



Charlie Duke on the moon

HUNTING WITH THE MOON WALKER

By Joe Da Silva, Professional Hunter and outfitter of Cape Town Hunting Safaris and Tours.



Charlie Duke the Astronaut

Charlie Duke was born in Charlotte, NC, in 1935. Led by a desire to serve his country, Duke attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Following graduation, he was commissioned into the U.S. Air Force, and thus began a life-long love of flying. After a few years as fighter pilot and test pilot, he was encouraged by his commandant, Chuck Yeager, to become an Apollo astronaut. He served three years in Germany as a fighter interceptor pilot with the 526th Fighter One Interceptor Squadron at Ramstein Air Base.

In 1964, he entered the USAF Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB. In April 1966 he was one of the 19 astronauts selected by NASA. The Apollo 16 space vehicle was launched from Kennedy Space Centre on April 16, 1972. The crew consisted of Captain John W. Young, commander; Lt. Commander Thomas K. Mattingly II, Command Module pilot and Lt. Colonel Charles M. Duke Jr. Lunar module pilot.

The launch was no joke:

Charlie Duke: The Flight surgeons told me that my heartbeat during launch was over 140 beats per minute, while John Young's never got above 70

John Young: I was too old to get mine to beat any faster!

Neil Alden Armstrong was the first man to step on the moon, planting his left foot into the moon dust on 20th of July 1969. In 1972, Apollo 16 astronaut, Charlie Duke, became the tenth man to walk on the moon. Apollo 16 was the first scientific expedition to inspect, survey and sample materials and surface features in the Descartes region of the rugged lunar highlands. A number of experiments were deployed and two impressive

landmarks, Stone Mountain and the North Ray crater, visited. Samples taken from the rim of North Ray crater later proved to be bedrock thrown up from the meteorite impact that had created it. In three subsequent excursions onto the lunar surface, Duke and Young spent more than 20 hours exploring the moon. This involved placement and activation of scientific equipment and experiments, the collection of nearly 213 pounds of rock and soil samples, and the evaluation and use of Rover-2 (their lunar car) over the



Apollo 16 launched from Kennedy Space Centre

roughest and bulkiest surface yet encountered on the moon. Charlie Duke filmed the only pictures made of the rover in action - its record setting speed was 17 kilometres per hour. During Apollo's three-day return from the moon, Duke made a space walk with the third crew member, Ken Mattingly. The view over one shoulder was filled with a brilliant full moon and over the other hung a crescent earth - a thin sliver of blue and white. "Fantastic!" Charlie would exclaim again and again. The crew remained on the lunar surface for a total of about 71 hours. After lunar liftoff, the Lunar Module rendezvoused with the Command Module.

When the crew returned to orbit, tensions rose as it was discovered that a faulty engine on Casper, the Command Module, had to fire. The module was taken around the far side of the Moon where the burn would take place as Mission Control waited for news. The burn had the desired effect as the astronauts re-established radio contact, and entry and landing proceeded as normal. Apollo 16 concluded with a Pacific splashdown and subsequent recovery by the USS TICONDEROGA.



Apollo 16 concluded with a Pacific splashdown

In December 1975, Charlie Duke retired from NASA to enter private business in San Antonio. He entered the USAF Reserves in 1975 and served as Mobilisation Augmentee to Commander AF Basic Military Training Center and to Commander USAF Recruiting Service. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1979 and retired in June, 1986. Since 1976, he has been involved in a wide variety of business.

Charlie Duke the hunter

How often does one get to hunt with an astronaut? I have been in the hunting industry for over 30 years and I have had the privilege to hunt with some of the most famous people in the world but no astronauts. I met Charlie and Dorothy Duke in the United States a few years ago through my good friend Adelino Serra Pires - a famous hunter in Mozambique in the early 70s. Charlie Duke hunted big game with Adelino in those days. Charlie has hunted quite a few species in Africa but the one that has eluded him is the "Grey Ghost" of Africa, the Kudu.

We had been talking for some time about Charlie coming to Cape Town, as it has been

