

NEWS



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APOLLO 11 FLAGS

When Astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., lift off from the Moon after their lunar exploration July 21 they will leave behind three items in commemoration of the historic event.

Armstrong will unveil a plaque attached to the descent stage of the Apollo lunar module. The plaque is signed by President Nixon and the three Apollo 11 astronauts -- Armstrong, Michael Collins and Aldrin.

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The plaque bears images of the two hemispheres of the Earth and this inscription:

HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH

FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON

JULY 1969, A.D.

WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND

Another memorial to be left on the Moon will be a 1 1/2-inch silicon disc bearing messages of goodwill from heads of state of many nations. The messages will be placed on the wafer using the technique of making microcircuits for electronic equipment. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration invited the heads of nations to submit messages for this purpose.

The third item is the flag of the United States of America which will be erected on the Moon.

The flag is three by five feet and is made of nylon. It will be erected on an eight-foot aluminum staff and tubing along its top edge will unfurl it in the airless environment of the Moon. Plans are for the event to be recorded on television and transmitted live to Earth.

The planting of the flag is symbolic of the first time man has landed on another celestial body and does not constitute a territorial claim by the United States.

In addition, the Apollo 11 crew will carry four-by-six-inch flags of other nations of the world, the 50 states, District of Columbia and territories of the United States and the United Nations. These flags will be carried in the lunar module and brought back to Earth. They will not be deployed on the Moon.

Two other United States flags will be carried in the Apollo 11 command module. These measure five by eight feet and are to be presented to the two Houses of the Congress of the United States upon return to Earth. They were flown over the U.S. Capitol before the mission and will be flown again over the Capitol after their return.

The plaque is made of stainless steel measuring nine by seven and five-eighths inches and one-sixteenth inch thick. The finish has the appearance of brushed chrome and the world map, message and signatures are in black epoxy which fills the etched inscription.

It will be attached to the ladder on the lunar module descent stage of the landing gear strut between the third and fourth ladder rungs from the bottom.

To fit properly around but not touching the strut and to allow room for the insulation material which covers much of the lunar module, the plaque will be bent around a four-inch radius.

Covering the plaque during flight will be a thin sheet of stainless steel which will be removed by Armstrong during his activities on the surface of the Moon.

The plaque was made at NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston.

The disc upon which the messages of good will from heads of state will be carried is being made by the Sprague Electric Co., Semiconductor Division, Worcester, Mass., under the direction of NASA's Electronics Research Center, Cambridge, Mass.

The process used to make this wafer is the same as used to manufacture integrated circuits for electronic equipment. It involves making tiny photographic images and depositing metal on the images.

The Stars and Stripes to be deployed on the Moon was purchased along with several others made by different manufacturers at stores in the area around the Manned Spacecraft Center near Houston.

In order to attach the flag properly to its aluminum staff it was necessary to remove the binding and labels. For this reason the name of the manufacturer cannot be determined.

For its journey to the Moon, the flag will be wrapped in plastic and carried in a thin aluminum container attached to the left side ladder down which Astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin will descend to the surface of the Moon.

It will be erected after both astronauts step on the Moon and several feet away from the landing spacecraft sufficiently distant to minimize possible damage from the spacecraft's rocket engine as it leaves the Moon on its return trip to Earth.

Armstrong will erect the flag as Aldrin photographs the event. First Armstrong will place the lower four-foot section of the aluminum staff in the ground. He will then swing out a telescoping tube which runs along the top of the flag to keep it unfurled. The flag is riveted at its top two corners to this tube and is attached at its lower corner to the top portion of the staff. When the flag is properly unfurled, Armstrong then will slide the top portion of the staff into the bottom portion in the ground.

The aluminum staff and tube which holds the flag unfurled is gold in color.

The flag during its journey to the Moon will be wrapped in several layers of insulating blanket and attached by two brackets to the left handrail of the ladder. The packaged flag extends from the first step of the ladder upward to where the ladder bends inward toward the lunar module.

The flag and staff are removed from the stowage position by pulling retaining pins as the astronaut stands on the Moon's surface.

Weight of the flag and its wrapping is nine pounds, seven ounces. The flag and its staff and deploying tube weigh three pounds. The upper four-foot section of the staff slips into the bottom section for four inches making the length of the assembled staff seven feet eight inches. The staff will be stuck into the lunar surface from six to nine inches.

The small flags are to be carried in a plastic vacuum pack and stowed in a Beta cloth pouch with a Teflon outer wrap. Total weight is 10 ounces.



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PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA