

SCOUTS ON THE MOON

On 21 July 1969, Neil Armstrong uttered the famous words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," as he placed his foot upon the soil of the moon, the first man ever to stand or walk on the moon.

These words, and the moon landing of the Apollo 11 mission, are perhaps some of the most memorable of the 20th century. Many people who witnessed the first moon landing in 1969 commented that it is one of the most impressive memories in the history of their lives. Armstrong was the quintessential astronaut; sometimes overshadowing Buzz Aldrin, who also walked on the moon with Armstrong during that historic mission. Like Jim Lovell and several others who would serve in the NASA programme, Armstrong was an avid Scout, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. As well as being honoured by his country, he also received the Boy Scouts of America's highest honour: the Silver Buffalo Award. What's more, Neil Armstrong also carried the World Scout Badge with him on his historic mission.

Astonishingly, 11 of the 12 men to have walked on the moon were Scouts. Even more remarkably perhaps, two thirds of all the astronauts ever to have gone into space were involved in Scouting. When NASA began its astronaut selection process, they were looking for people who were not only fit and technically proficient, but who had an even temperament and above all, a thirst for adventure. It was no coincidence that the majority of those who were handed "tickets to the moon" were former Scouts.

