First Man on the Moon

In July 1969, Neil Armstrong became a hero, a national treasure and worldwide name. He was the American astronaut who was the first person to ever set foot on the surface of the Moon.

His Early Life

Neil Armstrong was born on 5th August 1930, in the state of Ohio in the USA, the eldest of three children. He developed a passion for aviation from a young age. His first experience of aircraft was when his parents took him to Cleveland Air Race as a toddler. At the age of six, he flew for the first time with his father. As a teenager, he took flying lessons which he paid for himself by working at a local chemist. He practised and persevered. Consequently, by 16 years old he had achieved his first pilot’s licence, before he could even drive a car!

Fun Facts

• Neil Armstrong was a committed Boy Scout and earned the rank of Eagle Scout!

• He loved making model aircraft in his spare time.

• As a child, he suffered from travel sickness, but fortunately he did not experience space sickness.

During his career in aviation, Neil Armstrong flew more than two hundred different aircraft! He was renowned for being resilient and calm under pressure, strengths which helped him to fly in very dangerous situations. It was in September 1962 that he was accepted to the NASA astronaut corps, which would eventually lead to the very difficult job of landing on the Moon!

The Moon Landing

Finally, everything was ready! On 16th July 1969, at 13:32, the powerful Saturn V rocket blasted Neil Armstrong and his crew
After landing, Armstrong and Aldrin had a moonwalk around the landing site where they planted the flag of the United States of America. They also spent time collecting moon rocks from the surface so they could be studied back on Earth.

The astronauts arrived home on Earth on 24th July 1969 where they were quarantined (put in isolation) in case of infectious diseases or illnesses before being released to tour the country.

**Later Life**

After he had returned home, Armstrong retired from being an astronaut. However, his enthusiasm for space and aircraft continued and he became a professor in order to share his passion.

Neil Armstrong died on 25th August 2012, aged 82.

**Did You Know...?**

- A modern smartphone is several thousand times more powerful than the computers used for Apollo 11!

- The Saturn V rocket was the largest rocket ever built, standing at 111 metres tall! It was higher than the Statue of Liberty and taller than many tower blocks!