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RELEASE NO: 64-316

**FOR RELEASE:** SUNDAY PM'S  
Dec. 20, 1964

MOON BLINK  
NET ORGANIZED  
FOR LUNAR STUDY

N65 14623

~~64-316~~  
Cat - 30  
CODE - 1

A moonwatch network has been organized by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to assist with development and operation of the "Moon Blink," an instrument designed to verify and locate color on the lunar surface.

When alerted by one of the stations, the watchers at scattered distant points will train their telescopes on the Moon to verify a sighting. Professional and amateur astronomers at some 35 stations are working with NASA to give volunteer assistance to the Moon Blink program. They are linked by long-distance telephone.

The instrument is being developed by NASA's Office of Advanced Research and Technology under contract with Trident Engineering Associates, Annapolis, Md. It consists essentially of rotating color disks which appear to blink when red color appears on the Moon.

A number of observers have reported reddish color spots on the Moon over a period of several years. Last October, the Moon Blink located a patch of reddish pink in the crater Alphonsus. The instrument was being tested by Lyle Johnson, an amateur astronomer at Port Tobacco, Md. Johnson's experiments are being continued as weather and Moon position permit.

About half of the astronomers in the network are amateurs and about half professionals, according to Winifred Cameron, Astronomer, Theoretical Division of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. Most of the East Coast observatories are cooperating.

As part of the development program, five of the experimental instruments have been distributed to outlying stations in Alabama, California, Kansas and Colorado. Five more may be added later. The Trident company is working under a \$60,000 contract with the NASA Headquarters' Electronics and Control Research Division.

The instrument is being developed for detection of unusual coloration on all types of bodies orbiting in space. Simple and relatively inexpensive in design, it is meant for use by professional and amateur astronomers.

Scientists generally believe that red color could mean that the lunar satellite is not a "dead" object. Some claim the unusual color signifies a source of gases and possibly of energy.

Any source of energy would be significant to the NASA lunar landing program. For this reason, and in the effort to learn as much as possible about the Moon's surface, engineers of the Apollo lunar landing program are interested in the moonwatch network.