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All about embedded systems engineering.

Heroes

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— Neil Armstrong

In my life, there have been many people who have had a positive influence on my life. This week, one of them passed away. While I have been fortunate enough to meet members of the Canadian astronaut corps, I've never met Neil Armstrong. In spite of this, he had a profound influence on my life. An engineer, test pilot, astronaut, explorer and pioneer; he led the way in many fields. It was fitting that he was first human being to set foot on another heavenly body.

Still, there is a lot more to this story than just that. The Apollo space system was perhaps the first ever example of an embedded computer system. Who other than NASA would put two very expensive computers into a vehicle when only one would be recovered? The engineer in Neil would have appreciated that aspect. When training for and piloting the Lunar Module, quick action was twice required. The test pilot in Neil remained calm and did the right thing in time to save the day. Once on the moon, a carefully planned course of action led to the accumulation of valuable scientific samples in a short time. As a trained observer, he provided the eyes and hands of those who could not be there themselves. As a pioneer, he led the way into the unknown, facing terrible risks and danger.

Neil Armstrong was my childhood hero. He inspired me to work harder in school, to go beyond the lessons in my own studies, and to keep looking at life as the greatest, only opportunity anyone

could ever have. Mr Armstrong is gone now; but he will live on in my heart with the gratitude I feel for how he inspired me and thanks for the sacrifices he made to the benefit of mankind.
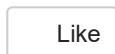
As always; your comments and thoughts are invited.

Peter Camilleri (aka Squidly Jones)

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