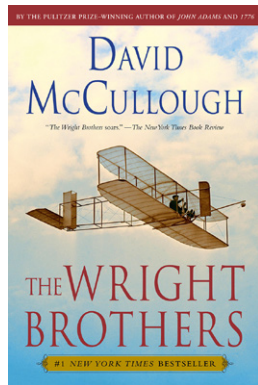


The Literature of Aerospace Medicine: Books, Book Reviews, Letters to the Editor, and History

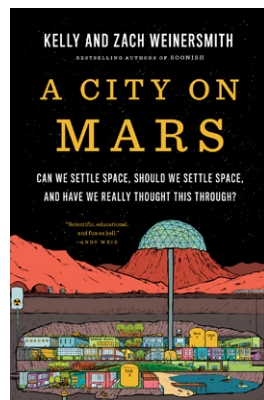
Robert Orford, M.D., CM, MS, MPH, FACP, FRCPC, FRSM, FAsMA

Growing up in an air force family, I was familiar from an early age with aircraft and the pilots who flew them. As I reached adolescence, I became interested in space through science fiction and read many of the books by Isaac Asimov, particularly enjoying the *Foundation Trilogy*, and Robert Heinlein's books *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, among others. I was also fascinated by Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. In more recent years, I enjoyed reading Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy—*Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, and *Blue Mars*—as well as *The Martian* by Andy Weir. All these books have something in common: humans living in settlements, aircraft, or spacecraft in other than the terrestrial environment.



In non-fiction, *The Wright Brothers* by David McCullough describes the lives and times of Orville and Wilbur Wright from childhood through adulthood. Their entrepreneurial spirit led them to start a bicycle shop, build on that experience to build an aircraft capable of manned flight in a remarkably short time, to become financially successful by marketing and selling their aircraft, and to start the aviation industry we have today. *First Light* by Geoffrey Wellum, a

WWII Spitfire pilot, documents his experiences as a student pilot and, in battle, learning about human factors, such as in a dogfight, “never fly straight and level for more than twenty seconds. If you



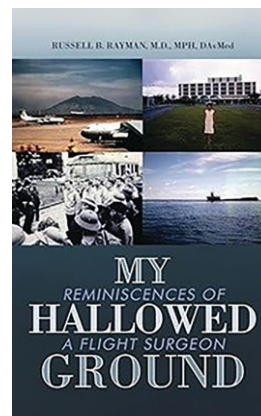
do, you'll die.” *Reach for the Sky* by Douglas Bader, an RAF fighter pilot who lost his legs in a flying accident and later returned to combat flying with two prosthetic legs, is another extraordinary aviation book with a medical theme.

Tom Wolfe in *The Right Stuff* covers the transition between aviation and spaceflight, from aircraft traveling faster than the sound barrier to the creation of NASA and the selection of “The Mercury Seven,” America's first astronauts, in 1959. *Rocket Men* by



Robert Kurson describes NASA's first mission to the Moon, the boldest, riskiest, and ultimately one of the most successful missions of that era. Another book by the same name, *Rocket Men* by Craig Nelson, celebrates NASA's first Moon landing by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, while command module pilot Michael Collins remained in lunar orbit. A moving story of a boy from Mexico becoming an astronaut is told in *Reaching for the Stars* by astronaut José Hernández. It later became the movie *A Million Miles Away*. Other nonfiction books, such as *Apollo 13* by Jim Lovell, have also been made into movies. Finally, physiological, psychological, medical, and legal aspects of space settlement on the Moon, Mars, and interplanetary space are described in Kelly and Zach Weinersmith's *A City on Mars*.

While the number of new books related to aerospace medicine each year is small, there are many published each year on aviation and space, which often include aspects of human health and performance in flight or in space. Our Journal, *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance* (AMPH), publishes book reviews. Though they have been few and far between, that should change, with a book review at least quarterly, such as the review of *Systems Medicine for Human Spaceflight* in this issue. There will also be a review by the Society of USAF Flight Surgeons of *My Hallowed Ground: Reminiscences of a Flight Surgeon* by AsMA Emeritus Executive Director Dr. Russ Rayman in an upcoming issue.



As new books are published, I encourage AsMA's Component and Affiliate Societies, and individuals like you, to be proactive in submitting reviews for publication in the Blue Journal. If you would like to review a recent book you have read related to aviation, space, aerospace medicine, physiology, or human performance, please contact Sandy Kawano, AMPH Assistant to the Editor, and let her know. She will provide you with guidelines concerning length and content

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE, *continued*

for your article. It would help to have a Book Review Editor, with responsibility for identifying suitable books for review and selecting reviewers. Many journals do this and will cover the cost and mailing of the books to be reviewed. If you would be interested and willing to take this on, please contact our Editor-in-Chief, Dr. David G. Newman.

Did you know that the Blue Journal has a Letters to the Editor section? No? That is because you have not been writing them. Many medical journals and most newspapers provide members with the ability to comment on articles that have appeared in prior issues or to express their opinion, ideas, hypotheses, or provide new data on topics of relevance to the journal's readers. A letter to the Editor is a scientific publication. It is classified as a short communication and you may add it to the publications list on your résumé, which in turn may be used for academic advancement.

As British leprologist and missionary Stanley G. Browne, CMG, OBE, FRCS, FRCP, said, "Observe, Record, and Publish." He had 500 published papers in the early to mid-1900's. So, please, I adjure you to write a Letter to the Editor for publication in the Blue Journal and to keep those letters coming. This is good for the Journal and good for you!

Finally, if you have an urge to write and have knowledge of the history of aviation and space medicine and/or the history of the Aerospace Medical Association, AsMA is planning to publish a history of our field and of our organization for publication concordant with AsMA's hundredth anniversary in 2029. The Editor for that publication is Dr. Walter Dalitsch, who many of you know. Please contact him if you are interested. Thanks!

AsMA is a family. No one belongs here more than you!