, a 58-year-old draughtsman. "He was interested in the heavens. But it was always the Moon that held a particular fascination for him.

"He would keep it in view for minutes at a time. Then he would turn away without saying anything, as though lost in his thoughts."

The story of how Armstrong got to the Moon is a classic tale of an all-American boy who made good. If National Space Agency officials had fed "ideal astronaut" material into a computer, the chances are Neil Armstrong's name would have emerged at the other end.

Wapakoneta, Armstrong's home town, slumbers in the midst of endless flat acres of Mid-West farmland.



## A FLIER AT JUST 16

The 7,000 residents, many of German origin, are a God-fearing community who fly the American flag from their front porches and are almost delirious with delight that their boy is about to write the name of Wapakoneta into the history books.

As you drive into town, a road sign proudly reminds you that you are entering the home of the world's first civilian astronaut.

Already, the town has declared two Neil Armstrong Days, and named a street and an airfield after him.

#### Scared

And it is here that they remember Neil Armstrong as the quiet, rather withdrawn schoolboy who was always mad about flying.

He went for his first aeroplane ride at the age of six when his father, Stephen Armstrong, let him skip Sunday school to go for a flip in an old crop-dusting biplane in which a local farmer gave poyrides.

"Neil was absolutely fascinated with the flight," recalls his mother, Mrs. Viola Armstrong, at her home on Neil Armstrong drive, Wapakoneta. "Mind you, I think his Daddy was a bit scared."

By the time he was in

high school, Armstrong was spending every moment of his spare time at an airfield about four miles from town.

Neil took flying lessons, and when he hadn't enough money, he paid for them by helping mechanics and pilots tinker with their engines in the ramshackle hangar.

He got his pilot's licence at the age of 16 — before he had learned to drive a car.

At Blume High School in Wapakoneta Armstrong was never much more than an average student, though he collected A's in science and mathematics.

But already he was displaying the kind of determination and singlemindedness which was to make him America's No. 1 astronaut.

Under his picture in the high school yearbook was the caption: "He thinks, he acts, 'tis done."

Neil made it clear that his heart was set on aeronautical engineering. But his physics master, 78-year-old Mr. John Crites, also remembers him as "a bit of a dreamer" who once stood on the back porch of Mr. Crites' house, looked up at the moon and said: "One day I'd like to go up there."

Getting out of tight corners has been a speci-

ality for Armstrong. After winning a Navy air cadet scholarship to Purdue University, Indiana, at the age of 17, he went on to fly 78 combat missions in Korea.

On one mission he was strafing a road convoy over enemy territory when his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. He ejected, parachuted down behind enemy lines, but was picked up by an American rescue patrol.

In May, 1968, he narrowly escaped death again when a lunar module similar to the one on the Moon trip went out of control during training. He ejected and parachuted safely just before the spacecraft crashed.

#### Parachuted

Armstrong is married to Janet Shearon, a college beauty queen he met at Purdue. They have two young sons.

They live near Houston, Texas.

But in Wapakoneta, Ohio, the bunting as neatly out, ready to give Neil Armstrong a hero's welcome home.

International celebrity he may become. To Wapakoneta he's still the odd-job boy at Bading's drug store who everyone knew would "go far."

## ALDRIN

### He always wanted to be first

**E**DWIN "Buzz" Aldrin was determined to be the first man on the Moon.

That's what he told friends when he returned to his home town of Montclair, New Jersey, after his spectacular two-and-a-half hour walk in space during the Gemini Twelve mission in November, 1966.

The fact that is is going to be Number Two won't bother him.

For instant adaptability is something he's famous for.

At the age of 16, "Buzz" Aldrin was a twelve-stone curly-haired half-back on the football team of Montclair High School.

The team was badly in need of a new centre. And coach Clary Anderson decided to experiment with Aldrin.

"He'd never played centre before, and I was a little anxious about how he'd make out," said Mr. Anderson.

He needn't have worried. Aldrin took over the centre spot as if he'd been playing there all his life. He hardly put a pass wrong.

"Buzz was always such a serious, determined little boy," explained Miss Rita Hogan, who taught him at Edgemont Primary School in Montclair.

#### Prosperous

"Before he embarked on anything he would weigh it up carefully, and wanted to know exactly what was involved before he started out."

"He was a perfectionist even as a small boy."

Aldrin's determination to move ahead quickly was already being displayed at the age of five.

Miss Hogan recalls that "Buzz" only did one year in kindergarten instead of the usual two.

Aldrin's 73-year-old father, Colonel Edwin Aldrin, a distinguished American flyer and former World War One pilot, admits he was behind the plan to get "Buzz" working faster than the normal child.

