

Secret

11/5/87

[REDACTED]

This is a brief summary of the early
Discoverer / Corona Program. Note that
Discoverers I, II and III preceded the
launch of the first Corona payload.
Need more.

[REDACTED]

Declassified and Released by the N R O

In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997

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MSN	AGENA	LAUNCH/DAY/HR	RECOVERY/DAY/HR	REMARKS
9001	1023	25JUN59	N/A	83.6 AGENA FAILED TO ORBIT
9002	1029	13AUG59	NONE	83.6 NO RECOVERY
9003	1028	19AUG59	NONE	NO RECOVERY
9004	1091	07NOV59	N/A	79.9 NO REC INVERTER PRCP.
9005	1090	20NOV59/1925Z	NONE	80.6 ECCENTRIC ORBIT NO RECOVERY
9006	1092	04FEB60/1952Z	N/A	79.9 AGENA TUMBLD NO ORBIT
9007	1094	19FEB60/2015Z	N/A	79.9 RANGE SAFETY DESTROYED
9008	1095	15APR60/2013Z	NONE	80.4 SPIN ROCKET FAILED
9009	1096	19AUG60/1957Z	19AUG60	79.6 FIRST SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY
9010	1099	13SEP60/2214Z	NONE	80.9 CAPSULE SUNY
9011	1091	26OCT60/2026Z	N/A	81.8 AGENA FAILED SEP/1ST AGENA
9012	1092	12NOV60/2043Z	14NOV60	81.7 ONLY 1.7FT OF LEADER IN CAPS
9013	1103	07DEC60/2012Z	10DEC60	81.5 RECOVERED REV 48
9015	1105	30MARCH	N/A	81.7 AGENA FAILED TO ORBIT
9017	1107	16JUNE61	19JUNE61	81.8 RECOVERED REV 32
9019	1109	09JUL61	10JUL 1	RECOVERY REV 33
9021	1111	05AUG61	N/A	81.8 AGENA GUIDANCE FAILED
9023	1112	30AUG61	01SEP61	82.6 RECOVERY REV 32
9025	1113	12SEP61/1959Z	14SEP61	82.7 RECOVERY REV 33
9024	1114	17SEP61/2100Z	NONE	82.7 LOST POWER AND GAS
9025	1115	13OCT61/1123Z	14OCT61/2307Z	81.6 RECOVERED REV 18
9026	1116	03OCT61/2022Z	N/A	81.8 AGENA TUMBLD NO ORBIT
9027	1117	05NOV61/2001Z	NONE	82.5 EXTREME ORBIT 97 MIN. PER.

- 28 Feb 59 ~~DISCOVERER I-163-1022~~ successfully launched at 1349 hours from Vandenberg AFB.
- 2 Mar 59 Amendment No. 1 to ARPA Order 38-59 approved, subject to review, Phase I only of the MIDAS program and increased available funds under the order from [redacted] to [redacted]. Instructions were given to AFMD to submit plan for the procurement of ATLAS boosters and space vehicles for Phases II and III, long lead time items.
- 18 Mar 59 AFMD directed by AFAEF to hold the six boosters removed by ARPA in Amendment 1 to ARPA Order 48-59, (Program reduction from 19 to 13) on production, notify AF when funds for these six were required.
- 24 Mar 59 Amendment No. 2 to ARPA Order 48-59 approved the development and funding plan dated 30 January 1959 for the DISCOVERER Program. The approval provided for a 13-vehicle program.
- 3 Apr 59 Amendment No. 10 to ARPA Order 9-58 approved the AFMD SENTRY Development Plan of 30 January 1959 "to the extent it pertains to payload programs of visual readout visual recovery, and ferret readout".
- 10 Apr 59 Amendment No. 4 to ARPA Order 17-50 directed AFMD to modify the Bell-Bustler stage to obtain dual burning capability, simplify guidance and control, and structures to contain payloads of arbitrary shapes that may be carried; increase propellant capacity [redacted]. Deliver and launch at Pacific Missile Range two THOR-HUSTLER vehicles suitable for 215 pound TRANSIT #2 payload in 400 n.mi. circular orbit.
- 13 Apr 59 DISCOVERER II launched from Vandenberg AFB. Satellite orbited, but because of cumulative adjustment of the orbital ejection timer, the capsule was probably ejected in the Spitzbergen, Norway, area. An unsuccessful area search (terminated 22 April) was conducted.
- ~~16~~ Apr 59 By ARPA Order 38-59, ⁵⁹Amendment No. 3, Phase I of the MIDAS Development Plan (FY [redacted]) was approved. Program objective strongly reoriented to give priority to quantitative scientific and engineering data, with objective to predict success or failure of an operational alarm system, improvement and design.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1 May 59 AFBMD submitted DISCOVERER Development Plan dated 30 April to Mr. Malcolm A. MacIntyre, Under Secretary of the Air Force. Major change over earlier 1 January plan was addition of ten flights, making a total of 25 flights.
- 8 May 59 Mr. M. A. MacIntyre, Under Secretary of the Air Force, requested that the Secretary of Defense designate the Air Force as service responsible for operational employment and utilization of the MIDAS system.
- 18 May 59 AFBMD informed by AFDAT that WS 117L had been removed from Master Urgency List, and DISCOVERER and SENTRY put on it with DX ratings. Action was underway to obtain (from NSC or NASC) a DX rating for MIDAS. AF priority for all three programs remained as 1-A with 1-1 precedence.
- 20 May 59 Amendment No. 4, ARPA Order 48-59 approved DISCOVERER Development and Funding Plan dated 30 April 1959, on the 25-vehicle program. Funds were increased from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED].
- 20 May 59 Amendment No. 4 to ARPA Order 38-59 increased funds for MIDAS from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED].
- 26 May 59 ARPA directed that the mapping program be deleted from SENTRY. LMSD notified.
- 3 Jun 59 DISCOVERER III launched from Vandenberg AFB. Failed to achieve orbit because of less than nominal second stage performance and incorrect Pt. Migu radar data indicating firing time. Data was received on the four mice passengers.
- 24 Jun 59 AFBMD was informed that ARPA had laid down ground rules for the initial FY 1960 budget determination. These were: SENTRY [REDACTED] with SENTRY recovery program [REDACTED] to be deferred pending review; DISCOVERER [REDACTED] for extension and completion of the series; MIDAS [REDACTED] ARPA funds, with assumption Air Force will fund [REDACTED] when Phase II was approved. No increments to the above funds were available. AFBMD was to submit revised development plans based on the above instructions. Until FY 1960 appropriations word was received, funds would be on a monthly basis.
- 25 Jun 59 DISCOVERER IV launched from Vandenberg AFB on a Polar orbit. While the launch was successful, the vehicle failed to achieve orbit because of less than normal second stage performance.