

CAS 1979

MID-AIR CATCH OF DISCOVERER XVII CAPSULE — A U.S. Air Force C-119

plane makes a mid-air catch of the capsule ejected from the Discoverer XVII satellite high over the Pacific Ocean northeast of the Hawaiian Islands November 14. The trapping device extends from the rear of the plane and hooks onto the capsule's parachute. The 300-pound (136-kilogram) capsule had orbited the earth 31 times instead of the usual 17 before a signal from the ground started the re-entry sequence. The satellite, 25 feet long (7.6 meters) and weighing 2,100 pounds (950 kilograms), was blasted into a polar orbit November 12 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. This was the third capsule recovered from space in the Discoverer series. The capsule from No. 13 was fished from the Pacific and No. 14's was also caught in the air. The 15th capsule was sighted but was lost in stormy seas. Discoverer XVI failed to orbit when the second stage misfired. (60-20847)

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