

# SPLASHDOWN

# 30 SECONDS

# LATE!

**A** MERICA'S three quiet spacemen completed their historic mission to the Moon and back yesterday with a near-perfect splashdown.

The spacecraft carrying Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins touched down in the pitching Pacific at 5.50 p.m. British time . . . thirty seconds behind schedule.

At the moment of splashdown, a sentence was flashed on the TV screen of mission control in Houston, Texas.

It read: "I believe this nation should commit itself to the goal before this decade is out of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth."

It was part of a message to Congress by President John F. Kennedy in 1961.

Jack Riley, the voice of Apollo control, said solemnly as the live TV broadcast from the Pacific showed the astronauts being recovered: "That goal has now been achieved."

## Watched

As Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins re-entered the Earth's atmosphere at 24,600 mph and plummeted down to the sea, President Richard Nixon watched from the recovery aircraft carrier, USS Hornet.

It was the first time the returning crew of a Space-ship had been greeted in person by a President.

But even President Nixon could not break down the quarantine regulations that were designed to prevent any possible Moon germs from spreading.

The precautions began as soon as the Spacecraft, which landed upside down,

From ARTHUR SMITH in HOUSTON

had righted itself with the aid of three big flotation bags.

Lieutenant Clancy Hatleberg, swam to the Spacecraft. From his helicopter a bag was lowered, containing four Biological Isolation Garments—BIGs—and the first thing he did was to put one on himself in the raft.

A BIG is a sort of space-suit which is designed to keep any germs which the astronauts may have picked up on the Moon in isolation.

Then Lieutenant Hatleberg opened the Spacecraft hatch and passed three BIGs in to the astronauts.

As he worked, Michael Collins said from inside: "Tell him to take his sweet time. We're doing fine in here. It's not as stable as normal, but almost."

As the Hornet closed in to four miles, and then three, Lieutenant Hatleberg sprayed the hatch and the area around with disinfectant.

He then took ten minutes to scrub down the outside of the astronauts' suits and finally his own suit was scrubbed by the astronauts.

Almost exactly one hour after splashdown, the astronauts were winched one by one into the hovering helicopter above.

A three-minute flight

took the crew to the deck of the Hornet. An aircraft elevator took the helicopter down to the hangar deck, where Armstrong, Collins and Aldrin walked fifteen steps to an aluminium trailer.

This is called the Mobile Quarantine Facility. The crew will spend the whole of the time inside the small well-equipped trailer until they reach Houston on Sunday.

In Houston, they will stay inside the lunar receiving laboratory quarantine quarters until 21 days have elapsed since they left the Moon last Monday.

## Rocks

The other precious "passengers" on board the spacecraft Columbia—the two boxes containing the samples of Lunar rocks that they picked up in the Sea of Tranquility—will be flown back separately.

They should arrive in Houston today and scientists will immediately start studying them.

A doctor and a technician will be their only companions in the MQF during the fifty-five hours steaming to Hawaii and the ten-hour flight from there to Houston.

So after eight days in Space isolation, they now face another seventeen days isolation on the Earth.

received in Washington. Over 100 governments, emperors, prime ministers, presidents and kings have sent their congratulations.

"Most important I had a telephone call yesterday. More important even than the call I made to you on the Moon. I made that collect incidentally, in case you didn't know.

"Yesterday I called three of the greatest and most courageous ladies in the whole world, your wives. From Jan, Joan and Pat I bring their love and their congratulations."

When Nixon told the crew that he expected them to accompany their wives to a state dinner in Los Angeles on August 13, Armstrong replied with a smile: "I'll do anything you say, Mr. President."

Collins asked the President: "How about some promotions."

But Armstrong jumped in quickly to squash this levity by saying: "We are just pleased to be back and glad that you could come out and welcome us back. We look forward to getting out of this quarantine."

What the Mirror says —  
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