Explorer XVI, New Satellite, Whirls In Orbit

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new U.S. satellite whirls in orbit a few hundred miles above the earth today while Mariner 2 — still flashing signals — speeds millions of miles from earth toward eternal orbit around the sun.

But a third satellite, Relay, which was to take the place of the now silent Telstar, wasn't performing properly.

The new satellite, dubbed Explorer XVI, sped aloft Sunday from the Wallops Island, Va., test station of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Space agency officials said it reached an orbit varying from 466 to 733 miles above earth and its "telemetry and experiments appear to be operating satisfactorily."

MAIN mission of Explorer XVI is to find out more about what meteoroids — tiny bits of solid matter that whiz through space — do to space vehicles and solar cells.

Mariner 2, which took a 43-minute electronic look at Venus Friday, was still faithfully reporting Sunday as it headed into orbit around the sun. The U.S. spacecraft journeyed 1109 days through space to give earthbound scientists their closest contact with Venus.

Mariner 2 passed within 21,100 miles of Venus Friday. It was 650,000 miles beyond Venus and Continued on Page 15; Col. 1