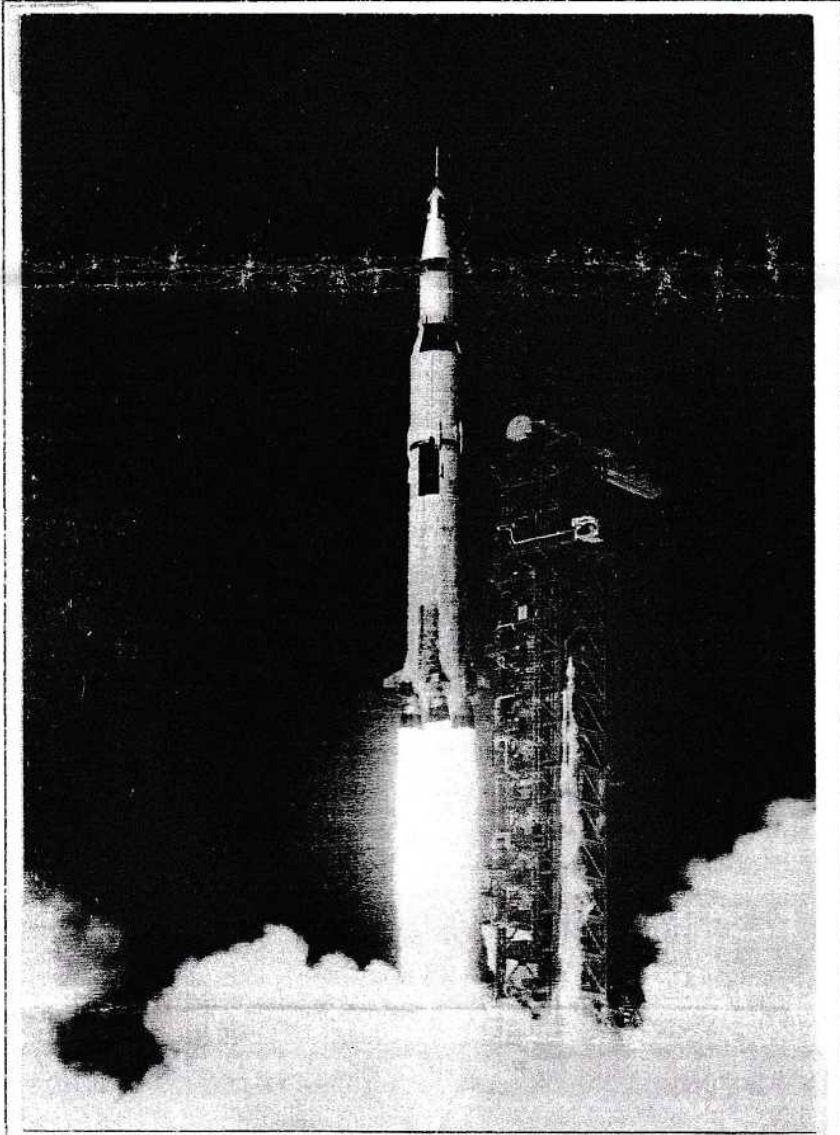


APOLLO 13

Failure is NOT an Option



The flawless launch of the Apollo spacecraft from Kennedy Space Center

The American public was already getting bored with it: Apollo 11 had been a major worldwide event. Billions of people had sat, glued to their radios and televisions, watching breathlessly as the "EAGLE" had glided across the barren landscape of the moon before finally settling in on a flurry of dust as the spindly legs of the LEM (*Lunar Excursion Module*) made contact with the moon. With that, the engines were cut.

The world heard the words, *Houston - The Eagle has landed*. Several hours later, the world had sat entranced again as a grainy black and white ghostly image came down the ladder and stepped onto the lunar surface. *That's one small step for man; One giant leap for Mankind!*

That was on July 20, 1969 and the world had stopped collectively to watch, listen and for many, pray. Four months later, Apollo 12 matched the precision of Apollo 11. But you would be hard pressed to find anyone who recalled the words at landing. But a few might recall Charles (Pete) Conrad's stating as he stepped on the moon's surface: *That might be a small step for Neil, but it's a big one for me!* At 5 foot 9 inches, he was shorter than Neil Armstrong.

