

# Artemis: Humans travel farthest from Earth

**New York:** The Artemis II astronauts have now ventured farther from Earth than anyone else in the history of humanity.

At 1.56pm Eastern time, their distance from Earth passed 248,655 miles, the record that had been set by Apollo 13 in 1970. For the next few hours, they will travel farther, reaching a distance of 252,760 miles.

A little past midnight in India, Artemis II was now about 11,000 miles from the moon, or a bit farther than flying between New York and Los Angeles four times.

During this mission, the four astronauts have launched to space, tested life support and other important systems of their Orion spacecraft, tangled with the vehicle's toilet, puzzled over personal computing devices and left low-Earth orbit. They are the first humans to do so since 1972, although they will not land on the moon.

The three Americans and one Canadian aboard Artemis II are set on Monday to make even more history.

First, Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen will become the humans who have travelled farthest from Earth. They will surpass the astronauts of Apollo 13, whose

lunar mission went awry.

Later, the astronauts will pass behind the far side of the moon, seeing parts of the moon never observed with human eyes, gathering scientific data on what they spot. In the process, they will fall out of radio contact with Earth for about 41 minutes.

As the crew comes out of its scheduled communications blackout, they may have an opportunity to create a moment for a new generation as inspirational as the "Earthrise" of Nasa's Apollo 8 mission in 1968.

Wiseman, the Artemis II commander, said the crew's flight was "honouring the extraordinary efforts and feats of our predecessors in human space exploration. We will continue our journey even further into space before Mother Earth succeeds in pulling us back to everything that we hold dear. But we most importantly, choose this moment to challenge this generation and the next to make sure this record is not long lived."

After Artemis II passed the record, Jenni Gibbons in mission control said: "On April 15, 1970, during the Apollo 13 mission, three explorers set the record for the farthest distance humans have ever travelled from our home planet. At that time, over 55 years ago, Lovell

**HOUSTON, WE DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM!**



**In this fully illuminated view of the moon, the near side (the hemisphere we see from Earth) is visible on the right, identifiable by the dark splotches that cover its surface, as viewed by the crew of Artemis II inside the Orion spacecraft on Monday. (Nasa/Handout via Reuters)**

Swigert and Hayes flew 248,655 statute miles away from Earth. Today, for all humanity, you're pushing beyond that frontier."

## Crater after wife

The Artemis II astronauts called down to mission control requesting that a previously unnamed crater that straddles the near and far sides be

named Carroll, in memory of the wife of Wiseman. Carroll Wiseman, the mother of the commander's two daughters, died in 2020 of cancer.

It was an emotional moment for the crew. The voice of Hansen, the mission specialist on the flight, broke up as he made the request. The astronauts all embraced, and a mo-

ment of silence was observed in mission control in Houston.

"It's a bright spot on the moon, and we would like to call it Carroll," he said.

Moments earlier, the crew had requested that another crater be called Integrity, in honour of their spacecraft.

"Integrity and Carroll crater, loud and clear," the capcom said in response.

Earlier, the astronauts woke up to the voice of Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell, who recorded the message just two months before his death last August. "Welcome to my old neighbourhood," said Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 8, humanity's first lunar visit. "It's a historic day and I know how busy you'll be, but don't forget to enjoy the view."

They took up with them the Apollo 8 silk patch that accompanied Lovell to the moon, and showed it off as the crucial flyby approached. "It's just a real honour to have that on board with us," said Wiseman. "Let's go have a great day."

Artemis II is using the same manoeuvre that Apollo 13 did after its "Houston, we've had a problem" oxygen tank explosion wiped out any hope of a moon landing.

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