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Hanks Produces Show on Space Travel

From: **RSchatte** <RSchatte@aol.com>
Date: Thu, 5 Mar 1998 17:25:53 EST
Fwd Date: Sat, 07 Mar 1998 13:43:40 -0500
Subject: Hanks Produces Show on Space Travel

Hanks Produces Show on Space Travel

.c The Associated Press

By SARAH WYATT

WASHINGTON (AP) - Tom Hanks wants to create astronauts.

While many American kids seem bent on becoming rock stars and video directors, Hanks hopes his miniseries about the Apollo missions will ``inspire a new generation of space travelers'' who were too young to remember the birth of the American space program.

After portraying Capt. James Lovell in ``Apollo 13,'' Hanks returns to the subject of space exploration as executive producer of ``From the Earth to the Moon,'' an HBO 12-part miniseries.

At a National Press Club luncheon to preview the series, Hanks related his awe at watching ``live television footage of the Earth ... from 200,000 miles away,'' an experience that ``blew my 13-year-old mind.''

``This is the future we dreamed of when I was a kid,'' Hanks said, adding that some people still don't appreciate the Apollo mission or ``the footprints in the lunar dust that will never ever go away.''

The series depicts all of the Apollo flights, with an emphasis on the historical conditions that drove the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Astronauts from the Apollo missions agree that circumstances were ripe for the momentum in space travel during that decade, citing the Cold War, economic prosperity and a president who was willing to take risks, but say that it is still early in the age of space exploration.

``This is like Columbus just returned to Spain and the world is not flat after all; it's round,'' said Col. Dave Scott, commander of Apollo 15 and a technical adviser for the series. ``As time goes on, if we continue to stimulate young people, inspire them to look forward and look outward, then eventually mankind will go back to the moon and go on to Mars.''

For his part, Hanks said he can think of no reason why NASA would want him on a shuttle mission, but volunteered his talents as a cameraman or as someone who could ``make people laugh at

lunchtime as we're all sitting around the table'' in the space shuttle.

``From the Earth to the Moon'' debuts Sunday.

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