

Dead astronaut's toothbrush on auction for \$4,000

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A toothbrush used by one of the American astronauts who flew to the Moon is being auctioned off at a starting bid of \$4,000, a Los Angeles auction house said Tuesday.

The clear Oral B-40 toothbrush was used by Jack Swigert during the 1970 Apollo 13 mission, when he stepped in at the last minute to be the command module pilot after a colleague was exposed to measles.

The mission was meant to be the seventh manned journey to land on the [lunar surface](#), but the touchdown was aborted after an [oxygen tank](#) exploded 55 hours into the trip.

Swigert and his two crew mates managed to convert their lunar module, Aquarius, "into a effective lifeboat" and returned safely to Earth, NASA said.

Swigert was one of 24 American astronauts to fly around the Moon as part of the Apollo program, but was not among the dozen who walked on the surface.

He died in 1982 of bone cancer at age 51.

Other personal items on auction include his mustard-colored flight suit (opening bid \$6,000), a space pencil that flew in the Apollo 13 [lunar module](#) (current bid \$8,250), and numerous patches, badges and pins.

The items on auction are from Swigert's estate and come with a letter of authenticity from his sister, said the auction host, Nate D. Sanders.

The auction takes place May 29, and bids are being accepted online.

Last week, a joystick controller from the fourth US manned [lunar landing](#), Apollo 15, sold at a Massachusetts auction for \$610,063.

That was believed to be the most ever paid for a piece of NASA spacecraft at a public auction, experts said.

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