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MARINER II SPACECRAFT AIDS FOR VENUS

Mariner II spacecraft was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on August 27, 1962, and is expected to pass within about 20,900 miles (33,440 kilometers) of Venus on or about December 14, 1962. Weighing 447 pounds (210 kilograms) including 41 pounds of scientific instruments, the craft stands 12 feet (3.6 meters) high and measures 16 1/2 feet (five meters) across its outstretched solar panels. Radio signals from Mariner are received at deep-space tracking stations near Goldstone, California; Johannesburg, South Africa, and Woomera, Australia. Data is then relayed to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology, which designed and built the spacecraft for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Before it was completely assembled, Mariner II spacecraft rested on a wheeled frame alongside the nose cone of its Agena-B launching rocket. A round radio antenna hangs down from the base of the craft. The two wing-like solar panels, folded up toward the top, contain 9,800 solar cells which collect energy from the sun and convert it into electricity to power the instruments.

(Photo No. 62-3351. Accompanies Feature P-62-367.)



SCIENCE - ARTIFICIAL SATELLITE - MARINER