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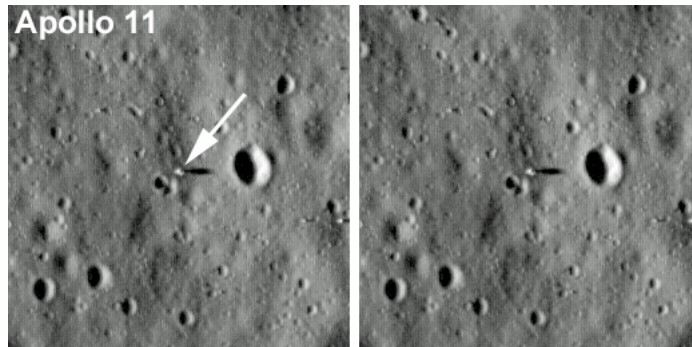
[The Space Shot](#)

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# Lunar orbiter photographs Apollo landing sites

by [William Harwood](#)

Forty years after the Apollo 11 voyage to the moon, NASA released photographs from the new Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter spacecraft Friday showing five of the six Apollo landing sites. Shadows cast by the Apollo descent stages are clearly visible and in some cases, the moon walkers' paths can be seen in the disturbed dust.



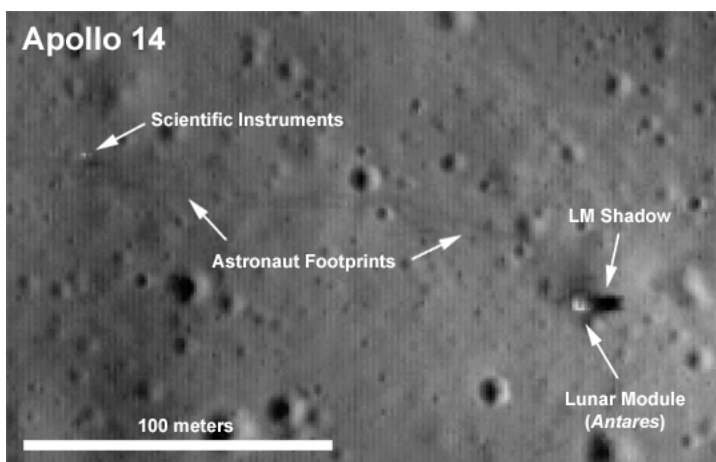
The Apollo 11 landing site, photographed by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

The scene is 925 feet across.

(Credit: NASA)

"We were very interested in getting our first peek at the lunar module descent stages just for the thrill - and to see how well the cameras had come into focus," Mark Robinson, principal investigator of the LRO's main camera, said in a statement. "Indeed, the images are fantastic and so is the focus."

The [Apollo 11, 14, 15, 16, and 17 landing sites](#) were photographed between July 11 and 15. The Apollo 12 landing site will be imaged during upcoming orbits.



The Apollo 14 landing site as seen by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

(Credit: NASA)

Launched June 18, the Lunar Reconnaissance orbiter braked into an initially elliptical orbit around the moon on June 23. It eventually will be maneuvered into a circular 31-mile-high

orbit, allowing it to photograph surface features - including the Apollo landing sites - with three times greater resolution than the pictures released Friday.

Equipped with seven state-of-the-art cameras and other instruments, LRO was built to look for suitable landing sites for future manned missions while creating the most detailed lunar atlas ever assembled.

The solar-powered spacecraft also will measure the solar and cosmic radiation that future lunar explorers will face and map out the surface topology, mineralogy, and chemical composition of Earth's nearest neighbor. One year will be spent scouting future landing sites followed by three years of purely scientific observations.



William Harwood has been covering the U.S. space program full-time since 1984, first as Cape Canaveral bureau chief for United Press International and now as a consultant for CBS News. He has covered more than 115 shuttle missions, every interplanetary flight since Voyager 2's flyby of Neptune, and scores of commercial and military launches. Based at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, Harwood is a devoted amateur astronomer and co-author of "Comm Check: The Final Flight of Shuttle Columbia."