

Fifty years after Apollo, when will we go back to the moon?

July 9 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Fifty years ago, Neil Armstrong's famous first steps on the surface of the moon demonstrated both ground-breaking technical expertise and immense political will. Science and technology have made considerable progress since then, so why was the last manned mission to the moon in 1972? In his new book, *Returning People to the Moon After Apollo*, former Apollo engineer Pat Norris gives a detailed account of the Apollo missions and of the Soviet program that was the other competitor in the race to the moon, and asks why more people have not landed on the moon in the decades since. He also assesses today's programs and weighs up who will likely be the next to walk on the moon and when.

In the opening chapters, Norris outlines in detail why the US decided to embark on a [mission](#) to send humans to the [moon](#) in the first place. He then goes on to describe the technical and managerial advances necessary to send humans there, and gives a detailed account of the first moon landing using supporting photographs and diagrams. NASA originally planned for ten moon landings—Apollo 11 through 20—and in the second half of the book, Norris explores why returning people to the moon has not been prioritized over the past forty years.

"The May 1961 decision to send men to the moon was taken on Cold War strategic political grounds. The main motivation was not to advance science or to explore the universe," explains Norris. "Apollo happened because its success was made a national strategic priority with a budget to match for several years."

Norris contrasts this with the bungled Soviet program which was ultimately cancelled after repeated failures of their giant N1 launcher. In

the final chapters of the book, he assesses who might be in a position to launch a new mission to the moon and when this might happen. For the first time since the 1970s there are realistic schedules for people to once again walk on the moon. Who will be the next to do it? The United States, China, or a private company?

More information: Returning People to the Moon After Apollo:
www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030149147

Provided by Springer

Citation: Fifty years after Apollo, when will we go back to the moon? (2019, July 9) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-07-fifty-years-apollo-moon.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.