

September 3, 2021

To: Memorandum for the Record

From: Commander, Apollo 15

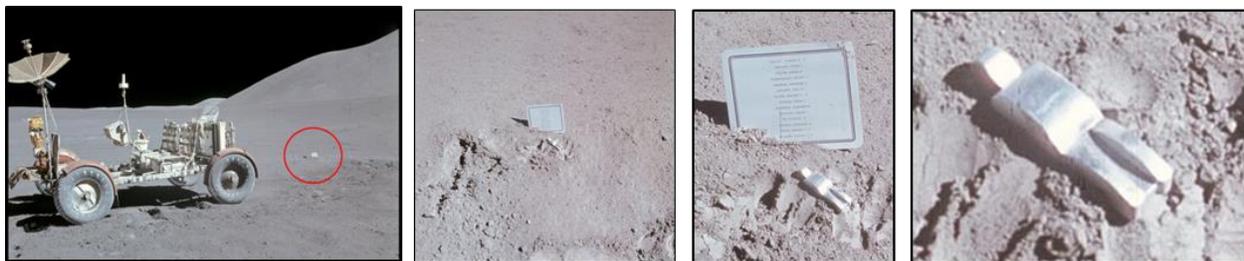
Subject: Apollo 15 Fallen Astronaut Memorial at the Hadley-Apennine Site on the Moon

Placement. During the final moments of the Apollo 15 expedition to the Moon, the Commander of Apollo 15 (me) placed a small Memorial at the Apollo 15 Hadley Apennine site on the Moon to honor our colleagues who died in the pursuit of exploration of space. The Memorial consisted of a simple plaque with the names of 14 astronauts and cosmonauts on both sides of the “Space Race” between the United States and the Soviet Union. Near the plaque is a small figure representing a fallen astronaut. This was a private and confidential project approved by NASA management to be emplaced only on a time-available basis at the end of the mission after all official duties had been performed. Prior to the mission this was an internal project known to only my crewmates and a few people at NASA who had prepared and stored the items prior to launch.

Announcement. On August 9, 1971, during the Apollo 15 post-flight conference, I disclosed the Memorial (and photos) with the following comments.

“I think many people have contributed to this pinnacle we have reached; some have contributed more than others. And we know of 14 individuals who contributed all they had. And because of that, we left a small memorial on the Moon. About 20 feet north of Rover 1, in a small subtle crater, is a simple plaque with 14 names, and those are the names, in alphabetical order of all the astronauts and cosmonauts who have died in the pursuit of exploration of space. Near it is a small figure representing a fallen astronaut.”

I used the term “fallen astronaut” to characterize the figurine. At that time, NASA released the stereo photographs I took to record the configuration and location of the Memorial near Lunar Roving Vehicle No 1. These photos were widely circulated by NASA and the media.



Neither the figure nor the plaque was ever to be reproduced or commercialized in any manner. This was a private, personal tribute of respect to our fallen colleagues on both sides of the “Space Race”.

Background. During the early days of Apollo, I lost many friends and colleagues in accidents related to the program. I always wanted to recognize their contributions, and during my final mission, Apollo 15, I had the opportunity. On June 30, 1971, three weeks before the launch of Apollo 15, the cosmonaut crew of Soyuz 11 died during reentry from the Soviet space station, *Salyut*. Several days later, on July 6, 1971, I attended a NASA management meeting in Houston to discuss potential changes in our procedures due to the loss of Soyuz 11 (the other A-15 crewmembers were at the Cape). Our

procedures were not changed; our system was different from theirs. At the end of the Soyuz 11 meeting, my supervisor, the Director of Flight Crew Operations (Deke Slayton) approved my recommendation of establishing a memorial on the Moon to honor both astronauts and cosmonauts who had died during the 1960's Cold War "Race to the Moon". I had previously met one of the cosmonauts as well as three others personally and had great respect for their efforts and contributions.

During the subsequent three weeks before launch, a plaque listing the names of both astronauts and cosmonauts in alphabetic order a simple figurine representing a "fallen astronaut" were designed and fabricated by NASA personnel and stowed in the pocket of my spacesuit. The figurine was precision-machined from a single block of aluminum alloy 6061, the same material approved for fabrication of our lunar surface tools. The design of the figurine was based on standard "stick-figures" that had been universally accepted in the late 1960's as location symbols for bathrooms. Prior to the mission this private memorial concept was known only to a few individuals who were involved in preparing and stowing the plaque and figurine; there was absolutely no contact or knowledge outside these limited NASA personnel regarding this project.

David R. Scott
Commander, Apollo 15