



View from moonship

The man in the Earth!

From
ANGUS MACPHERSON
Houston, Monday

THIS is the Man in the Earth — a shot from the Moon men's TV spectacular tonight.

For nearly 20 minutes the Apollo 8 astronauts sent back TV pictures of the Earth from 190,000 miles out in space.

They showed the whole of North and South America, the night line passing through the Atlantic, with Britain and Europe hidden in the night.

As the pictures flashed on to millions of TV screens across the world Commander Frank Borman, the Moonship skipper, said: 'Hope you're all looking at yourselves from all this distance.'

He was asked by the radio link man at Houston: 'Can you see any evidence of life on earth?' Borman replied: 'Well, I don't see anybody waving.'

Major Bill Anders, in charge of Apollo 8 fixed TV camera, said Earth appeared to be royal blue with land masses showing up as 'dark brownish to a light brown texture.'

Navigator James Lovell said: 'What you're seeing is the Western Hemisphere. At the top is the North Pole.'

Solved

The long-range lens failed to work for Sunday's TV transmissions. Tonight the astronauts used camera filters and these apparently solved the problem.

At the end of the TV show Houston told Apollo 8: 'We appreciated it. See you manana [tomorrow].' The astronauts replied: 'O.K. Earth.'

Shortly after their TV show—at 9.30 p.m. BST—Borman, Lovell and Anders became the first Moon-men. As a mission commentator said at the Houston control: 'They are literally out of this world.'

Just under 200,000 miles from Earth the 30ft. spaceship began to speed up from its lowest point of 2,320 m.p.h. This meant they were at last within the Moon's sphere of influence, being pulled by the gravity of another world.

They were past the point of no return and must now at least go round the Moon. It is now the quickest way home.

At 11 a.m. BST tomorrow, out of sight and out of touch behind the Moon and a quarter of a million miles from home, they are due to fire their spacecraft engine to make Apollo 8 a captive of the Moon and circle it for 20 hours.

On Christmas Day they are due to fire their engine again to set them on course back to Earth.

Their lives and the success of their historic flight will hang on a perfect performance by the 20,000lb.-thrust rocket engine, said to be the most tested in history.

Tense

Its pumps and wiring have been triplicated and sometimes more. Its fuel fires automatically when mixed with its oxidant liquid—no ignition system needed.

But the controllers here will begin the longest 45 minutes of their lives while Apollo 8 is behind the Moon. Not until it reappears will it be known whether the crew have managed to put themselves into a safe stable ring around the Moon.

There will be an even tenser period on Christmas Day when the Moon men go through the same thing—once again out of all contact with their native planet to get themselves on a homeward course.

Early tomorrow morning, if the controllers here decide to

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Man in the Earth on TV. Viewers saw the curved sector at the bottom of the screen

Moon takes over

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cut out the lunar orbit, Apollo 8 will simply swing round the Moon and head back to Earth on a figure-of-eight course.

In this case, the first Moon voyagers will come back about a day earlier than planned for a splash-down in the Atlantic

rather than the Pacific. Ships are standing by off the coast of Africa.

Before the final decision, the astronauts themselves will be asked if they are still confident about becoming Moon orbiters.

After yesterday's flu scare aboard the Moonship, the

three men reported feeling 'fine' today.

Lovell said: 'We're all feeling pretty good now.' He said there were no problems, but the cabin was 'slightly cold.'

Another minor snag developed when instruments showed that a secondary coolant valve did not close properly. But ground control does not think this was serious.

Flight director Glynn Lunney was satisfied with the trip so far.

'I'm real pleased,' he said. 'The spacecraft seems to be going in an essentially perfect fashion.'

Lunney said the astronauts 'sound real good. They seem to be pretty chipper.'

GEORGE VINE reports from BONN: Herr Heinz Kaminski, head of the German Space Tracking Centre at Bochum, said he believes the Russians have a spacecraft standing by ready to go to the rescue of the three American astronauts if they get into difficulties on their Moon flight.

He bases his belief on Soviet statements made after the signing of the Space Treaty last year, and after the UN resolution on the rescue of astronauts.

When to see it on TV

THERE will be four Christmas TV programmes from the three astronauts aboard Apollo 8 and both BBC and ITV plan to broadcast three of them live.

The fourth programme, which will reach Britain at 3.31 on Christmas morning, will be recorded and shown by both BBC and ITV in special breakfast time programmes.

The other three programmes will arrive at 1.26 p.m. today, 3.31 a.m. and 10.6 p.m. on Christmas Day, and 9.51 p.m. on Boxing Day.

BBC

Today: 11.15 a.m. and probably a special on a live broadcast from space at 1.30 p.m.; 2.5 p.m.-2.10 p.m.; 5.50 p.m.-6 p.m.; 9.5 p.m.-9.20 p.m. BBC 2, 1.55 p.m.-2 p.m. and 7.25 p.m. (colour).

Christmas Day: Special breakfast programme at 8.45 a.m. Then 9.30 a.m., a one minute progress report at 1 p.m.; 6.30 p.m.-6.35 p.m.; 11.40 p.m.-11.50 p.m. BBC 2, 9.15 a.m.-9.30 a.m.; 11.55 a.m.-12.10 p.m.; 8.35 p.m.-8.45 p.m. (colour).

Boxing Day: 9.30 a.m.; 5.35 p.m.; 10.25 p.m. BBC 2, 7.30 p.m. (colour).

Friday: 4.15 p.m.-6.15 p.m. (approximately) — Apollo splash-down. BBC 2, 4.55 p.m.-6.15 p.m. (colour).

ITV

Today: 1.55 p.m., orbit of the Moon; 5.50 p.m.-6.4 p.m.; News at Ten.

Christmas Day: 9.15 a.m., special breakfast programme; 5.50 p.m.-6.4 p.m.; News at Ten.

Boxing Day: 5.50 p.m.-6.4 p.m.; News at Ten.

Friday: Splashdown, 4.30 p.m.-6 p.m.