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Front Cover After logging over 1,000hr in five years on "Flight" assignments, this Beechcraft Baron has been re-registered in the name of the International Publishing Corporation for a still wider range of duties, including work for "Daily Mirror," "Autocar" and other IPC publications. Its growing utilisation indicates IPC's appre-ciation of the value of business aviation— a theme underlined at the aviation show sponsored by "Flight" at Cranfield this week

Man on the Moon

The greatest scientific and technical task ever undertaken by Homo Sapiens reached its climax at 0256hr GMT last Monday when Neil Armstrong climbed out of his spacecraft to stand, for the first time, on another heavenly body. At a distance of a quarter of a million miles nationalities blurred and the astronauts became representatives of man's ingenuity and intellect.
At the summit of a pyramid of 400,000 men and women of all disci-plines in 20,000 industrial firms and centres of learning, labouring for eight years and absorbing an appreciable fraction of the resources of the world's richest nation, the three men were seen, on their journey to the Moon, by hundreds of millions of television viewers. As we watched our screens from the comfort of our armchairs, the moment approached. The first astro-naut climbed down the ladder, paused, and stepped on to the Moon. In this supreme moment was man's historic dream fulfilled. Even then we were aware of how crude these first attempts are, dimly perceiving the future in a way which was not possible to an observer at Kitty Hawk 66 years ago, even to a reader of Jules Verne.

The voyage had all the ingredients of a good adventure story: the domestic separation, the countdown, the moment of tension as the 3,000-ton rocket climbed into the Florida sky. And could there have been a better hero? Neil Armstrong, dedicated to aviation from the earliest age, pro-gressing from model aircraft to combat over Korea, later to fly the glamorous X-15, the world's fastest aircraft. An outstanding man to spearhead the greatest enterprise of all time. A quickening interest was provided by

the Russian dark-horse Luna 15 which, it was widely predicted, was to perform an unmanned landing and return with the first sample of Moon soil.

To Dr Wernher.von Braun the flight
of Apollo 11 is the summit of a life-time's work in the development of rockets. The expertise of this German engineer was only too evident to Londoners 25 years ago. Since the wa von Braun struggled to get his schemes for giant rockets accepted, often in the face of indifference and US Service rivalry. But he won through; the Saturn V rocket, possibly the largest which America will ever build, is a tribute to his skill and tenacity.

General Samuel Phillips, as Apollo Programme Director, had the fre-quently unenviable task of steering this expensive (and hence controversial) project. In such an ambitious pro-ject, initiated at a time when only one American manned flight (sub-orbital at that) had taken place, there would have been every excuse, in the face of tremendous technical difficul-ties, for a slippage in the programme. Early in 1967 the disastrous fire which killed three astronauts caused a 19-month delay. The critics were voci-ferous; even NASA doubted that a manned landing on the Moon would be possible by 1970. But Gen Philips trampled down all the difficulties and got the programme back on schedule

Finally a tribute to the man whose vision Apollo was: President John F. Kennedy. His oration to Congress on
May 25, 1961, not minimising the diffi-
culties but emphasising the challenge,
inspired the American people in the
most expensive and difficult task ever
undertaken.

One other toast is due—to aviation. This greatest achievement of the human species is an aviation achievement. When we talk about Man's awesome technological progress we are nearly always talking about aviation.
The defiance of gravity, and the high intellect and physical skill and courage always in-volved in pioneering better ways of defying it, have produced an industry which in all its forms—civil aviation, defence and space—is now the world's biggest in terms of annual value.
The personal disciplines involved were those of aviation too. Man's first words on the Moon's surface were from the technical check list which, in principle if not in content, even the humblest light-aircraft pilot shares with Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins.
To these three exceptional pilots "Flight" offers its congratulations and good wishes for
a safe return today to the old familiar gravity of which their historic flight has been the ultimate defiance.
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