

LAUNCH DAY – Cape Kennedy

A huge spaceport – Complex 39 – is the launch site for the Apollo Lunar Mission. At Merritt Island, it sits on the Florida Coast adjacent to Cape Kennedy.

The Saturn V rocket vehicle which will blast the Apollo spacecraft on to the epochal Lunar voyage has been designed, built and tested by major contractors throughout the U.S. It represents the combined efforts of more than 300,000 scientists, engineers and technologists working under the overall direction of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The three giant booster stages of the Moon rocket are transported by barge along man-made waterways to Cape Kennedy for assembly.

Dominating the 80,000 acre site is the massive Vehicle Assembly Building (left) – the largest building by volume in the world. So big that the air conditioning equipment is designed to prevent thunderstorms occurring inside the building. The V.A.B. is planned to allow four Saturn V rockets to be assembled vertically at one time.

Inside the Assembly building the Moon rocket is put together against a Service Tower on a Mobile Launch Pad which in turn rests on a giant transporter crawler. The Apollo spacecraft is joined atop the Moon rocket, a final checkout and then the transporter drives the entire structure out of the V.A.B. and along a causeway to the launch site three miles distant.

Travelling at one mile per hour the first stop is at the Arming Tower, where all the sensitive explosive devices and systems are armed. When the transporter reaches the launch site the Mobile Launch Pad, Service Tower and Moon rocket are lowered on hydraulic jacks and the transporter returns to the V.A.B.

With the start of terminal count-down, fuelling begins. Evaporating liquid oxygen puffs vapour from vents in the aluminium body and a sparkling rime of frost coats Saturn V.

Three hours after fuelling is completed and three hours before launch, you and your crew, already pressure suited, will be driven to the Launch Pad in a van. An elevator in the Service Tower will take you to the 296 ft level.

One by one you will enter the Apollo Command Module.

