At the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, NASA has taken another step in the journey to Mars.

On Feb. 1, the pressure vessel for an Orion spacecraft arrived at the Shuttle Landing Facility operated by Space Florida at Kennedy.

Late in 2018, this spacecraft will lift off atop NASA's Space Launch System rocket on the vehicle's maiden voyage.

Technicians with Lockheed Martin, Orion's prime contractor, completed the final welds on the spacecraft in mid-January at NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans.

After arrival at the Florida spaceport, Orion was unloaded from the Super Guppy wide-bodied cargo aircraft and transported to the spaceport's Neil Armstrong Operations and Checkout Building.

Inside the facility's high bay, technicians removed Orion from its shipping container.
to begin preliminary checkouts.

On Feb. 3, members of the news media were given an opportunity to see the new spacecraft and hear from Orion Program leaders.

This is our full-up Orion spacecraft on top of the SLS rocket, the most powerful rocket ever launched. This will be our test to wring out the vehicle to make sure it's safe to put humans on the very next flight. So we're very excited to start.

We're here today marking the delivery of the crew module for the Exploration Mission-1. This pressure vessel has been under construction for the past several months. Actually, for the last year and a half of so across the country in machine shops and welded in the Michoud Assembly Facility and on Monday delivered here by NASA's Super Guppy ready to start the rest of its integration.
and assembly.

(Narrator)
Over the coming months, Orion will be subjected to robust testing to ensure the structure is sound before other elements are added to the spacecraft in preparation for Exploration Mission-1, or EM-1.

The unpiloted first flight of the SLS will pave the way for future missions with astronauts traveling beyond low-Earth orbit for the first time since the Apollo era.

(Scott Wilson)
We're going to travel 40,000 miles beyond the moon, so the moon's 270,000 miles, 40,000 miles beyond that, it will be farther than any human capable spacecraft's gone ever.

(Narrator)
EM-1 will allow NASA to use the lunar vicinity as a proving ground to test Orion's technologies for successful trips into deep space, prior to sending astronauts on missions to an asteroid... and, eventually, continuing on NASA's
journey to Mars.

The best of the past going into the future.

I'm thrilled. This is an important step. But, seeing that actual object there and knowing that when it leaves, it's leaving Florida vertically. And I want to be here for that event. I can't wait for that to happen.