Twitter Thread by Harry Stranger



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[Thread] Mobile Launch Platforms are some of my favourite pieces of ground support equipment, so here's a closer look at the Saturn V MLPs with some images from the archive.

The first MLP began construction in July of 1963. The first image here is from late 1963 shows the construction areas just north of the VAB site for MLPs 1 & 2. The second image is a closer look at one of the MLPs in early 1964.

These two images from early 1964 show part of the mount mechanisms that would support the MLPs as they were constructed. Just the size of these alone starts to put things in to perspective!

As the first tower began to grow taller in May of 1964, the first Crawler Transporter (Image 3 and foreground of image 2) began to take shape.

A view of the launch platform itself as it was still being built in July of 1964. The launch platform covered an area close to half an acre.

The umbilical tower would stand 121.5m (without crane) above the launch platform. These images from July and August 1964. (Check out the cool landscape of all the other launch pads and facilities in the first image!)

The first MLP was topped out in September of 1964.

MLP 2 & 3 were finished in December 1964 and March 1965.
2nd image: "Hundreds of construction workers, community leaders, and NASA and contractor employees were present on April 14, 1965 for a ceremony marking off the "topping off" of the Vehicle Assembly Building."

Crawler Transporter 1 picking up MLP 3 in mid 1965.

At their time the three MLPs were the heaviest portable structures known. I'm not sure what holds this title today, but I'm sure it's impressive!

MLP 3 made its way to LC-39A in March of 1966 for testing which included a water deluge test which can be seen in the last image here.

Service (swing) arm 9 in the transfer aisle of the VAB before and after receiving the White Room. This arm would then be attached to MLP 1.
Images 23 May 1966.

In late May of 1966 a MLP rolled out to LC-39A with the Saturn 500F test vehicle to conduct fit checks before the real Saturn V would take the trip.

If you don't feel small yet, maybe this will change that... I think this *may* be from the rollout of Apollo 4.

The Apollo 4 stack making its way to the launch pad in November 1967.

There is so much more history to these amazing structures post Apollo, but that's for another day. So I'll leave you with this shot from the rollout of Apollo 16 with people for scale ■