

# Men walked on the moon 20 years ago

**NOTE:** Twenty years ago, *The World Almanac* focused on the Apollo 11 mission as the top news story of 1969. The following is excerpted from *The World Almanac* account of man's historic landing on the moon.

By The World Almanac

Astronaut Neil A. Armstrong, after climbing slowly down a ladder from the U.S. spaceship Eagle on July 20, 1969, reached out his booted left foot and at 10:56:20 p.m. EDT planted the first human footprint on the moon.

He was seen and heard by millions around the earth as he said: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

Fifty-two minutes later President Nixon's face shared the world's TV screens with the view of astronauts Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin Jr., standing on the moon. The president talked with them in what he described as "the most historic telephone call ever made."

The president said: "For every American this has to be the proudest day of our lives. And for people all over the world, I am sure they, too, join the Americans in recognizing what an immense feat this is...."

"For one priceless moment in the whole history of man, all the people on the Earth are truly one — one in their pride in what you have done and in our prayers that you will return safely to Earth."

The historic landmark of 1969, and perhaps of the 20th century thus far, was the landing of U.S. astronauts on the moon and their safe return to Earth. Fulfilling dreams and prophecies of hundreds of years, the Apollo 11 flight accomplished the first land-

nar trajectory.

Shortly afterward, the U.S. astronauts separated the command module from the lunar module, turned the command module around and re-docked it with the lunar module, which was still attached to the third stage of the rocket (S4B).

Then the lunar module was disconnected from the S4B, which was fired into orbit around the sun.

Armstrong and Aldrin entered the lunar module July 18 and telecast a program from inside while making an inspection. Late that night, Apollo 11 entered the moon's sphere of gravitational pull.

The spaceship went into lunar orbit July 19.

On the morning of July 20, Armstrong and Aldrin entered the lunar module, which was subsequently undocked from the command module at 1:47 p.m. EDT. At 3:08 p.m., the lunar lander started downward toward the moon.

A guidance computer directed it to an altitude of 300 feet above the lunar surface, when Armstrong took over semi-automatic guidance control. He guided the craft to a soft landing in the dry Sea of Tranquility at 4:17:20 p.m. EDT.

At 10:51 p.m. EDT, Armstrong left the spaceship, and 5 minutes later he stepped onto the lunar surface. Aldrin followed him out of the lunar capsule later and reached the moon's surface at 11:14.

They read to the TV-radio audience the wording on a plaque to be left on the moon: "Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon July, 1969, A.D. We came in peace for all mankind." It had been signed by

the crew members and President Nixon.

The two astronauts set up an American flag on the lunar surface and saluted. They also talked by radio with the president.

They then deployed scientific equipment: a sheet of aluminum foil to pick up particles of the solar wind, a seismic detector and a laser reflector. They filled boxes with rocks and soil samples to take back to Earth. During their walk of 2 hours, 21 minutes on the lunar surface they snapped many pictures.

On July 21, at 1:54 p.m. EDT, Armstrong fired the rocket of the lunar module ascent stage, which took it up into a lunar orbit. It docked with the command module at 5:35 p.m.

After Armstrong and Aldrin, with their gear, had moved into the command module, the lunar module was detached and cast into space.

Apollo 11 started toward Earth at 12:56 a.m. EDT on July 22 and splashed down in the Pacific at 12:50 p.m. EDT on July 24.

Flown by helicopter to the U.S. aircraft carrier Hornet, the three astro-

nauts were rushed into a quarantine trailer. It was flown to Houston, and they were transferred on July 27 to the spacious Lunar Receiving Laboratory at the Manned Spacecraft Center.

While they were in the trailer on the Hornet, President Nixon, who had been waiting on the ship, greeted them through the trailer's glass window. They were released from quarantine on Aug. 10, in fine physical condition.

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NEIL ARMSTRONG (left), Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin (center) and Michael Collins were the U.S. astronauts who voyaged to the moon on Apollo 11. Armstrong and Aldrin explored the lunar surface; Collins remained in orbit.

ing of earthbound man on another celestial body.

Armstrong, 38, was the civilian commander of the Apollo 11 mission. He was followed to the lunar surface by Air Force Col. Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr., 39, pilot of the lunar module, code-name Eagle.

It had carried the pair to a moon landing after being disengaged from the command module, code-named Columbia.

Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Michael Collins, 38, pilot of Columbia, orbited the moon awaiting a rendezvous with Eagle and the return to Earth.

Apollo 11 began its lunar voyage from Cape Kennedy, Fla., on July 16, 1969, atop a 363-foot Saturn-5 booster rocket. After about 2 1/2 hours in Earth orbit, the spaceship was put into a lu-

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