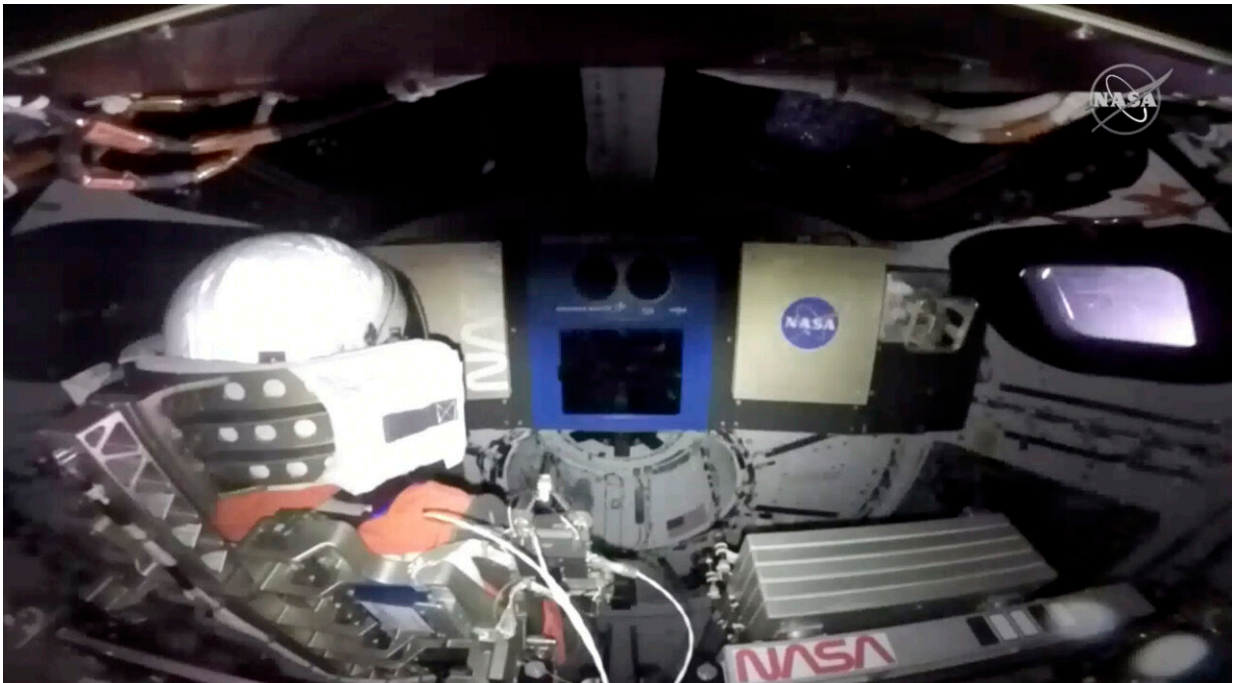


NASA's Orion capsule enters far-flung orbit around moon

November 26 2022, by Marcia Dunn



This screengrab from NASA shows inside the NASA moon rocket, an un-crewed test flight, on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022. NASA's new moon rocket blasted off on its debut flight with three test dummies aboard Wednesday, bringing the U.S. a big step closer to putting astronauts back on the lunar surface for the first time since the end of the Apollo program 50 years ago. Credit: NASA via AP

