

Apollo 11, from launch to splashdown

It is 9:32 a.m. EDT July 16, 1969. On schedule to within less than a second, Apollo 11 blasts off from Cape Kennedy, Florida, to start what is looked upon as the greatest single step in human history—a trip to the Moon, a manned landing, and return to Earth.

Watching is a worldwide television audience and an estimated million eyewitnesses. Standing three and one-half miles away on the sandflats or seated in grandstands are half the members of the U.S. Congress and more than 3,000 news representatives from 56 countries.

Launch comes after a 28-hour countdown. The flame appears as a bright yellow-orange star on the horizon. As the spacecraft reaches the top of the service tower, the thunder of the firing engines rolls over the Florida landscape and engulfs the viewers like a tidal wave.

They witness the beginning of the fifth manned Apollo flight, the third to the vicinity of the Moon, and the first lunar landing mission.

Onboard are Neil A. Armstrong, Commander; Michael Collins, Command Module Pilot; and Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., Lunar Module Pilot.

"Eleven, this is Houston. Your guidance is converged, you are looking good."

"Downrange 140 miles, altitude is 62 miles, velocity 10,000 feet per second."

"Eleven, Houston. You are GO at four minutes."

Three hours after launch the three Saturn stages fire one after another and the first two are jettisoned. Apollo 11 enters a 103 nautical mile-high Earth orbit during which the astronauts and ground control crew carefully check out the vehicle.

Another firing another three hours later boosts Apollo 11 out of Earth orbit and onto its lunar trajectory an initial speed of 24,200 miles an hour.

The flight on schedule, crewmembers keep busy with housekeeping duties such as checking oxygen reserves and charging batteries. They have to make

occasional mid-course corrections and keep in constant contact with Mission Control Center.

"There's plenty of room for the three of us. After awhile you get sort of tired of rattling around and banging off the ceiling and the floor and the side. You tend to find a little corner somewhere and wedge yourself in. That seems more at home. And Neil's standing on his head again. He's trying to make me nervous."

July 19, at 12:58 p.m., ground control informs the crew, "We're 23 minutes away from LOI (Lunar Orbit Insertion) burn."

The spacecraft passes completely behind the Moon and out of radio contact with Earth for the first time. The main rocket, a 20,500 pound thrust engine, fires for about six minutes to slow the vehicle so it can be captured by lunar gravity.

The entire orbital insertion takes place while the craft is still behind the Moon, out of radio contact.

July 20 at 9:27 a.m., Aldrin crawls into the lunar module, the Eagle, and starts to power-up the spacecraft. About an hour later, Armstrong enters the LM, and together they continue to check the systems. They deploy the landing legs.

At 1:46 p.m. the landing craft separates from the command module, the Columbia. Collins fires the command ship's rockets and moves about two miles away to continue to orbit the Moon.

"The auto targeting was taking us right into a football field sized crater, with a large number of big boulders and rocks for about one or two crater diameters around us. It required flying manually over the rock field to find a reasonably good area."

4:05 p.m.: The landing will not be easy. The site Armstrong and Aldrin approach is four miles from the target point. Armstrong takes over manual control and steers the craft to a smoother spot.

His heartbeat has risen from a normal 77 to 156.

4:18 p.m.: The craft settles down with a jolt almost like a jet landing on a runway. Armstrong immediately radios Mission Control: "The Eagle has landed."

First task after landing is to prepare the ship for launch, to see that all is ready to make the ascent back to rendezvous with the command module orbiting above.

At 10:39 p.m., with everything in order, Armstrong opens the LM hatch and squeezes through the opening. Strapped to his shoulders is a portable life support and communications system weighing 84 pounds on Earth, 14 on the Moon. He moves slowly down the 10-foot nine-step ladder, deploying a television camera on the second step so that people on Earth can watch.

10:56 p.m.: Armstrong puts his left foot on the Moon. "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind," Armstrong radios. Aldrin is taking photographs from inside the craft.

"There seems to be no difficulty in moving around as we suspected. Got to be careful that you are leaning in the direction you want to go. In other words, you have to cross your foot over to stay underneath your center of mass."

"There seems to be no difficulty in moving around as we suspected," Armstrong says. He collects a small bag-full of soil and stores it in a pocket of the left leg of his space suit. This is done early, according to plan, to make sure some of the Moon surface is returned to Earth in case the mission has to abort.

At 11:11 p.m., Aldrin backs down the ladder and joins Armstrong. As scheduled, the astronauts set up the first of three experiments, a foot-long tube containing a roll of aluminum foil. Its function will be to collect particles of "solar wind" blowing constantly through space so they can be brought back to Earth and analyzed.

