

Mars from Viking 1

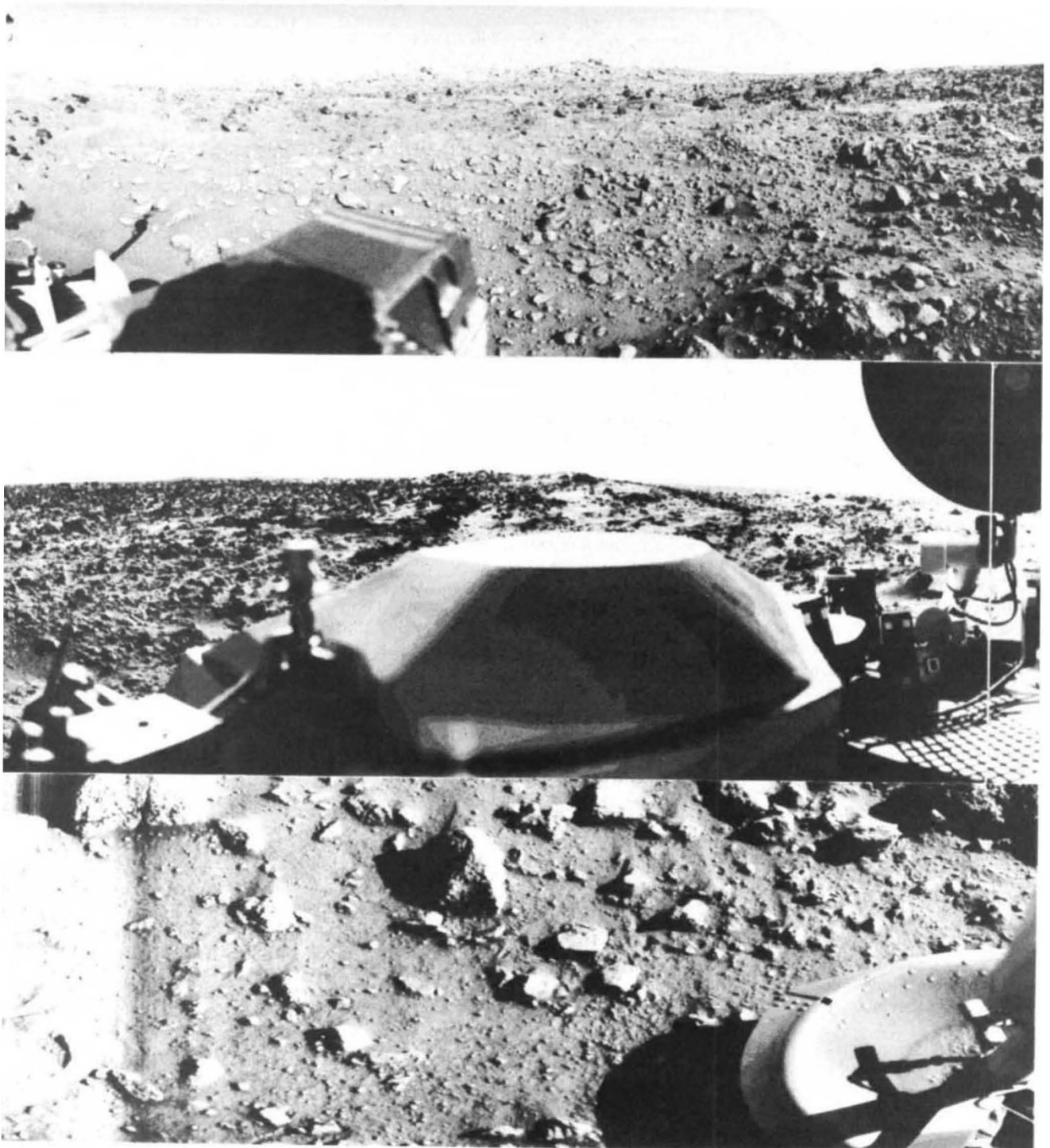


Photo: NASA

THE top two pictures provide the first panorama of the Martian landscape as seen from Viking 1, taken in the late Martian afternoon. A plateau can be seen on the horizon to the left of the top picture, approximately 3 kilometres (1.8 miles) away. The out-of-focus spacecraft component left of centre is the housing for the sample arm (which is now in full working order after becoming jammed when first tested). The centre photograph is the continuation to the right of the 300° panorama. At left is the low-gain antenna which receives commands from Earth. In the right foreground

are colour charts for lander camera calibration, a mirror for the Viking magnetic properties experiment and part of a grid on the top of the lander body. At upper right is the high-gain dish antenna for direct communication between the landed spacecraft and Earth. Toward the right edge is an array of smooth fine-grained material which shows some hint of ripple structure and may be the beginning of a large dune field off to the right of the picture.

The bottom picture, the first ever of the surface of Mars, was taken minutes after the spacecraft landed.