

## **Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator**

### **Armstrong Operations and Checkout Building Renaming**

### **Kennedy Space Center**

July 21, 2014

- Thank you, Bob. I want to echo Bob's thanks to all the members of the NASA family and the KSC community who are with us today.
- I want to begin my remarks by reminding us all why we are here on the Space Coast today.
- Forty-five years ago, NASA's journey to land the first humans on the moon began right here at Kennedy Space Center.
- NASA astronauts, beginning with the Mercury 7 and continuing through the Gemini and Apollo years, blasted off from these storied shores. For 30 years, the unprecedented success of our Space Shuttle program was made possible by the men and women of the Kennedy Space Center.
- So today, we have come home to commemorate what is arguably the most significant event in the history of human exploration – the Apollo 11 moon landing of July 20, 1969.

- We are fortunate to have with us, two of the members of that historic mission, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins as well as back-up commander, Jim Lovell and the late Neil Armstrong's sons, Mark and Rick who will help us mark this anniversary with the renaming of the Operations and Checkout Building for their father.
- As Bob Cabana explained, this building holds a special place in NASA history. It served as the crew quarters for generations of NASA astronauts, myself included, who spent the final days leading up to launch in this facility. Millions of people around the world have been riveted by those iconic pictures of astronauts in their flight suits, walking out of this building on their way to those daring missions.
- NASA's next giant leap into space is taking shape right here. The new *Orion* multi-purpose crew vehicle is being assembled and tested within these very walls in preparation for its first test flight later this year and its eventual use for human missions to an asteroid and Mars.
- It is altogether fitting that today we rename this facility the Neil Armstrong Operations and Checkout Building. Commander Armstrong was not only the first human to set foot on the moon. Throughout his life he served his country as an astronaut, aerospace engineer, naval aviator, test pilot, and university professor and he constantly challenged all of us to expand the boundaries of the possible.

- He, along with his crewmates, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins are a bridge from NASA's historic journey to the moon 45 years ago to our path to Mars today.
- At this time I would like to present to Bob Cabana a unique symbol of that bridge. In 1987, Neil, Buzz and Michael signed and presented a special patch that flew on their Apollo 11 mission to then-NASA Administrator, James C. Fletcher.
- Those of you who are familiar with NASA know that mission patches are common mementos and keepsakes that accompany just about every mission. But what is unique about this patch is its inscription that reads "To be presented to the Mars 1 crew."
- Twenty-seven years ago, the men who accomplished what many believed was impossible, were already imagining NASA's next giant leap -- a human mission to Mars...and they had no doubt we would succeed. Neither do we.
- We present this patch to Bob Cabana for safe keeping because it is here, at the Kennedy Space Center, where the Mars One crew will lift off on America's next bold mission, going farther in space than ever before. We salute Neil Armstrong and his crewmates for blazing a path that is leading us all the way from the first footprints on the moon to – very soon -- the first footprints on Mars.