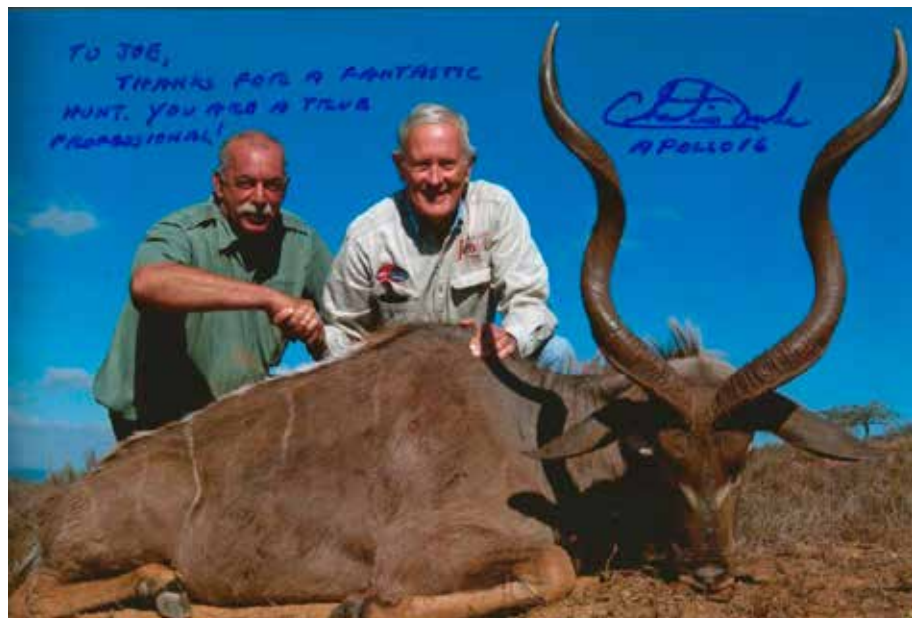


Charlie, Joe Da Silva and the Blesbuck

on his bucket list. The time arrived after much communication via email. He decided that he would come in September 2013. The trip took some planning. I also had to make sure that his time spend with me would allow to him experience the beauty of Cape Town, including Table Mountain, Cape Point and not to miss our wonderful wine estates. After their arrival in Cape Town, I kept Charlie and Dottie very busy. They were interviewed by Die Burger, on Cape Talk with John Maytham and they attended the HuntEx show where Charlie signed books and spoke to those eager to meet someone of his hunting calibre. Charlie is a great inspirational speaker and easily motivates people. Once our Cape Town trip was over, we drove towards Port Elizabeth where I had arranged a hunt on a friend's farm in the Eastern Cape. This would be the highlight for Charlie as he is a keen hunter. He could not wait to get out in the African bush away from the hustle and bustle of city life. We decided on spending four days hunting his dream Kudu.

We needed enough time to hunt this elusive animal. On the first day of the hunt at about 6.30 in the morning, we were following a mountain trail when my tracker spotted a beautiful Kudu a few hundred metres away, but still out of range. We got out of our transport and carefully started to climb the mountain angling towards the spot the Kudu was spotted last. We took great pains to keep cover between us and our prey. We had been stalking the Kudu for about an hour and were manoeuvring ourselves into a good shooting position. I could see Charlie was enjoying himself, although the going was tough. Just as we got into shooting range, the wind changed and the Kudu was gone, leaving us behind as he graciously bonded away into the distance. The stalk was over but we had gotten so close.

I hoped this was not the start of things to come, I had promised Charlie a Kudu and I planned to deliver. My reputation was on the line. Charlie still seemed upbeat about the situation because after all, it was only day one



Joe, Charlie and Charlie's Grey Ghost



of our hunt.

We started the long walk back to our vehicle, taking in the beautiful Eastern Cape scenery and discussing our hunting strategy. Out of nowhere, a Kudu bull popped out of the bush. They truly are the Ghosts of Africa. They blend in so well with their surrounding that you could trip over them.

We shook off our surprise and changed tactics to get upwind from him as soon as possible. We carefully stalked him for about 20 minutes, again keeping to cover the whole way. I don't know about Charlie, but my heart was pumping, the excitement of the hunt still fills me with joy even after hunting for 30 years. Charlie seemed calm and focused, ready to take the shot as soon as an opportunity presented itself. Suddenly the Kudu was there, standing broadside, looking straight at us. We had to act fast or we would lose him as well. I quickly setup the tripod for Charlie to use as a shooting rest.

Charlie was in the hunting zone and he had the rifle in place and was taking aim in seconds. It was with baited breath that I looked on as Charlie slowly squeezed the trigger; one, two heartbeats and the shot rang out. A perfect heart shot. You could see Charlie was an experience hunter, he never wasted time and did what was needed. The Kudu was down about 10 metres from where the shot hit him.

Charlie had his Grey Ghost of Africa at last. Best of all, this within the first day hunting and he still had three days to spare.

Charlie was still in a hunting mood so we decided to try for a Blesbuck on another part of the farm the next day. Again, we were lucky and after only a few hours in the veld we came upon Blesbuck that gave us chance to stalk it.

We were in position in a few minutes. The shot was about 150 metres and again Charlie carefully took aim. I was used to his quick, no nonsense professional shooting style by now. Two heartbeats and the shot rang out. Again a perfect heart shot and the Blesbuck dropped on the spot. Another great day of hunting. We celebrated that evening with lots of good Cape wine, Charlie was a happy man.

On the last day of our hunting trip, I decided to invite some friends and a few local farmers over for a "braai", as well as a to meet Charlie. Charlie gave us a first hand account of his trip to the moon and everybody was stunned to hear what happen during his moon mission.

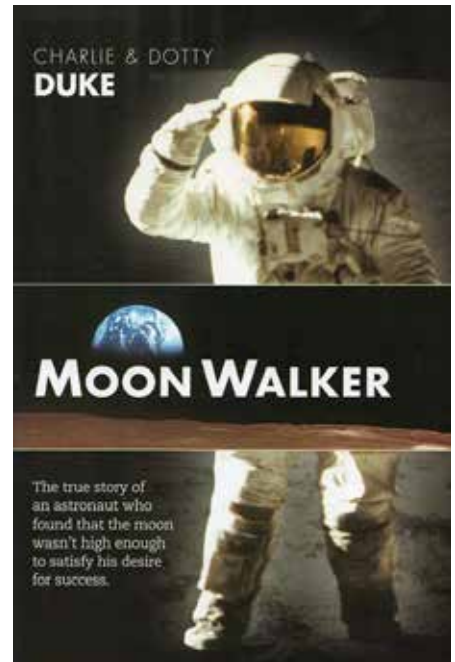
The final day of goodbyes arrived and they both agreed it was a great trip that they enjoyed immensely.

I found Charlie to be a very down to earth guy, even if he did walk on the moon.

For more information;

Read about Charlie Duke on www.charlieduke.net

"As an American, it was my honour to serve my country by going to the moon aboard Apollo 16 and becoming the 10th man to



The book written by Charlie Duke walk on the lunar surface. We can all share in the accomplishments of the Apollo program, just as we shared that special moment when on July 20, 1969, we watched the televised pictures of the Commander of Apollo 11, Neil Armstrong, as he took his "...giant leap for mankind." Charlie Duke

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