

Canada's Artemis 2 astronaut says his country is just getting started in lunar realms with his round-the-moon mission.

Jeremy Hansen was named Canada's representative on Artemis 2 on April 3, and within days the experienced test pilot found himself exploring new worlds as a result: speaking with Stephen Colbert, walking the red carpet at Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3, participating in an Indigenous vision quest, visiting policy-makers in Canada and the U.S., and carrying the flag at the coronation of Charles III.

After this work to connect with numerous communities touched by space, the Artemis 2 crew officially began training on May 15, studying the control systems and computers of the Orion spacecraft and other technical matters.

In a few months, however the training timeline "gets a little fuzzy" as this will be the first moon crew in a half-century. The crew is awaiting direction, as well as development of simulators and procedures, from senior management. "For developmental missions, that's to be expected," Hansen told Space.com in an exclusive interview.

But there are a few things Hansen is sure about for himself and his three crewmates, all NASA astronauts: commander Reid Wiseman, mission specialist Christina Koch, and pilot Victor Glover.

There will be geology training to prepare for looking at moon craters, potentially with Canadian crater expert Gordon Osinski — with whom Hansen recently discovered a rare Earth crater on a previous expedition. There also will be continued conversations with Canadian and American policy-makers to chart out the path after Artemis 2, Hansen emphasized.

"Eventually, you'll see us doing amazing science and deep space," Hansen said. "You'll see a Canadian walk on the moon someday, and eventually go to Mars, because we have that ability to do it in a way that brings benefits to Canadians."

The Canadian Space Agency (CSA) has suggested that Canada will have seats on Artemis 4 and 6, which are both planned moon-landing missions slated to run around the end of the decade.

CSA's director of space exploration development, Martin Bergeron, disclosed those early stage discussions at the Canadian Lunar Workshop in late May, according to SpaceQ. (The first landing mission, Artemis 3, may be in 2025 or 2026.)