"I knew 'Buzz' could do it."

Buzz was born in the prosperous commuter town within an hour's train ride of New York City on January 20, 1930.

Although they were the depression years, his father had a good job as head of flying for the rich



## IT STARTED AT SCHOOL

Standard Oil Company and the family — "Buzz" had two older sisters — lived comfortably with a cook and a coloured maid.

At high school, just like the other two Apollo 11 astronauts, he wasn't remembered as one who chased the girls.

Mrs. Verity Webb, a Montclair housewife who went out with him occasionally in high school, recalls that he was "a solid citizen."

She added: "If you want the truth, I think you could say he was pretty dull company."

In 1943, when "Buzz" was 13, his father went off to the Philippines as an aide to the famous General Billy Mitchell.

Before he went, he took "Buzz" on one side and reminded him that he was now the man of the family while his father was away.

"I told him he'd better find himself a spare-time job, and get out and achieve something."

With his usual promptness, Aldrin did just that. He got a job at a Montclair ice-cream parlour. But Aldrin's nickname,

"Buzz," has nothing to do with his ability to zip into action.

He acquired it from one of his sisters who, when small used to tell everyone about her "baby buzzer."

When Aldrin left Montclair High School in 1947 he was voted the boy "most likely to succeed."

He went on to become a brilliant cadet at West Point, and later flew 66 fighter missions in Korea, where he shot down two MIGs.

#### Brilliant

Just before going to Korea, Aldrin had met Joan Archer, a good-looking blonde, at a party in New Jersey.

They never wrote to each other.

But when he got back from Korea after a year, he looked her up.

It was a whirlwind courtship, rather untypical of the methodical "Buzz." They had been out together less than half a dozen times when they married.

They now have three children.

## COLLINS

### The man without a home town

**I**T's perhaps inevitable that Michael Collins should be the astronaut circling around in the command Spaceship while Armstrong and Aldrin land on the Moon.

For all his life Collins has been on the move — a son of a military family who moved from army post to army post as a child has no real home town.

Michael Collins was born in Rome on October 31, 1930, when his father, the late Major-General James L. Collins, was the United States military attaché there.

His uncle, General J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins, was a famous World War Two commander and former army Chief of Staff, and his older brother, James, is an army brigadier.

Even if Collins had a home town, it's just possible he would keep quiet about it — to avoid a hero's homecoming after the mission.

For he is probably the quietest of all America's astronauts.

"If you didn't know he was an astronaut, you'd never find out about it by talking to him," said one friend.

#### Celebrated

At West Point military college, from which he graduated in 1952, the Year Book teasingly notes that if Michael Collins had any kind of battle cry it's "Stay casual."

He stayed casual during the Gemini 10 Space-flight when he took a walk in Space and calmly reported to Houston that conditions 250 miles out of Space were "just what we expected."

Before going to West Point, Collins went to the celebrated St. Albans prep school in Washington.

Run on the lines of an English public school, and connected with Washington Cathedral, many of its pupils come from the families of diplomatic and military personnel based in Washington.

"He had West Point in mind right from the moment he entered St. Albans," says Mr. John Davis, who was the boarding master then.

"Even at twelve years



## SO RELAXED, SO TACITURN

old he knew just where he was going."

He is remembered at St. Albans as a solid, above-average student.

Although sport was his main interest, he was intensely proud of being chosen as a server in the Washington Cathedral.

Another St. Albans master, Mr. Ferdinand Ruge, said:

"Mike always wore an inscrutable expression, and when you were talking to him you always wondered what he was really thinking and what mischief he was planning."

If Michael Collins was planning any mischief, he must have got away with it. No one can ever remember him being in serious trouble.

Even his mother, Mrs. Virginia Collins, who still lives in Washington, can't remember him getting into any real scrapes.

At school, Mike acquired the nickname "Scarecrow" because of his tall, slender build.

His taciturn manner was still with him the day his

jet got into trouble during a training exercise with the U.S. Air Force in France.

An explosion ripped a jagged hole in the side of his plane.

He calmly ejected and parachuted down into a field while the aircraft crashed in flames.

#### Disappointed

He met his wife, Patricia Finnegan from Boston, in the Officers' Club at Chambley, France.

She recalls that he came up to her, "very serious-looking" and introduced himself.

They were married a year later and now have three children.

Michael Collins is naturally disappointed that he's not going to be the first man on the Moon, or even one of the astronauts who will make the first landing.

But, in his usual relaxed way, he shrugs and says "I'm going 99.9 per cent. of the way there, and that's good enough for me."

Astronaut profiles by JOHN SMITH