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TITAN II BLAST-OFF -- Titan II, America's most powerful military rocket, blasts off the launching pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida March 16 to begin a highly successful initial flight. The three-ton instrumented nose cone, described as capable of carrying a nuclear payload with almost twice the punch of the earlier Atlas and Titan I ICBMs, landed right on target 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometers) down the Atlantic test range. Powered by revolutionary new storable liquid propellants which emit a rose-colored glow of hot gases instead of the usual trail of bright flame, the 105-ton weapon is designed to be launched from underground silos within minutes after an alarm is sounded. It is expected to be operational in mid-1963 at bases near Wichita, Kansas; Tucson, Arizona, and Little Rock, Arkansas. Titan II is also slated for use in the U.S. space program as the booster for the Gemini two-man space capsule. The first and second stage engines of the 103-foot (31-meter) vehicle generate over a half-million pounds (240,000 kilograms) of thrust. (62-1400)



MISSILES - TITAN