Five more months transpired and Apollo 13 readied itself for take-off. But observers had been there, done that, bought the T-shirt, wore it out and given it to Good Will. It was already becoming boring. However, that was soon to change, and in a dramatic way, beyond what any movie studio could have imagined. Apollo 13 displayed raw American ingenuity to the world as men on Earth saved the lives of three men who were as far away from help as any humans had ever been in the history of the world. For those who were superstitious, Apollo 13 with an explosion on Friday the 13th was a sign. For the engineers of NASA it was, instead, a challenge.

This exhibit covers the major events of that fateful mission while showing a wide range of Astro-philatelic elements.

SYNOPSIS

Apollo 13: Failure Is Not An Option

This is a story about the remarkable Apollo 13 mission, in which three astronaut's lives hinged on the activities of humans on Earth, tens of thousands miles away, who eventually saved those lives. This one-frame exhibit could have been stretched to two frames, but half of those additional 16 pages would have either been redundant or added stuffing that would not add much to the story.

In addition to explaining the details of the launch, the emergency, the worldwide efforts to save these three lives, and the safe recovery, this exhibit includes a variety of Astrophilatelic knowledge explaining the variety of cancellations, cachets, and such items as printer's waste, NASA VIP cards, Kennedy Space Center Official cachets, a "faked" recovery ship cancellation discovered by this exhibitor, and others. This was one of the events in Astrophilatelic exhibiting that pushed this exhibitor to persuade the FIP and later corrected the MOJ to allow for cancellations from sites other than the "closest post office to the event".

While much of the action in finding ways to save the lives of the astronauts was done in Houston, engineers at the Kennedy Space Center and at the manufacturing plants also participated with testing and communications of ideas to solve the problems of recovery. In most cases there are active participants at the launch besides the Kennedy Space Center who actively participate in the activities by clearing the launch area of aircraft and boats and ships, by tracking the missions in near and in deep space; by communications as the Earth spins on its axis by giving assistance to the Program Managers in Houston as needed.

The shown, Dow Jones printout was a communications tool that provided information about the events of each day of the flight to millions of readers in pre-personal computer days.

When the splashdown point had to be changed due to the rotation of the Earth causing the splashdown to occur in the Atlantic, rather than the Indian Ocean, ship's near the splashdown site were ready and able to safely recover the astronauts far from the planned location. Their cancellations and some varieties are depicted in this exhibit. Signatures of the Astronauts (along with a couple of Autopen varieties), as well as signatures of other notables such as George Low, the then NASA Administrator, and Gene Krantz, the flight director, who voiced the positive charge that "*Failure is not an option*" to the team of engineers who eventually solved a bevy of problems, adds a personalization to this exhibit. This exhibitor was requested to modify the Astrophilatelic section of MOJ #7 and one of the revisions was to add that signatures are a personalized addition to the cachets because these are so inherent to the stories depicted in space exhibits.

There is no Plan Page in this exhibit as the insertion of one would require the reduction of one page of information that could be shown. In short it is:

- Pg. 1. Overview of the story
- Pgs. 2 & 3 Launch of Apollo 13
- Pg. 4 Communications between Earth and the crew
- Pg. 5 Earth tracking stations
- Pgs. 6 -8 The explosion and Mission Abort
- Pgs. 9-10 Efforts to save the astronaut's lives
- Pgs. 11-15 Splashdown and Recovery
- Pg. 16 Crew thank-you contacts with their heroes on Earth

References:

Primary Recovery Ship Cover Handbook (1993 pg.14) by Ray E. Cartier

U.S. Space Cover Collecting Handbook (2011 - Article by Dr. Reuben Ramkissoon Pg. 181-2)

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