

Buzz Aldrin gets visit from NASA after polar evacuation

December 3 2016, by Nick Perry And Marcia Dunn



In this Friday, Dec. 2, 2016, photo provided by Christina Korp, right, Buzz Aldrin lies in a hospital bed in Christchurch, New Zealand. Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, was evacuated from the South Pole to New Zealand where he was hospitalized in stable condition. (Christina Korp via AP)

Buzz Aldrin had an unexpected bedside visit from NASA Deputy Administrator Dava Newman on Saturday as he continued to recover in a

New Zealand hospital from his medical evacuation from the South Pole.

Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, posted a picture of himself with Newman on Twitter. Aldrin, who was wearing pajamas and sitting up in bed, was giving a thumbs-up sign, as was Newman.

"I had a surprise visitor this morning. My longtime friend ... She beat me to the South Pole by one day," Aldrin wrote.

Newman also posted some pictures on Twitter of Aldrin sitting up in bed and gesticulating, with a tray of food and juice in front of him.

Aldrin, 86, was visiting Antarctica as a tourist when he fell ill this week. He was flown to Christchurch from McMurdo Station, a U.S. research center on the Antarctic coast.

Tour company White Desert said Aldrin has fluid in his lungs, but was responding well to antibiotics. His manager Christina Korp, who accompanied him, said he was in good spirits.

As Aldrin recovers, she said on Twitter, "I did want to let people know that he did make it to the South Pole which was his objective. Thnx for prayers!"

Korp said on Twitter she'd told Aldrin he now holds the record as the oldest person to reach the South Pole, according to the National Science Foundation.



In this image made from a video, Buzz Aldrin is wheeled from ambulance into hospital in Christchurch, New Zealand Friday, Dec. 2, 2016. Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, was evacuated from the South Pole to New Zealand where he was in a hospital on Friday in stable condition. Aldrin was visiting Antarctica as a tourist when he fell ill. (TVNZ via AP)

"He'll be insufferable now," she wrote.

She said the evacuation had been grueling. She posted side-by-side photos of Aldrin—one on a stretcher giving a thumbs-up with a purple knit cap on his head, another in a hospital bed, on oxygen and with an IV in his left arm.

Aldrin and Neil Armstrong became the first men on the moon, on July 20, 1969. Armstrong died in 2012.

Just three weeks ago, Aldrin was at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in

Florida for the unveiling of a new astronaut exhibit. The ceremony coincided with the 50th anniversary of his launch with Jim Lovell on Gemini 12, the last of the two-man Gemini flights. Both were present and looked as energetic as usual.

Aldrin has crisscrossed the globe in recent months and years, pushing hard for human exploration of Mars and promoting space and science education. His latest book, "No Dream Is Too High: Life Lessons from a Man who Walked on the Moon," came out in April. He also teamed up with the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida, now home to the Buzz Aldrin Space Institute. Aldrin lives in nearby Satellite Beach, Florida, not far from Cape Canaveral and its launch pads.

"We wish Buzz a speedy recovery," the London-based White Desert said in a statement.

Aldrin was part of an Antarctica sightseeing tour, along with son Andrew. The elder Aldrin was clearly excited about his adventure to the bottom of the world: "South Pole here I come!" he said via Twitter on Nov. 28. The group departed Tuesday from Cape Town, South Africa, on a trip that was supposed to last just over a week. Doctors agreed an evacuation was prudent after Aldrin's condition deteriorated, according to his staff in Florida.



In this Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2015, file photo, Buzz Aldrin, former NASA Astronaut and Apollo 11 Pilot, prepares to testify on Capitol Hill in Washington, before the Senate subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness hearing on human exploration goals and commercial space competitiveness. Officials said Aldrin, one of the first men to walk on the moon, has been evacuated by plane from the South Pole for medical reasons. An association of Antarctica tour operators said Thursday, Dec. 1, 2016, that Aldrin was visiting the South Pole as part of a private tourist group when his health deteriorated. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File)

The National Science Foundation helped provide the air lift via a ski-equipped LC-130 cargo plane from the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station to McMurdo, and then on to New Zealand on another plane.

More information: Buzz Aldrin: buzzaldrin.com/

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