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APOLLO 11: MISSION TO THE MOON

“The *Eagle* has landed.” Neil Armstrong captured the attention of the world. He uttered these four simple words. Nine years earlier, President John F. Kennedy spoke the words that led to the *Eagle's* take-off. “I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out,” he declared, “of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.” The mission, simply stated, was to perform a manned lunar landing and return. The United States achieved the goal.

Carried by a *Saturn V* rocket, *Apollo 11* was launched from the Kennedy Space Center on July 16, 1969. On July 19 *Apollo 11* entered lunar orbit. On July 20 the lunar module (LM) *Eagle*, with Commander Neil Armstrong and LM pilot Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin aboard, separated from the command module *Columbia*. Pilot Michael Collins manned *Columbia* as it circled the moon. The *Eagle* dropped away toward the moon. With only about 25 seconds of fuel left in the LM, Armstrong took control. Armstrong landed *Eagle* safely. Their schedule called for five hours of sleep after landing. The men were too excited to sleep. Instead, they began to plan their extravehicular activity (EVA).

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On Monday, July 21, 1969, Neil Armstrong opened *Eagle's* hatch. He climbed down the nine-rung ladder. He stepped onto the surface of the moon. He became the first human being to walk on another world. "That's one small step for a man," Armstrong declared, "one giant leap for mankind."

Buzz Aldrin followed. He described the scene as "magnificent desolation." The men performed tests,

gathered samples of soil and rock, and planted a U.S. flag on the lunar surface. President Richard

Nixon called the crew from the White House. He praised them for their successful mission. A plaque

with a map of earth and these words was attached to the leg of the lunar module:

"HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH
FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON
JULY 1969 A.D.
WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND"

Three days later, on July 24, the three astronauts returned to earth aboard the *Columbia*.

They landed in the Pacific Ocean 15 miles from the recovery ship, the *USS Hornet*. Summarizing the

mission, Buzz Aldrin explained, "This has been far more than three men on a mission to the Moon...

We feel that this stands as a symbol of the insatiable curiosity of all mankind to explore the unknown."

A group of British scientists, forty years later, described the significance of the risky moon landing as

“the greatest technical achievement of mankind to date. . .nothing since *Apollo* has come close..”

