

"First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

—President John F. Kennedy, May 25, 1961

On July 16, 1969 at 8:27 AM, Flight Director Cliff Charlesworth polled the flight controllers in the Houston Mission Operations Control Room asking for a final GO/NO-GO for the launch of Apollo 11. He ran through his list,

"BOOSTER, how are you?"

"We're GO, FLIGHT."

"EECOM?"

"GO, FLIGHT."

Finally he reached the fifth call out on his list,

"NETWORK, you got it all? Everything up?"

"That's affirmative, FLIGHT."

A twenty-eight year old Air Force Captain, a liberal arts graduate, a history major, sitting in a room full of bona fide rocket scientists, had just committed a worldwide network of tracking stations, ships, and aircraft to the successful completion of man's first attempt to land on an extraterrestrial body. I did that. To this day I find it hard to believe that I did that. I find it hard to believe that I was even in that room on that day!

How did I come to be there? What was it like to be there? Was I able to do my part to meet the President's challenge? BELOW TRANQUILITY BASE: An Apollo 11 Memoir is meant to answer those questions.



BELOW TRANQUILITY BASE RICHARD STACHURSKI

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