

PLAYMATES ON THE MOON

IT WAS TOUGH, LONELY WORK
FOR THE ASTRONAUTS OF APOLLO 12
IN THE OCEAN OF STORMS.
LUCKILY, THEY HAD COMPANY

BY D.C. AGLE

IT WAS November 19, 1969, just 25 years ago, and four months after Neil Armstrong had bobbed down his lunar ladder. Apollo 12 was racing around the moon with its crew, mission commander Charles "Pete" Conrad, command module pilot Dick Gordon and lunar module pilot Alan Bean. All on board were naval aviators, top pilots who had endured the gut-wrenching snap of an aircraft carrier catapult, and landed a hurtling machine on a heaving ship's deck. All, that is, except a couple of sneak companions. "I had no idea they were with us," states Conrad today. "It wasn't until we actually got out on the lunar surface and were well into our first moon walk that I found them."

He is speaking of Miss September and Miss October 1967, reprised in the 1970 Playmate Calendar.

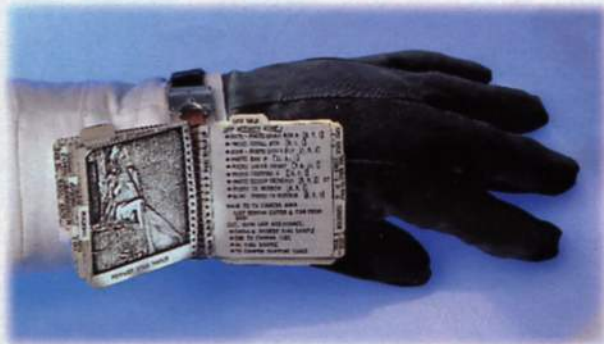
While Gordon orbited in Yankee Clipper 60 miles above the surface of the moon, Conrad and Bean moved gingerly in their bulky space suits over the Ocean of Storms. Bending to pick up rock samples. Flipping their cuff checklists for the next instruction. Setting up the solar wind spectrometer. Checking the list. Securing the seismometer. Checking the list. And . . . whoa!

Tossing her head and smiling was the stunning bare-breasted Angela Dorian, with the caption, "Seen any interesting hills and valleys?"

"It was about two and a half hours into the extravehicular activity," says Bean. "I flipped the page over and there she was. I hopped over to where Pete was and showed him mine, and he showed me his."

Conrad had been joined by the charming and equally nude Reagan Wilson, her hair tousled, reclining against a bale of hay with the caption, "Preferred Tether Partner."

Just how did these lunar lovelies get by NASA? Easily. "It



Off the cuff: Pete Conrad's things-to-do list from Apollo 12. A NASA prankster surprised him with Miss October 1967 as Conrad plodded the desolate moonscape.

fold off the newsstand. Then we had to get it printed on fire-proof plastic-coated paper."

Unfortunately, Scott and his merry NASA pranksters didn't get to enjoy publicly the fruits of their labors.

"We didn't say anything on the air," says Bean. "We thought some people back on earth might become upset if they found out we had PLAYBOY Playmates in our checklists. They would have said, 'This is where our tax money is going?'"

But the lunar explorers were, after all, human. "We giggled and laughed so much," confesses Conrad, "that people accused us of being drunk or having 'space rapture.'"

After completing their next extravehicular activity, Conrad and Bean rocketed off to dock with Yankee Clipper as the command module was making its 31st revolution around the moon. Then they crawled through the hatch with their moon mementos to rejoin Gordon.

"When we got back to earth," remembers Bean, "Conrad put the photo on restricted access. He didn't let them distribute it like he did the rest of the photos. He didn't want it to get out to the press."

The Playmates were eventually forgotten. It was not until long afterward, in fact, that (concluded on page 213)

was part of the game," says Conrad. "Guys doing joke things. It probably goes back to Mercury. The pad leader, Guenter Wendt, always had some gag thing. So did the crews. I think Dave Scott was the first to think of doing something on the cuff checklist."

"It was a family thing," confirms Scott, backup commander for the Apollo 12 mission. "We spent a lot of time going through the checklist to see where we could insert something humorous. We got that center-

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Conrad happened to look closely at the photo he'd had framed of himself on the moon (below) with Bean reflected in his visor. "All of a sudden I looked at the cuff checklist on my left arm and I said, 'Holy Christmas, that's the Playmate of the Month sitting on my arm!'"

Today, Dick Gordon is involved in the preservation of space hardware. Alan Bean is an accomplished artist. And Pete Conrad is a vice president and flight



Conrad snapped by Bean (in visor) on the moon with cuff checklist and "fether partner" Reagan Wilson.

manager of the McDonnell Douglas DC-X program. Both Conrad and Bean, naturally, have kept their moon checklists. "We weren't supposed to bring anything back," says Conrad. "But they brought back stuff from previous flights and as time went on the guys started getting more aggressive. One astronaut actually took the hand controller right out of his lunar module. I brought back my cuff checklist from Apollo 12 for obvious reasons. The Playmates were a dear memento of the real world and the way it was."

And still is, guys.

