



Dear Friends and alumni of Apollo,

I know many of you at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex are accustomed to communicating with spacecraft in deep, deep space.

But this week we remember some things we did in our own back yard, less than a quarter of a million miles away. It was an exciting time for many of you, and it certainly was exciting for me. We were involved in doing what many thought to be impossible, putting humans on Earth's moon.

Science fiction writers thought it would be possible. H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and other authors found ways to get people to the moon. But none of those writers foresaw any possibility of the lunar explorers' being able to communicate with Earth, transmit data, position information, or transmit moving pictures of what they saw back to Earth. The authors foresaw my part of the adventure, but your part was beyond their comprehension.

Some of you, I expect, may have had mixed emotions about the film, *THE DISH*. I understand, because as technical people, we like things to be correct and accurate. And the film did not always accurately capture the roles of those of you at Honeysuckle Creek, those of you at Parkes, and those of you at Tidbinbilla. But for most of the viewers of the film around the world, those were not the details that they would remember anyway. What they will remember is that down in Australia there were some very dedicated people, with some very big antennae and complex electronic equipment that did remarkable things that were instrumental in the success of man's **first** flights to the moon. They will have a sense that you were having a great time doing what you were doing. And what they remember will, in fact, be the truth.

I remember all the preflight testing we were doing on that little black and white image orthicon TV camera. In all that testing, I never saw a picture successfully transmitted. But the chaps assured us that it would, in fact, work. And it did. And I was probably the most surprised person in the human race when Mission Control announced they were getting a picture. So I was never concerned that the picture quality was less than optimum. I was just amazed that there was any picture at all!

All the Apollo people were working hard, working long hours, and were dedicated to making certain everything they did, they were doing to the very best of their ability. And I am confident that those of you who were working with us forty years ago, were working at least that hard. It would be impossible to overstate the appreciation that we on the crew feel for your dedication and the quality of your work.

So I will just say thanks, mates. I wish I could be with you to raise a glass to you and to what we were all able to do forty years ago.

Neil Armstrong