

Don Belt

Author Don Belt has traveled to 80 countries over the past three decades, working as a writer and editor of articles for NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazine. Along the way, he has covered the defining issues of our time such as environmental degradation, Islam and the West, the effects of global climate change, and the geopolitical trends that shape our world. As senior editor of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC from 1998 to 2010, he helped to guide the magazine's coverage of topics ranging from weapons of mass destruction and the use of terrorism to the legacy of colonialism in the modern Middle East.

Belt began working for NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC as a freelance in 1981; his first story for the magazine, on Georgia's Chattooga River, was published in the April 1983 issue. He joined the magazine's Editorial Staff as a writer in 1985, and rose to become Associate Legends Editor in 1990, managing a staff of fifteen writers and researchers. He served as the magazine's senior editor for expeditions for three years; its foreign editor for five. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC's chief foreign correspondent from 2006 to 2011, Belt now serves the magazine as an editorial consultant and Contributing Writer.

During his NGS career, Belt authored major articles on Russia's Lake Baikal, Sweden, Baja California, Israel's Galilee, the ancient city of Petra in Jordan, the Golan Heights, Lawrence of Arabia, Islam, the European Union, Pakistan, India, Syria, Arab Christians, and Cold War science in the Russian Arctic. His article about the Jordan River appears in NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC's April 2010 issue devoted entirely to Water, which won the National Magazine Award. The May 2011 issue features his article about Bangladesh's efforts to cope with global climate change. His piece on Mongolia appeared in the October 2011 issue, and his article about life in the time of Jesus appeared in April 2014. Upcoming issues will feature his articles about the Laponia wilderness of northern Sweden and the Marsh Arabs in Iraq.

Belt also contributed to a number of Geographic book projects, including the critically acclaimed Atlas of North America, based on remote sensing images of the continent. He served as Editor-in-Chief of the December 2001 National Geographic book, *The World of Islam*, and he helped to edit National Geographic's *Atlas of the Middle East* (2008). His essays, "A Land Still in Turmoil" and "Searching for Miracles," appear in Geographic special issues on the Holy Land (2009) and Sacred Journeys (2010).

Belt has been a featured guest on many radio and television programs, including The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, NPR's Morning Edition, The Diane Rehm Show, CNN, Fox and Friends, and newscasts around the U.S. and the world. He teaches journalism at Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. He has lectured on Middle Eastern geography and politics at George Washington University, and taught the craft of non-fiction writing at the Poynter Institute's annual National Writers Workshop. He delivered a keynote address to the Chautauqua Institution in July 2012, speaking about Water issues; he also taught master classes in non-fiction writing. He has served as an adviser to the International Reporting Project at SAIS/Johns Hopkins University, and serves on the board of the Out of Eden Walk Foundation. He is a member of the Middle East Institute and the National Press Club.

Belt has received various awards for his writing, including the Award for Excellence from *Communication Arts*, the National Magazine Award (ASME), an award of merit from the Overseas Press Club, and a First Place award from the North American Travel Writers Association. He was the recipient of a Pew Foundation Gatekeeper Fellowship to South Africa in 2002. In 2004 he was presented with the University of South Carolina's Distinguished Alumnus Award. He was honored for lifetime achievement by the South Carolina Department of Education in 2011. And in 2013 he was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame.