

Testing of a communications satellite



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Description

Scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Langley Research Center complete the first inflation tests of a 135-foot rigidized, inflatable sphere in connection with the Echo II passive communications satellite program. The purpose of the test, which was conducted in the same dirigible hangar at Weeksville, North Carolina, where the 100-foot Echo I sphere was tested some months ago before it was launched into orbit, was to verify the structural strength of the newly designed sphere. The balloon was equipped with strain gauges and thermometers during the trial of inflation to destruction. Made of three-ply laminate, the sphere skin consists of two layers of .00017" aluminum foil with a layer cemented to each side of a .00035" Mylar plastic film. When folded and packed, the 500-pound sphere fits into a 40-inch metal container.

Date(s)

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