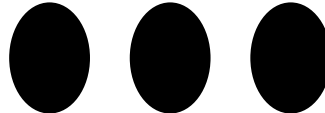




National Geographic Defends the Facts of the Apollo 11 Mission

Neil Armstrong's famous "small step" at the moon's Sea of Tranquility on July 20, 1969 was among the defining moments of an entire generation.

President Kennedy's memorable speech at Rice Stadium on September 12, 1962 defined and defended a goal that many people thought impossible: that the United States would send a man to the moon and safely returning him to the Earth, and would do so within the decade. The moon landing was among those goals to be embraced "[not because they are easy, but because they are hard.](#)"



The goal, accomplished through the labors of countless American men and women, was lived out by three American astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, and Michael Collins. Armstrong and Aldrin spent a mere 21 hours and 31 minutes on the lunar surface, but the significance of the landing is timeless. The heroism of America's astronauts and the national pride that Americans experienced in connection with the landing were in stark contrast to the cynicism and nihilism which marked the radical political movements which threatened to tear apart society at that same moment in history.

However, ever since the time of the landing, a host of claims have circulated setting forth a vast array of conspiratorial themes purporting that the entire moon landing was an elaborate government hoax. (The most famous, or notorious, venue for such conspiracy theories was the 1978 movie, *Capricorn One*, which although it purportedly dealt with a fictional Mars landing, featured the iconic lunar lander "on set" in NASA's secret studio.) In an age when political elites seem committed to inspiring cynicism, such conspiracy theories find fertile soil in which to take root and grow.

Thus, just in time for the fortieth anniversary of the *Apollo 11* moon landing, [National Geographic has posted a rebuttal](#) of eight of the most widespread "moon hoax" myths. It is important that such efforts are undertaken to subject myths to the light of truth so that the astounding facts of the moon landing can be seen in their proper light.

The amazing accomplishment of landing men on the moon inspired an entire generation of young men and women to study mathematics, engineering, and the sciences. Now a new generation of entrepreneurs are pursuing private space initiatives and dream of the long-promised "giant leap" out into the solar system. Against the petty "[zero-sum](#)" economic notions of the Beltway Collectivists, a vision that looks outward at the vast resources of an entire solar system offers breathtaking opportunities for a rising generation. Thus the pernicious character of the "moon hoax" myths stands out clearly: rather than allowing the events of July 1969 to inspire yet another generation of young Americans, the conspiracy theorists would tear that inspiration away and replace it with imagined plots and treachery. Surely there are enough real conspiracies and wickedness in the world without



Written by [James Heiser](#) on July 17, 2009

imagining ones that never existed?

The *National Geographic's* rebuttal of eight "moon hoax" myths is one more way of emphasizing the wonder of the *Apollo 11* mission — a mission which embodies the fusion of mankind's God-given gift for dreaming, and accomplishing, goals which expand our horizons, and it is a moment in American history of which we may all be proud.



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