

# Neil Armstrong



Neil Armstrong was born on 5th August 1930 in Wapakoneta, Ohio. His love for flying started at a young age when his father took him to an air show. From then on his goal was to become a pilot. At the age of 15 he got his pilot's license. Armstrong went to Purdue University and earned his bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering. He later got his masters degree at the University of Southern California.

During college, Neil was called up by the Navy and became a fighter pilot. He fought in the Korean War where he flew fighters from aircraft carriers. At one point his plane was hit by enemy fire, but he was able to eject and was safely rescued. After graduating from college, Armstrong became a test pilot. He flew all sorts of experimental planes testing them out to see how well they flew. It was a dangerous job, but very exciting. He flew over 200 different types of aircraft during his career.

Armstrong applied to become an astronaut and in September of 1962 he was selected for the NASA Astronaut Corps. He had to go through a series of harsh physical tests, but he passed and was soon part of the "new nine", or second group of nine NASA astronauts. On 23rd December 1968 Neil was offered the command of the Apollo 11. This would be the first manned landing on the Moon. This was an exciting time for the entire country. The United States was in a race with the Soviet Union to put the first man on the Moon. If the flight was successful, Armstrong would be that man.

After months of practice and preparation, the Apollo 11 spacecraft launched from Kennedy Space Center in Florida on 16th July 1969. There was one scary moment

in the flight where Armstrong had to take over manual control of the landing. This was not the plan and, if the landing took too long, would leave the crew short on fuel.

After a successful landing on the moon, Neil Armstrong was the first astronaut to leave the spacecraft, and therefore the first man in history to walk on the surface of the moon. When he stepped off of the ladder on to the moon, he said the following line which has become one of the most famous lines that is still quoted today "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."