

The original documents are located in Box 12, “7/24/75 - Talking Points: Phone Call to Apollo Crew Members After Splashdown (Draft only)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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~~THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN~~

(Rousek/Orben)PT

July 24, 1975
SECOND DRAFT

TALKING POINTS: PHONE CALL TO APOLLO CREW MEMBERS
AFTER SPLASHDOWN, THURSDAY, JULY 24, 1975

1. Tom Stafford, Deke Slayton and Vance Brand -- Welcome home!
On behalf of the American people, congratulations and thanks for a successful and productive flight in space.
2. Your safe return marks the close of the Apollo program and you should be proud to have been part of it. Your particular flight also added a new dimension -- that of international cooperation.
3. The new docking system you tested offers a foundation on which to build future cooperative efforts, and in the next decade it will be a valuable tool for space rescues.
4. I know you will all be glad to get home. Your wives -- Faye, Marge and Joan -- are probably listening to this conversation. At least I hope so -- because I want them to know how proud we all are of their husbands.
5. Tom, I understand that as soon as you get checked out -- you're going to spend the next few days helping Vance with his Russian.
6. Since this was your 4th mission, Tom, I understand you have now spent more than 500 hours in space. How does this mission compare with your previous ones?

7. Deke, one of your colleagues told me you're at that inbetween age for an astronaut -- halfway between Tang and Geritol. How are you feeling right now: Is there hope for old-timers in space?

8. Deke, I've heard that you hope to fly in the Shuttle program when that becomes operational. Are you looking down the road to more missions?

9. Deke, I want you and Marge to know that my good wishes go also to your brother and his wife and I hope they have a rapid recovery from their auto accident on the night before the launching.

10. Vance, you brought the Apollo in. Tell me, are Tom and Deke backseat pilots?

11. Vance, what was the biggest challenge you encountered on this mission?

12. Your achievements -- all three of you -- are historic. And part of that history -- as you know so well -- was written by the recovery forces that have been ready at the time of each re-entry. Before I hang up, I want to extend my congratulations for an outstanding performance to Captain Ralph E. Neiger (NIE-JER), commanding officer of the USS New Orleans, and to his ship's company.

13. The New Orleans herself has an outstanding record. Her crew picked up the Apollo 14 crew in February, 1971, and was responsible for the safe recovery of both the Skylab 3 and Skylab 4 astronauts.

14. To all of you, your successful completion of this mission has opened a new area of international cooperation. I sincerely hope this first international manned flight will provide us all with an example to remember for many years to come.

END OF TEXT