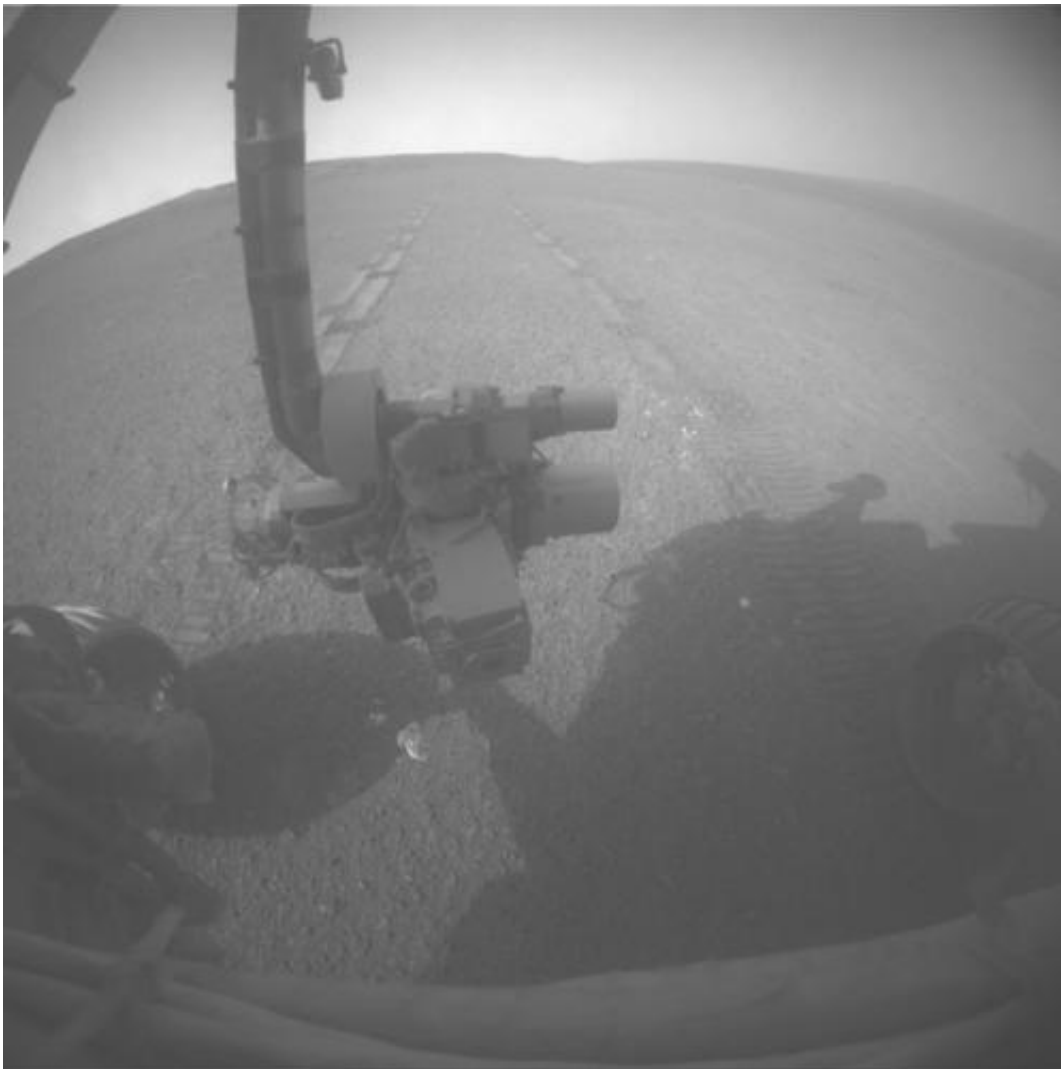


Nine-year-old Mars rover passes 40-year-old record

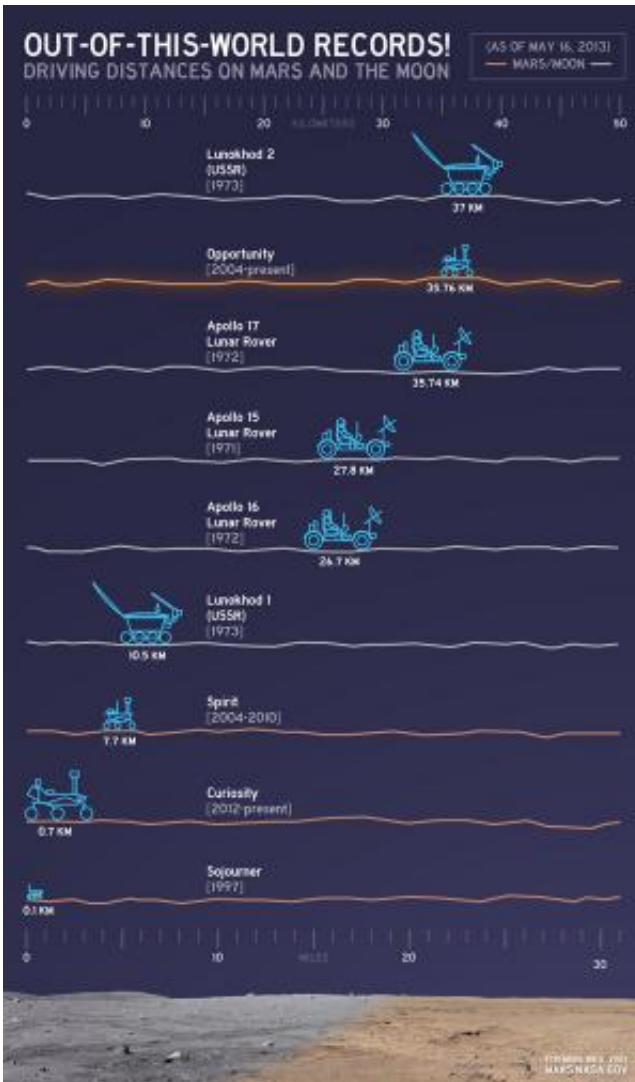
May 17 2013, by Guy Webster



On the 3,309th Martian day, or sol, of its mission on Mars (May 15, 2013) NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity drove 263 feet (80 meters) southward along the western rim of Endeavour Crater. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

While Apollo 17 astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt visited Earth's moon for three days in December 1972, they drove their mission's Lunar Roving Vehicle 19.3 nautical miles (22.210 statute miles or 35.744 kilometers). That was the farthest total distance for any NASA vehicle driving on a world other than Earth until yesterday.

The team operating NASA's [Mars](#) Exploration Rover Opportunity received confirmation in a transmission from Mars today that the rover drove 263 feet (80 meters) on Thursday, bringing Opportunity's total odometry since landing on Mars in January 2004 to 22.220 statute miles (35.760 kilometers).



This chart illustrates comparisons among the distances driven by various wheeled vehicles on the surface of Earth's moon and Mars. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Cernan discussed this prospect a few days ago with Opportunity team member Jim Rice of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. The [Apollo 17](#) astronaut said, "The record we established with a roving vehicle was made to be broken, and I'm excited and proud to be able to pass the torch to Opportunity."

The international record for driving distance on another world is still

held by the Soviet Union's remote-controlled Lunokhod 2 rover, which traveled 23 miles (37 kilometers) on the surface of Earth's moon in 1973.

Opportunity began a multi-week trek this week from an area where it has been working since mid-2011, the "Cape York" segment of the rim of Endeavour Crater, to an area about 1.4 miles (2.2 kilometers) away, "Solander Point."

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, manages the [Mars Exploration Rover](#) Project for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington. JPL also manages the [Mars Science](#) Laboratory Project and its rover, Curiosity, which landed on Mars in August 2012.

Provided by NASA

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