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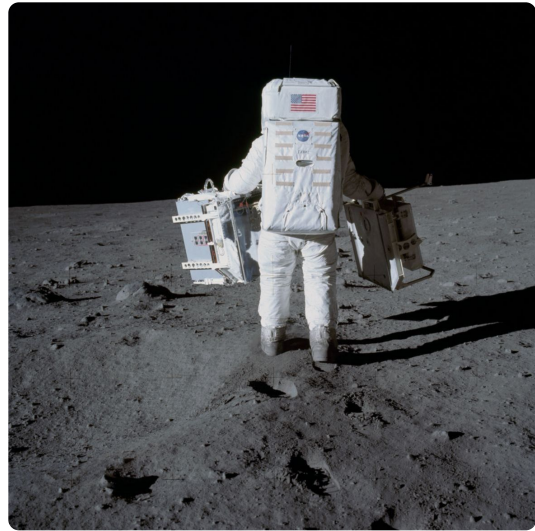
Apollo 11: One Giant Leap for Mankind

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged the nation to land a man on the Moon before the end of the decade, striking a responsive chord with the American people. The Apollo program was created to meet this goal, and on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first men to walk on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 mission.

In commemoration of this year's 50th Anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, [explore National Archives records](#) that detail the carefully choreographed sequence of steps—from lift-off to splash-down—that resulted in the mission's "giant leap for mankind."



Apollo 11 Mission image - Astronaut Edwin Aldrin walks near the Lunar Module. [National Archives Identifier 16685140](#)



L: Neil A. Armstrong inside the Lunar Module after Extravehicular Activities. [National Archives Identifier 16683662](#)

R: Astronaut Edwin Aldrin carries experiments to deployment area. [National Archives Identifier 16685259](#)



L: Lunar surface with Astronaut boot in field of view. [National Archives Identifier 16685067](#)

R: Astronaut Edwin E. Aldrin inside the Lunar Module. [National Archives Identifier 16683238](#)



To : H. R. Haldeman
From: Bill Safire July 18, 1969.

IN EVENT OF MOON DISASTER:

Fate has ordained that the men who went to the moon to explore in peace will stay on the moon to rest in peace.

These brave men, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, know that there is no hope for their recovery. But they also know that there is hope for mankind in their sacrifice.

These two men are laying down their lives in mankind's most noble goal: the search for truth and understanding.

They will be mourned by their families and friends; they will be mourned by their nation; they will be mourned by the people of the world; they will be mourned by a Mother Earth that dared send two of her sons into the unknown.

L: Green office telephone used by President Richard Nixon in the Oval Office to speak to the Apollo XI astronauts after the Moon Landing. [National Archives Identifier 6922346](#)

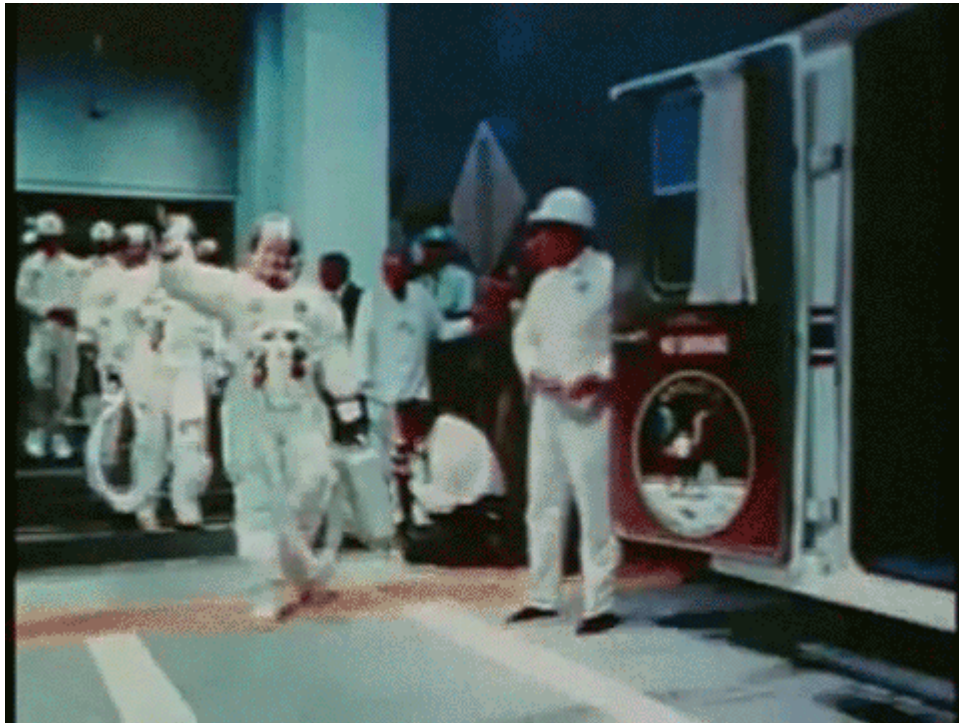
R: Memorandum from Speechwriter William Safire to President Nixon in the "event of moon disaster," 7/18/1969. [National Archives Identifier 6922351](#)



Photograph of President Richard Nixon Greeting the Apollo 11 Astronauts on the USS Hornet. Due to concerns about the astronauts potentially being contaminated during their time in outer space, they were first kept in a modified Airstream trailer that served as a mobile quarantine facility before spending the remainder of the 21-day quarantine period at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas. [National Archives Identifier 17409727](#)

For more Apollo II records, resources, and stories:

- Visit the [Featured Document Display](#) commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo XI moon landing in the East Rotunda Gallery at the National Archives Museum, July 3 - August 7, 2019
- Read [Practice Makes Perfect: How the Apollo 11 Crew Prepared for Launch](#) on the Unwritten Record blog
- View [Apollo 11: One Giant Leap for Mankind](#) exhibit on Google Arts & Culture
- Check out our space-related historic GIFs on our [GIPHY channel](#) to share with your friends on your favorite social platform.



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Photograph of a Party of Four Girls Canoeing, 8/1940. [National Archives Identifier 2128780](#)

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