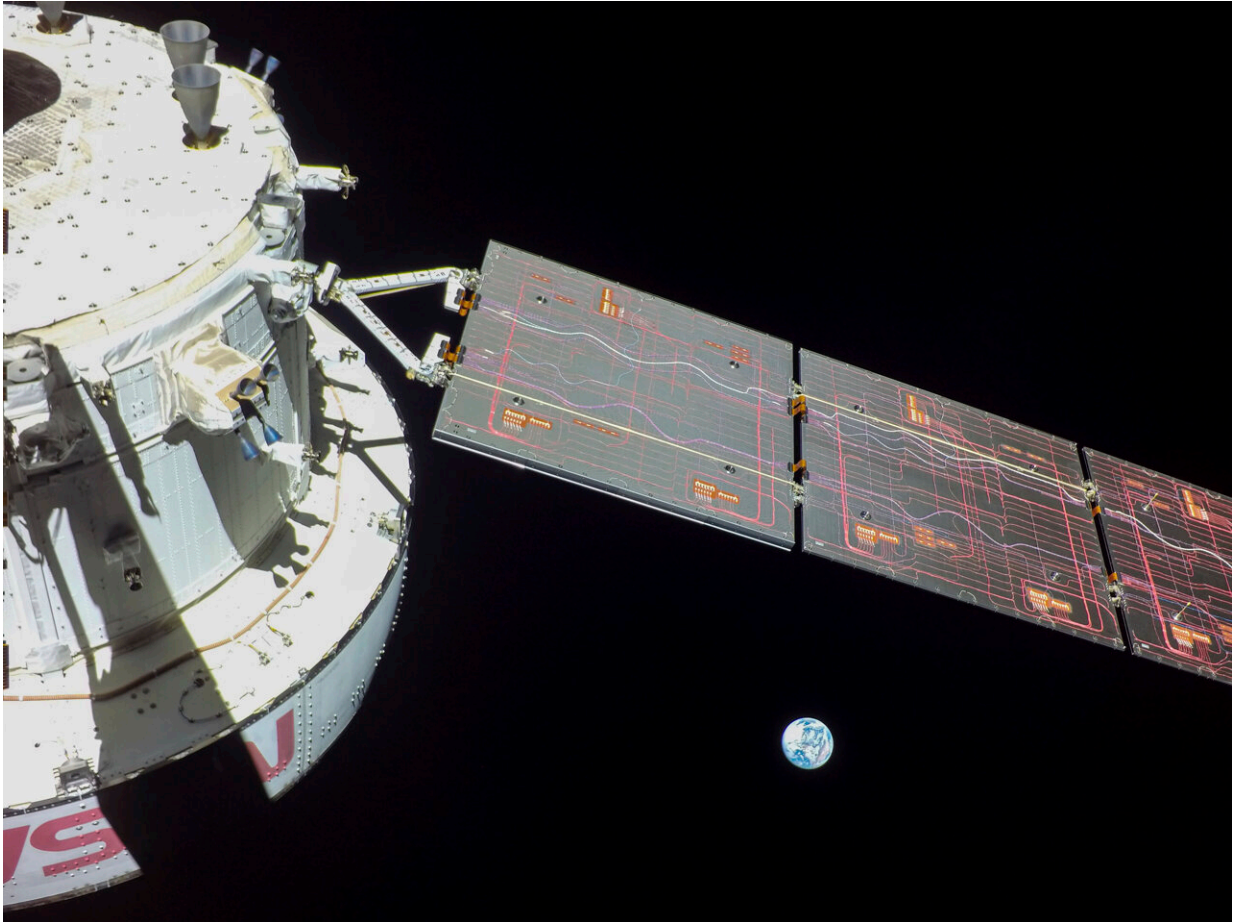
NASA's Orion capsule entered an orbit stretching tens of thousands of miles around the moon Friday, as it neared the halfway mark of its test

flight.

The capsule and its three test dummies entered [lunar orbit](#) more than a week after launching on the [\\$4 billion demo](#) that's meant to pave the way for astronauts. It will remain in this broad but stable [orbit](#) for nearly a week, completing just half a lap before heading home.

As of Friday's engine firing, the capsule was 238,000 miles (380,000 kilometers) from Earth. It's expected to reach a maximum distance of almost 270,000 miles (432,000 kilometers) in a few days. That will set a new distance record for a capsule designed to carry people one day.

"It is a statistic, but it's symbolic for what it represents," Jim Geffre, an Orion manager, said in a NASA interview earlier in the week. "It's about challenging ourselves to go farther, stay longer and push beyond the limits of what we've previously explored."

