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PEGASUS 2 REENTRY EXPECTED IN NOVEMBER

The Pegasus 2 spacecraft assembly, launched by NASA in 1965, is expected to reenter the Earth's atmosphere on or about Nov. 5, according to notification given NASA by the North American Air Defense Command.

The command compiles information on satellite payloads, rocket bodies and other orbiting pieces that could survive the friction and heat of reentry and impact on Earth.

Pegasus 2, launched May 25, 1965, was used to gather micrometeoroid data for use in the design of spacecraft.

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It was one of three such spacecraft, all launched in 1965. Pegasus 1 reentered Sept. 17, 1978, over Africa and Pegasus 3 reentered Aug. 4, 1969, over the Pacific Ocean.

The Pegasus 2 assembly weighs about 10,430 kilograms (23,000 pounds) and is 21 meters (70 feet) long. The spacecraft itself weighs about 1,450 kg (3,200 lb.). It is attached to the empty S-IV stage and the instrument unit of the Saturn I launch vehicle. None of the sections has any radioactive nuclear power sources or materials aboard.

It is estimated that approximately 9,705 kg (21,400 lb.) of orbital hardware will be destroyed by reentry heating. About 726 kg (1,600 lb.) may survive reentry in several pieces. Such a breakup of reentering spacecraft is normal and has not, in the history of space flight, resulted in personal or property damage on Earth. No surviving pieces of Pegasus 1 or 3 were found or recovered.

The predicted dispersion (footprint) of all pieces of surviving Pegasus 2 hardware is an area up to 200 kilometers (125 miles) wide and 3,500 km (2,175 mi.) long.

The global band overflown by the orbiting spacecraft extends 31.7 degrees north and south of the equator, an area that is three-fourths water.

Pegasus 2 is considerably smaller than the 70,300-kg (77.5-ton) Skylab space station that reentered July 11 in the Australia-Indian Ocean area. The area overflown by Pegasus also is markedly less than that of Skylab which ranged from 50 degrees south latitude to 50 degrees north latitude.

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