

Opportunity Presses On Toward Victoria

May 18 2006



NASA's Opportunity rover has driven about 200 more meters (656 feet) to put itself within about 1,100 meters (two-thirds of a mile) of Victoria Crater, its next destination on the Meridiani Planum. As of Martian sol 822, or 732 sols past its expected operational lifetime, the rover still has shown no major mechanical or technical difficulties.

Sol-by-sol summaries:

Sol 811 (May 6): Opportunity took a stereo microscopic image of a formation controllers have named Pecos River. During the communication-relay UHF pass with NASA's Mars Odyssey orbiter, the rover used its miniature thermal emission spectrometer on a target called Horsehead. In the morning, the panoramic camera took images of Horsehead and Chadbourne with all 13 of its filters.

Sol 812: The rover's miniature thermal emission spectrometer observed sky and ground targets. The panoramic camera checked dust on magnets and on the camera mast, and assessed the clarity of the atmosphere. Two afternoon UHF passes were used. The first was a UHF forward-link demonstration for the 2007 Phoenix Mars Lander mission, performed with Odyssey low in the sky.

Sol 813: Opportunity conducted a morning observation with the miniature thermal emission spectrometer during uplink of the day's commands, then took a pre-drive, 13-filter image of the work volume with the panoramic camera. The rover drove backwards for one hour, covering 40.14 meters (132 feet), and took post-drive images.

Sol 814: Opportunity drove for 1.5 hours and covered 52.38 meters (172 feet), then conducted post-drive imaging. The drive used both blind driving (following a route chosen by rover planners) and autonomous navigation.

Sol 815: The rover drove 1.5 hours blind for 45.61 meters (150 feet).

Sol 816: Opportunity stowed its robotic arm and drove 1.5 hours for 38.12 meters (125 feet). The rover then unstowed its arm and took post-drive images. During the Odyssey uplink, Opportunity was able to do a sky and ground observation with the miniature thermal emission spectrometer. The rover took a pre-sunset image with the panoramic camera after the Odyssey pass.

Sol 817 (May 12): The activity plan for this sol included a drive of about 22 meters (72 feet).

As of sol 816 (May 11), Opportunity's odometry totaled 7,769.52 meters (4.83 miles).

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