



Forty years ago, one man made a bold leap onto the surface of the moon. It was a historic moment, one that I will never forget watching. But to be honest, I've never liked describing that immense success as simply a "bold leap."

When we talk about that venture with those words, we are maximizing the moment when Neil Armstrong embedded his boots on the lunar surface, but minimizing the countless hours, days, months and years that men and women on the ground put into making that bold leap happen.

It wasn't just one man's bold leap. It was thousands of Long Islanders who came to work every day to research, develop, engineer, assemble, weld, manufacture and program a machine to get those men on the surface so that the final leap could happen.

It was Bill Barto of Bay Shore and Ross Kershenbaum of Farmingdale. It was Al Contessa and Saul Ferdman and Susan Raizer and Pete Neglia. Today I had the honor of joining the veterans of the Space Race to honor the anniversary of their success.

NASA didn't land a man on the moon. Long Islanders did.

We did this because Americans never take "no" for an answer. And it's time to rediscover that quality in America.

On October 4, 1957 when the Russians launched Sputnik, Americans didn't concede the Space Race, we reinvigorated it.



In 1961, President Kennedy declared, “We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.”

Building a lunar landing module tested the best of the abilities and skills of the men and women working for Grumman on Long Island. And now we need to use our skills and abilities to do something that great again.

We don’t need to build another lunar landing module, but we do need to build a hydrogen fuel vehicle to get from Route 110 to Queens without guzzling gallons of foreign oil.

Not because this is easy, but because it is hard. And not just to honor our past, but to create a new future for America.