

APOLLO-15: A REWARDING JOURNEY FOR ALL HUMANITY

The 12-day lunar mission of Apollo-15, which ended with splashdown in the Pacific Ocean August 7, is regarded by scientists as possibly the most rewarding exploration in human history.

Astronauts David Scott, James Irwin and Alfred Worden set a number of records. They surpassed previous Apollo crews in total time on the moon -- 66 hours and 55 minutes; time exploring the lunar surface -- 18 hours and 37 minutes; the amount of rock and soil samples collected -- 170 pounds (76.5 kilograms); and time in orbit around the moon -- 145 hours and 15 minutes.

They also brought back to Earth three kilometers of film that will reveal details as small as two meters across of almost 20 percent of the moon's surface.

Scott and Irwin were the first astronauts to ride on the moon in a wheeled vehicle. They ranged over the rolling Hadley-Apennine area for more than 18 hours in their sturdy little electric runabout known officially as the Lunar Roving Vehicle (LRV).

The rover not only provided transportation but also served as a mobile television station. Through the mobile television camera, flight controllers in Houston, Texas, were able for the first time to see clearly how lunar exploration is carried out.

As the astronauts went through their activities the camera, remotely controlled from Earth, followed them about the lunar surface. Only when the rover was moving from one site to another was the television camera stilled.

The Astronauts left alongside the moon's Hadley Rille a nuclear-powered scientific station with seven different instruments to make direct measurements of the moon for years. In lunar orbit they left a satellite that will map the moon's fields of gravity and magnetism for at least a year.

A sophisticated instrument package aboard command module Endeavour also measured the moon's chemistry from moon orbit for the first time, radioing to Earth data so voluminous scientists say it will take years to reduce and understand.

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