

Moon rocks found in Minn. National Guard storage

November 29 2012, by Paul Walsh

Moon rocks from mankind's first landing more than 43 years ago have been discovered tucked away in a government storage area in St. Paul, and officials are at a loss to explain how they ended up there.

The five encased rocks - little more than pebbles - are part of a desktop display that includes a small state of Minnesota flag that was among the 50 from every state that made the trip aboard Apollo 11.

Each state received a moon rock display from President [Richard Nixon](#) to commemorate the mission that put [Neil Armstrong](#) on the lunar surface on July 20, 1969.

"The Apollo 11 moon rocks were found amongst military artifacts in a storage area at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul," said Army Maj. Blane R. Iffert, former state historian for the Minnesota National Guard. "When I searched the Internet to find additional information about the moon rocks, I knew we had to find a better means to display this artifact."

Precisely, those "better means" will be handled by the Minnesota Historical Society, which will take possession of the rocks in a transfer ceremony Wednesday in front of a gathering of children at Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration (STARBASE) Minnesota.

Located at Minnesota Air National Guard base near the Minneapolis-St.

Paul International Airport, STARBASE educates and encourages urban youngsters in the study of science, technology, engineering and math.

Maj. Kristen Auge of the Minnesota National Guard said she has "no idea how the moon rocks came into our possession" or how long they were the storage area.

Iffert said his research found that most moon rocks from the [Apollo 11](#) and 17 missions that were given by Nixon as goodwill gestures are unaccounted for.

"We are honored to have this in our collection to preserve for future generations," Pat Gaarder, deputy director for the Minnesota Historical Society, said in a statement. "It is also exciting to think that our collection includes artifacts from across the globe and now with these [moon rocks](#), the galaxy."

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