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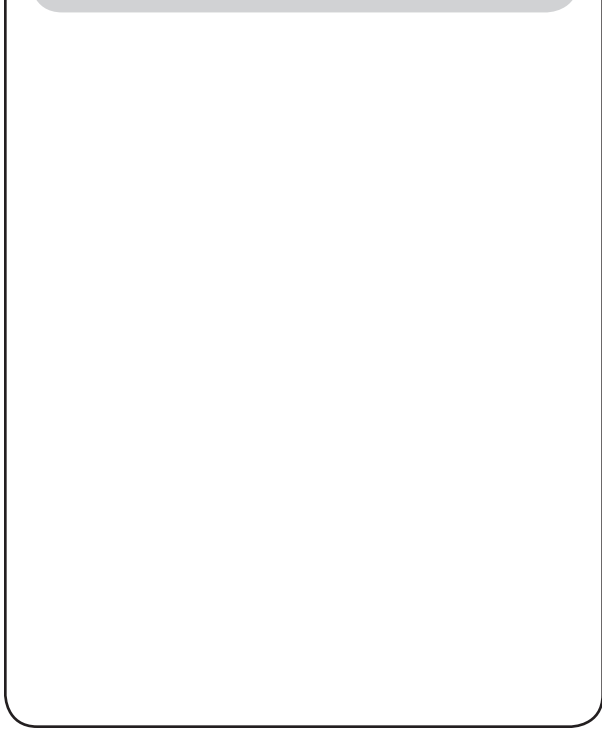
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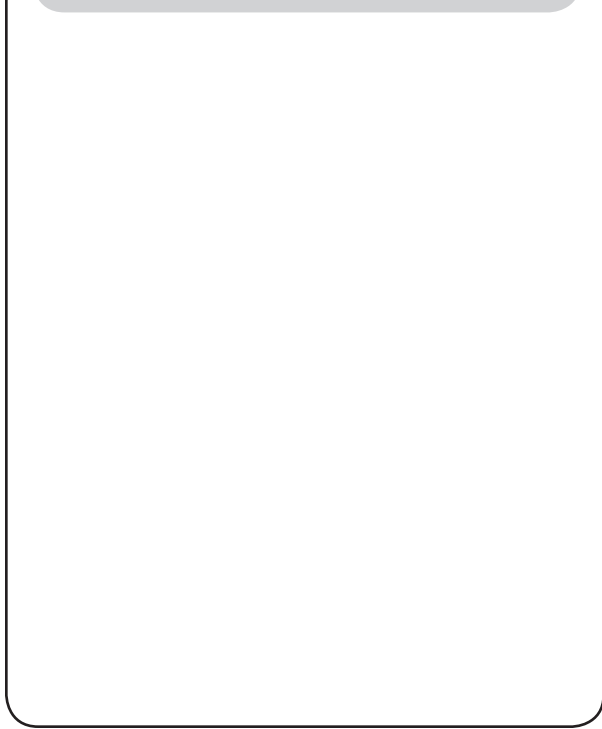
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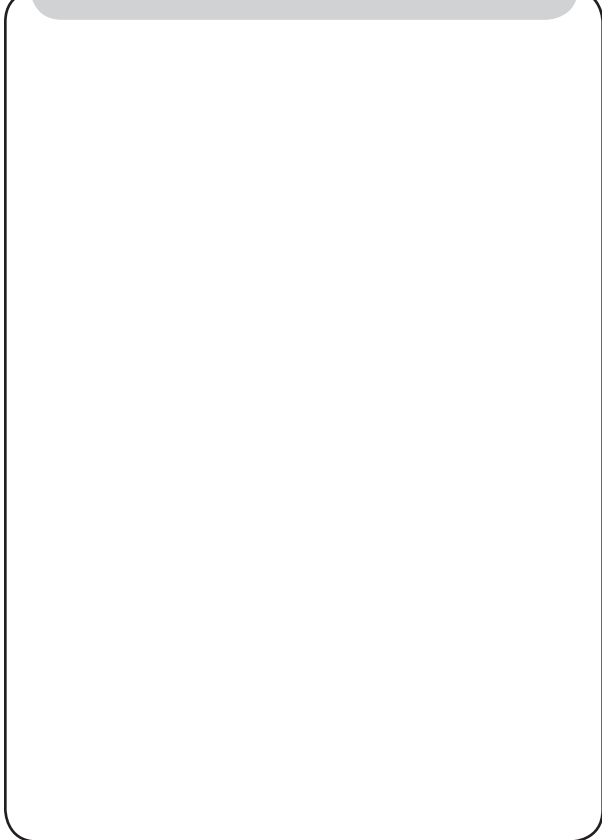


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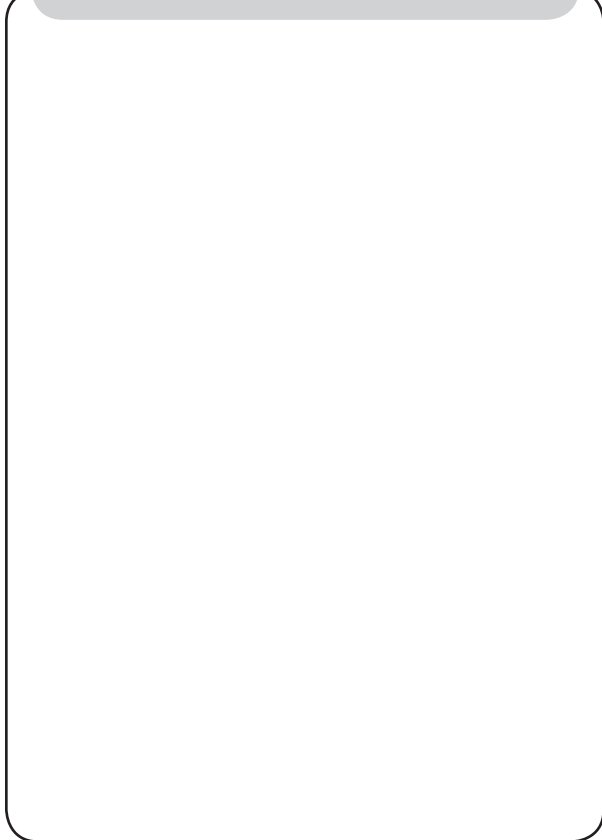
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