



Apollo 14 Astronaut Alan Shepard (center)

This truly unique Space Pen reminds us of one of the most remarkable golf shots ever made! During the Apollo 14 Moon Mission in 1971 Alan Shepard spent 33 hours on the surface of the moon.

When ending his second and final moon walk on February 6, 1971, Alan Shepard was about to climb aboard the lunar landing ship, "Antares", to return to Earth when he caught the attention of monitors watching television at Mission Control in Houston. From one of his suit pockets he withdrew the head of a golf six iron and attached it to the long aluminum handle of a device he had used to collect small lunar rocks. He then reached into his pocket and held up a golf ball. "What's Alan up to?" controllers asked.

Shepard, an avid golfer on Earth, dropped the ball into the moon dust. He made a valiant effort to assume a normal two-handed stance to hit the ball – no way, in his bulky suit and in the one-sixth gravity of the moon. So he decided to try the first "out-of-this-world" golf shot with one hand. He swung awkwardly, spraying lunar dust and plopping the ball into a crater less than 100 feet away. "Looked like a slice to me", quipped his fellow moon-walker Ed Mitchell.

A determined Shepard dropped a second ball, slammed the makeshift six-iron squarely in the tiny white sphere, and sent it soaring against the perfect black of space in the weak lunar gravity. "Beautiful," Alan remarked. "There it goes! Miles and miles and miles!" No one knows for sure whether it traveled 200 yards, 400 yards or some spectacular distance beyond.

Satisfied, Shepard and Mitchell climbed aboard Antares, fired off their ascent engine and headed for home. Shepard had secretly arranged with NASA officials before the flight to attempt the shot. NASA agreed, but only if he did it at the end of the moon excursions and only if every other aspect of the mission was successful. Alan had an engineer craft the makeshift club, and he swung it into the history books!

Howard Benedict, Director of the Astronaut Hall of Fame.