

# New Australian footage of Neil Armstrong's moon walk

September 28 2010

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US astronauts Neil Armstrong (right) and "Buzz" Aldrin deploy the US flag on the lunar surface 20 July 1969 during the Apollo 11 lunar landing mission. Long-lost footage of Armstrong descending the ladder of the Apollo 11 lunar module will be screened in public for the first time in Sydney next week, a prominent astronomer told AFP.

Long-lost footage of Neil Armstrong descending the ladder of the Apollo 11 lunar module will be screened in public for the first time in Sydney next week, a prominent astronomer told AFP.

The [footage](#) runs for a few minutes and is considered to be some of the best footage of the historic 1969 [moonwalk](#), but the film was lost in archives for many years and was badly damaged when found, said John Sarkissian.

It depicts the first few minutes of Armstrong's descent which was recorded in Australia as [NASA](#) was still scrambling for a signal, showing a far clearer image than was initially screened worldwide.

Telescopes in remote Australia played a key role in the [Apollo 11 mission](#), including provision of the television signal, after Armstrong decided to attempt the moonwalk early, putting the United States just beyond the horizon.

Sarkissian -- historian and astronomer in charge of the Australian side of the recordings restoration project -- said the unseen minutes were the "best quality of Armstrong descending the ladder."

"NASA were using the Goldstone (California) station signal, which had its settings wrong, but in the signals being received by the Australian stations you can actually see Armstrong."

"In what people have seen before you can barely see Armstrong at all, you can see something black -- that was his leg."

The segment which runs for "just a few minutes" will be screened at the awards night of Australian Geographic magazine next Wednesday, at which Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin will be the chief guest.

"When we heard Buzz was going to be the guest of honour we thought 'what a great opportunity'," Sarkissian said.

The Armstrong footage, which has only previously been seen by Apollo veterans and other members of the astronomy community, would form part of a highlights reel of restored, digitised moonwalk footage at the awards, he added.

There was a "long detective story" involved in the search for the footage

and Sarkissian said it took painstaking frame by frame work to shift the material from the deteriorating black and white film to digital format.

"It was very damaged tape as well, that segment of Armstrong at the beginning," he said.

Digitising the recording was "significant in the space flight history context" allowing it to be preserved and copied for future generations, said Sarkissian.

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Citation: New Australian footage of Neil Armstrong's moon walk (2010, September 28) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-australian-footage-neil-armstrong-moon.html>

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