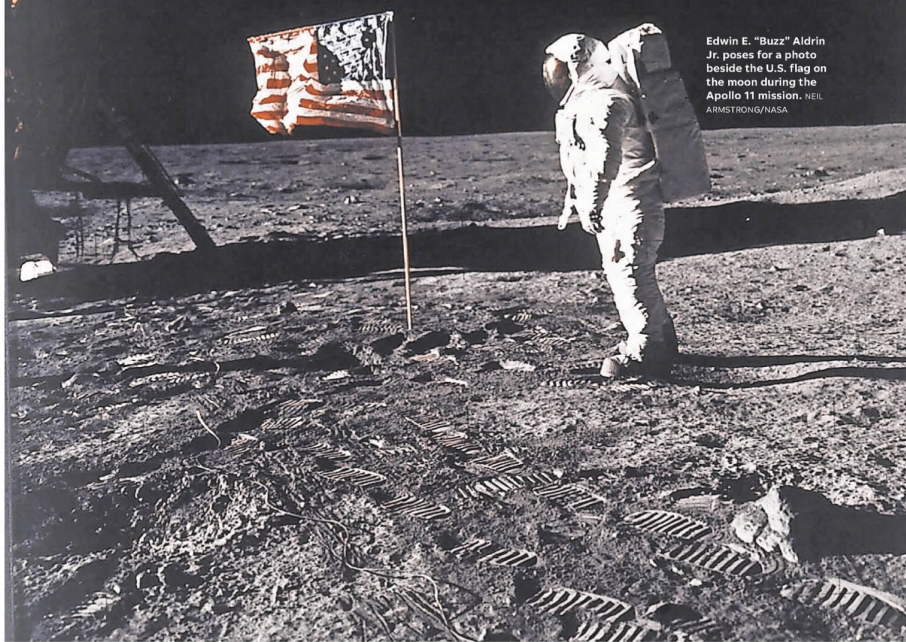


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Vermont

VERMONT'S MOON TIES

Industrial company played key role in Apollo 11 moon mission



Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. poses for a photo beside the U.S. flag on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission. NEIL ARMSTRONG/NASA



Dominique St. Pierre, 74, a retired engineer who worked on the Apollo space program from 1965-1971 with Simmonds Precision in Vergennes, describes his work on June 15. JOEL BANNER BAIRD/FREE PRESS

"To this day, 50 years later, it's still viewed as the greatest technological achievement of mankind."

Dominique St. Pierre
Engineer at Simmonds Precision

Joel Banner Baird Burlington Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

Something clicked when Dominique St. Pierre heard President John F. Kennedy declare, in 1962, that the U.S. would land men on the moon by the end of the decade. ■ "It was gutsy," St. Pierre, now 74, remembers. ■ JFK's challenge prompted St. Pierre, then an 18-year-old in St. Albans, to hone his engineering skills at Vermont Technical College, sign on with Simmonds Precision in Vergennes in 1965 — and help design and build a fuel system for the Apollo moon mission. ■ Three years later, the first-ever astronauts to orbit the moon were measuring their craft's precious propellant with Vermont-made gauges, valves and meters. ■ His collaboration with more than 200 employees at Simmonds yielded a tool that performed flawlessly throughout the Apollo program, St. Pierre said.

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