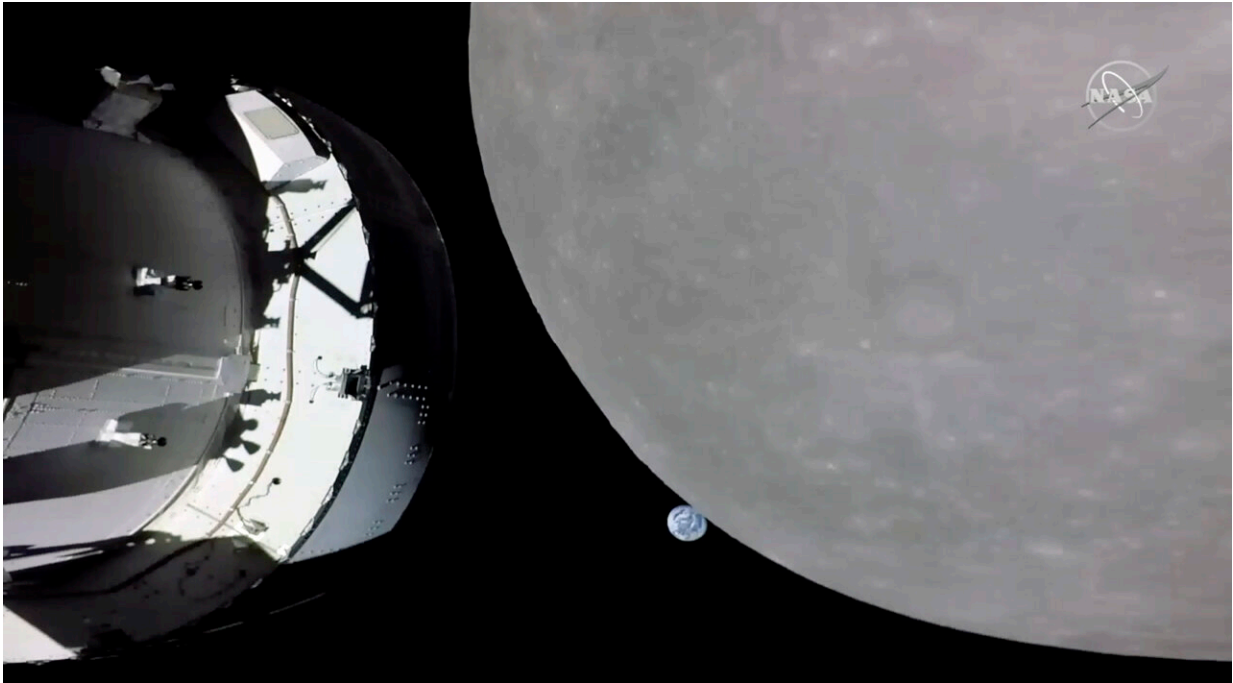


This image provided by NASA shows flight Day 9 imagery that NASA's Orion spacecraft captured looking back at the Earth from a camera mounted on one of its solar arrays. NASA's Orion capsule is now circling the moon in an orbit stretching tens of thousands of miles. The capsule and its three test dummies entered the far-flung orbit Friday, Nov. 25, 2022, more than a week after launching on the test flight. Credit: NASA via AP

NASA considers this a dress rehearsal for the next moon flyby in 2024, with astronauts. A lunar landing by astronauts could follow as soon as 2025. Astronauts last visited the moon 50 years ago during Apollo 17.

Earlier in the week, Mission Control in Houston lost contact with the

capsule for nearly an hour. At the time, controllers were adjusting the communication link between Orion and the Deep Space Network. Officials said the spacecraft remained healthy.



This screengrab from NASA TV shows NASA's Orion capsule, left, nearing the moon, right, Monday, Nov. 21, 2022. At center is earth. Credit: NASA via AP

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