From a leg of the spacecraft, the astronauts take a three-by-five-foot nylon United States flag and erect it on a staff pressed into the lunar surface.

Armstrong next sets up a folding table and opens two specimen boxes. Using tongs and the lunar scoop, he picks up a quantity of rocks and soil, seals them in boxes, and places them in the ascent stage of the landing craft.

Collins is still circling the Moon every 47 minutes in the Command Service Module.

"It's a happy home up here in the command module. It'd be nice to have company. As a matter of fact, it'd be nice to have a couple of hundred million Americans up here."

Aldrin removes two devices to be left on the Moon. One is a seismic detector, to record moonquakes, meteorite impact, or volcanic eruption. The other is a laser-reflector, a device designed to make measurement of Earth-Moon distances more precisely than have ever been made before.

All chores completed, the two return to the lunar module. At 1:11 a.m. July 21, the hatch is closed. The astronauts remove the portable life support systems on which they have depended for two hours and 47 minutes.

**"Houston, Tranquility Base. Repress complete."
"Roger, Tranquility. We observed your equipment jettison on TV and the passive seismic experiment reported shocks when each PLSS hit the surface. Over."
"You can't get away with anything anymore can you."**

That afternoon, the ascent engine is started and the LM redocks with Columbia at 5:35 p.m. The astronauts prepare for the trip home to Earth.

They splash down southwest of Honolulu, 13 nautical miles from the recovery ship, the U.S.S. Hornet.

So ends man's first mission to the Moon. It has lasted 195 hours, 18 minutes, and 35 seconds—a little more than eight days. It accomplished the goal set by President John F. Kennedy, for man to reach the Moon and return to Earth within the decade of the 1960's.

So many of you have asked as to what other Apollo 11 covers were done by the Space City Cover Society that we have put this list together. When the mission took place, many collectors didn't realize that Houston was Mission Control for all U. S. manned missions. This meant that as soon as launch was successful, the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston (now known as the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center) took over control of the mission. As a result, Houston postmarked covers for early Apollo flights are much scarcer than the launch site postmarks. This is reflected in the prices shown in McMahan's "Catalog of Space Covers", the most comprehensive of all space cover catalogs for U. S. space events.

These prices are subject to change without notice, according to depletion of our limited stock. The enclosed order blank is for your convenience in ordering and it will show a dead-line date. All of the covers listed are postmarked Houston unless other indicated. If the number has an asterisk (*) it means the cover contains a single of a NASA Local Post and cancel, in addition to the U. S. stamp and appropriate cancel. The previous covers are listed on the other side of this sheet.

Number	Date	Description	Price
A-11-1*	Jul 15, 1969	Launch of Apollo 11	7.00
A-11-2*	Jul 20, 1969	Moon Landing of Apollo 11	7.50
A-11-3*	Jul 24, 1969	Splashdown of Apollo 11	6.00
A-11-4*	Aug 16, 1969	Apollo 11 Crew Honored by Houston with gigantic ticker-tape parade	3.00
A-11-5	Oct 17, 1970	Apollo 11 Crew presented State of Texas Medal (postmarked Austin, Texas site of presentation)	2.00
A-11-6	Jan 14, 1971	Apollo 11 Crew presented American Football Coaches Association Award (only time ever given to a team rather than an individual)	1.75
A-11-7	Jul 16, 1974	Launch Pad 39 -- Site of Apollo 11 launch dedicated as National Historic Landmark (Kennedy Space Center postmark)	3.00

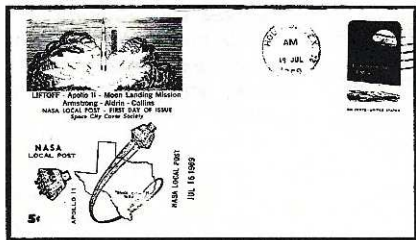
APOLLO 11 ANNIVERSARY COVERS

A-11-AN-1	Jul 20, 1970	First Anniv. (Embossed gold medal on envelope which was produced by mint in Switzerland)	4.00
A-11-AN-2	Jul 20, 1971	Second Anniv. (Houston)	2.00
A-11-AN-3	Jul 20, 1971	Second Anniv. (Cape Canaveral)	2.00
A-11-AN-4	Jul 20, 1972	Third Anniv. (Houston)	2.50
A-11-AN-5	Jul 20, 1972	Third Anniv. (Cape Canaveral)	3.00
A-11-AN-6	Jul 20, 1973	Fourth Anniv. (Houston)	2.00

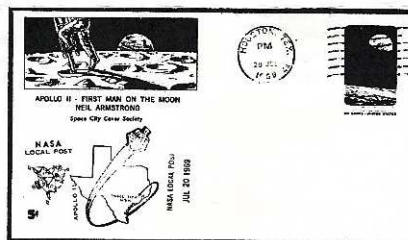
APOLLO 11 FIFTH ANNIVERSARY COVERS

The U. S. Postal Service produced a special cancelling die for the event. The Houston die was used only on the high speed equipment resulting in a "good" cancel but not one of perfect philatelic quality.

