Apollo 11 launches, July 16, 1969

Suzanne Deffree - July 16, 2018

Apollo 11 was launched by a Saturn V rocket on July 16, 1969, at 9:32 am local time from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, on a mission that would days later see man walk on the moon.

Apollo 11 was the fifth manned mission of NASA's Apollo program and carried Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong, and Michael Collins in its crew.

The spacecraft had three parts: a command module with a cabin for the three astronauts; a service module to support the command module with propulsion, electrical power, oxygen, and water; and a lunar module for landing on the moon.

Apollo 11 entered orbit 12 minutes after its launch. From there, it made one and a half orbits before the S-IVB third-stage engine pushed the spacecraft onto its trajectory toward the moon with the trans lunar injection burn about three hours after launch.

About 30 minutes later the command/service module pair separated from this last remaining Saturn V stage and docked with the lunar module still nestled in the lunar module adapter. After the lunar module was extracted, the spacecraft headed for the moon on a trajectory for heliocentric orbit.

Armstrong and Aldrin landed the lunar module in the moon's Sea of Tranquility on July 20. They spent about 21 and a half hours on the lunar surface.

Apollo 11 effectively ended the Space Race and fulfilled a national goal proposed in 1961 by the late US President John F Kennedy. JFK set the goal in a speech before the United States Congress stating that before the 1960s were over, the United States would land a man on the moon and return him safely to the Earth.

Aldrin, Armstrong, and Collins safely splashed down in the Pacific Ocean on July 24, and were heralded as heroes across the globe.

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Editor's note: This article was originally posted on July 16, 2013 and edited on July 16, 2018.