

# [PDF] Flight: My Life In Mission Control

Christopher Kraft - pdf download free book

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**Description:**

On July 20, 1969, near the end of a great decade of near-space exploration, a small craft called *Eagle* landed on the moon's surface. As anyone who watched the televised broadcast of the landing might recall, the astronauts aboard *Eagle* were guided to their objective by a capable ground crew headed by Chris Kraft, whom his colleagues had long called "Flight." Kraft was unflappable on the surface, but, as he writes in this memoir, the *Eagle's* landing had moments of drama that gave him pause, and that few outside NASA knew about--including baleful alarms from the ship's on-board computer that warned of imminent disaster.

For Kraft, frightening moments were part of his job as director of Mission Control. He encountered many of them in the early years of the space program, when failures were commonplace and all too often caused not by mechanics but by politics. We learn of many in Kraft's pages. One such failure was the Soviet Union's *Sputnik* launch, about which Kraft thunders, "We should have beaten them.... We were stopped by anonymous doctors in the civilian world who didn't know what they were talking about, by a bureaucrat in the White House who'd been stung when JFK shot down his position on manned space flight, and by our friend the German rocket scientist, who got cold feet when he should have been bold."

Plenty of other contemporaries, including John Glenn and Richard Nixon, come in for a scolding in Kraft's fiery account, which offers a rare insider's portrait of the challenging work of astronautics--work that, Kraft writes hopefully, is only beginning. --*Gregory McNamee* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From** Besides the astronauts, Kraft was one of NASA's best-known personalities in the agency's heroic decade of the 1960s, once making the cover of *Time*. The blunt-speaking demeanor that made Kraft popular with the press is fully present in his memoir, in which he lets fly about various instances of his dissatisfaction with the performance of an astronaut, engineer, or contractor. Such dirty-laundry airing, verboten at the time by the publicity-conscious NASA, is one reason for space-history buffs to flock to Kraft's narrative, but the principal attraction is how he ramped up from scratch the flight control operation for Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo. When *Sputnik* beeped the U.S. into a panic, Kraft was an engineer at the obscure National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), quickly revamped as NASA. Tapped by the unsung organizer of manned flight, Robert Gilruth, to establish what became Mission Control, Kraft directed the early flights, whose participants he critiques by his lights as a no-nonsense engineer. His key role and frankness of recollection make Kraft a worthy memoirist of pioneering space flight. *Gilbert Taylor*  
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