



Apollo 11 Anniversary: Heroes, Quests and Space

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37 Years ago, two Americans stepped on the Moon. Although alone when they planted our flag, they did not claim it for themselves or even this nation, instead, they proclaimed they were there on behalf of the entire human race. Although their mission was a symbolic gesture of dominance in a Cold War that was a battle for control of Earth, our emissaries to the small grey island next door in space made it clear their triumph was not of one nation, but of our entire species.

These men, and the 18 others that followed, and the thousands who worked for years to put them there were removed from the intrigues of international brinkmanship and bravado. To them this was a quest, a good thing to do, the right thing to do.

Anointed as those with the "right stuff," they were just normal people who worked through their fields to find themselves in the right place and time to be given a chance to change history. They were heroes because they did what they did not for money or personal power, but to fulfill a dream, to do the impossible simply because it was "impossible."

They were heroes because we made them heroes, because we needed heroes, just as we do today.

Real heroes, not made up, marketed, managed, media meat heroes, but people who put it all on the line, as part of a team, to do the right thing and do it as well as it can be done. No marketing deals, no personal hype, no agents bickering over million dollar deals, no walk-outs over damaged egos or who got top billing, they just did their job, did it to the maximum of their abilities, and when it was over, went on with their lives.

Unified under the banner of the quest, their fellowship took them, and us, to a place unknown, and opened up for us a new idea, that this tiny world of ours is not the only one upon which we can stand, and that we, as humans, can do incredible things in the name of a dream.

In this time of darkness, of rivalries between faiths and ideals, it is time again for heroes

who touch us all, no matter who we are, what we worship, and where we live on this oh so tiny planet. It is time for this great nation to embark on a new quest, to show the world and ourselves that we are not the greedy, self-aggrandizing gluttons and bullies so many believe us to be. Just as our landing on the Moon was "for all mankind," we need to throw open the gates to space for all humanity. Anyone can fight wars, instead the US should focus on doing those things no other nation can accomplish, by leading a new coalition of governments and private companies onto the frontier and establishing a new branch of humanity beyond the Earth.

Three major quests in space call out for our focus as the most powerful nation on Earth.

First, we must turn our guns away from each other and outwards, to defend the Earth, creating a global and in space network of sensors and telescopes to find asteroids that could destroy our planet and create the systems to stop them. It makes no sense to dream great dreams while waiting to be hit by a train.

Second, we need to mobilize the forces of free enterprise to create new transportation systems that allow many more of us to go out there, at lower cost and more often. The message needs to be we all have the right stuff, and like the hand-off of the Internet from government to the public, who knows what new and great things we can do in space until the minds and imaginations of our people have access to it?

Third, we must get serious about permanently returning to the Moon and blazing a path to Mars. We must form an international coalition not in the name of war and paranoia, but of peace and science. A partnership between nations to place new heroes at the apex of our imaginations, a singular unifying dream of hope and discovery that will lift our eyes and fire the imaginations of our new generations.

From these steps will rise the heroes of tomorrow. Imagine the feeling of strength and security that will come when we sight and deflect the first asteroid that might have wiped us from the planet. Imagine the hope for peace that will come when a child looks up to the Moon and sees the lights of an international base at its pole, knowing that people from all over the world made it so. And imagine the effect on our children of knowing that if they do good and work hard, they too can be heroes.

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