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MARINER IV

The Mariner spacecraft were designed to fly by Mars and Venus to supply data on the surfaces and atmospheric conditions and to search for signs of life.

On December 14, 1962, Mariner II flew past Venus at a distance of 21,648 miles, giving man his first relatively close up observation of the planet.

After passing Venus, Mariner II continued to transmit information to earth about atmospheric conditions in interplanetary space. Radio contact with the spacecraft was finally lost on January 3, 1963, when Mariner II was nearly 6 million miles beyond Venus and almost 54 million miles from earth. Mariner II demonstrated that reliable communications can be kept up over interplanetary surfaces.

On July 14, 1965, Mariner IV, the model seen on Platform B, flew by Mars approaching within 6,118 miles of the planet. The spacecraft televised 22 remarkably clear photos of Mars which revealed a heavily cratered surface similar to the moon's. Apparently, the visible surface is extremely old geologically. Also, neither a dense atmosphere or oceans seem to have been present on the planet since these craters were formed. After completing the TV picture playback, Mariner IV continued to transmit electronical data on interplanetary space and atmosphere. Mariner IV is now in permanent orbit around the sun and is still transmitting data to earth.