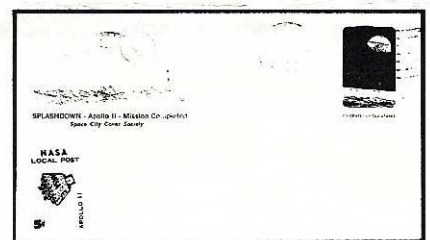
A-11-AN-7	Jul 20, 1974	Fifth Anniv (Houston)	2.50
A-11-AN-8	Jul 20, 1974	Fifth Anniv (Cape Canaveral)	2.50
A-11-AN-9	Jul 20, 1974	Fifth Anniv (Houston) Special cachet for first day of use of the special cancel	3.00
A-11-AN-10	Aug 20, 1974	Fifth Anniv (Houston) (But cancel reads "Postal Service 770") This was last day of use of the special cancel	2.50
A-11-AN-11	Jul 20, 1974	Fifth Anniv (Smithsonian Sta. Washington DC) Ceremonies were held at the Smithsonian Institution	3.00



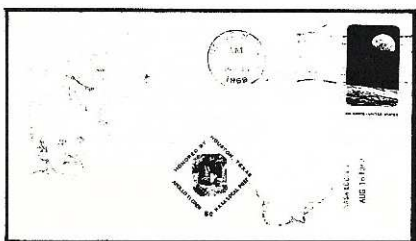
A-11-1



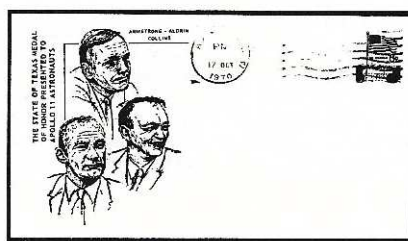
A-11-2



A-11-3



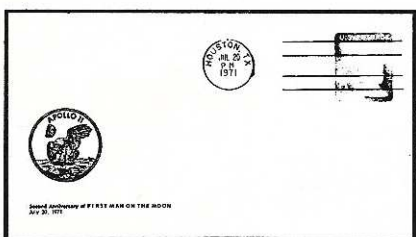
A-11-4



A-11-5 (Similar cachet on A-11-6 and 7)



A-11-AN-1



A-11-AN-2 and 3 (Similar cachet on A-11-AN 4 to 6 and 11)



A-11-AN-7 and 8



A-11-AN 9 and 10

APOLLO 11 SILVER MEDALS

Beautiful is the only way to describe the two medals we have for one of the most historic moments in the history of mankind.

The first is the proof-finish .900 medal (size 1 1/4" in diameter...slightly larger than the illustration), 15 grams in weight, produced in Switzerland and now selling there for \$20.00 and over. The price of silver alone has reached well over \$9.00 per ounce. We offered these originally 10 years ago at a price of \$7.50 each. Then silver was selling for only about \$2.00 per ounce. We have secured a few more of these from our source and this one-time offering means this Apollo 11 silver medal can be yours for only \$12.50 each, postpaid. We must limit these to two per order. If more than that is wanted please write first and we will see how our small supply is lasting.



SILVER MOON LANDING PLAQUE This is one that was not available to a lot of collectors back in 1969 and our source in Switzerland has secured a few more of these for us. These are .999 silver, same size as illustration, 25 grams in weight and hand-somely crafted. This is a replica of the plaque left on the Moon by the Apollo crew. This is an item all would be proud to own and to show to friends. Our price is \$17.50 postpaid. And this one we will have to limit to one per order.



Due to the few of these that we have, we will fill orders by return mail in rotation as to the postmark on your envelope. We are mailing these order blanks out to the furthest points from Houston first so that just about all of them should arrive in different parts of the country at the same time. If we are sold out when your order arrives we will return your original check to you.

TO: SPACE CITY COVER SOCIETY, P. O. Box 53545, Houston, Texas 77052

Please send me the following Apollo 11 silver medals:

_____ Apollo 11 medal (size 1 1/4" diamter) @ \$12.50 each \$ _____
 _____ Apollo 11 silver replica of plaque left
 on the Moon @ \$17.50 each \$ _____
 Total remittance \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 (July 1979)