

FEATURE



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SPECIAL

MOON TOOLS

When Astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., mention MESA as they go about their chores during man's first visit to the Moon's surface they will not be talking about a table-like selenological formation.

They will be referring to a pallet located on their lunar-landing spacecraft. This Modularized Equipment Stowage Assembly (MESA) is located to the left of the ladder on which the Moon-exploring astronauts descend to the surface.

On the MESA will be carried fresh batteries and lithium hydroxide canisters for their life-support back-packs, a television camera which will transmit live pictures from the Moon to Earth, tools for gathering samples of the Moon and containers for returning these samples to Earth.

Appropriately enough, the MESA also contains a folding table on which the sample containers are placed for loading by the astronauts.

The tools include a hammer which will be used to drive a core-sampling tool into the lunar surface and scoop and tongs, each with an extension handle, for collecting soil and rock samples.

An equipment transfer bag, which looks like a laundry bag, also will be on the MESA to offer a handy place for the astronauts to place tools while they are not being used. The bag hangs on the edge of the table portion of the MESA.

The sample containers look like a fisherman's tackle box. They have seals to preserve the vacuum in which the samples are collected. One container will carry about 20 pounds of a bulk sample, lunar material scooped into a large bag. The second box will contain the 15 or so small bags of documented lunar samples and the core sample. Material in the second box will weigh about 30 pounds.