

US company's lunar lander will burn up in Earth's atmosphere after failed moonshot

January 15 2024, by Marcia Dunn



In this image from a mounted camera released by Astrobotic Technology, shows a section of insulation on the Peregrine lander. The U.S. company's lunar lander will soon burn up in Earth's atmosphere after a failed moonshot. Astrobotic Technology says its lander is now headed back from the vicinity of the moon. Company officials expect the mission to end Thursday. Credit: Astrobotic Technology via AP

A U.S. company's [lunar lander](#) will soon burn up in Earth's atmosphere

after a failed moonshot.

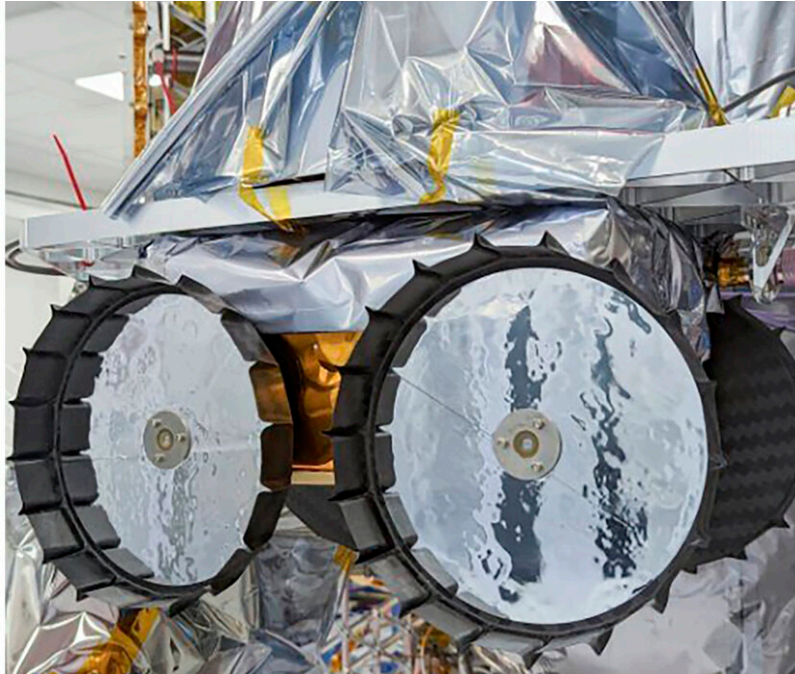
Astrobotic Technology said its lander is now headed back toward Earth from the vicinity of the moon. Company officials expect the mission to end Thursday. Astrobotic is working with NASA to track the lander's path and said it should pose no safety risk during its fiery reentry.

The lander, named Peregrine, rocketed from Cape Canaveral last Monday. It quickly developed a fuel leak that forced [Astrobotic to abandon its attempt](#) to make the first U.S. lunar landing in more than 50 years. The [company](#) suspects a stuck valve caused a tank to rupture.

Astrobotic said it has consulted with NASA and other [government officials](#) on how best to end the mission. The company said it does not want to endanger satellites around Earth or create a hazard for future spacecraft flying to the moon.

It was a "difficult decision," the company said in an online update late Sunday. "By responsibly ending Peregrine's mission, we are doing our part to preserve the future" of space exploration.

NASA paid more than \$100 million to fly experiments on the Peregrine lander. It's part of the space agency's bid to commercialize lunar deliveries by private businesses while the government works to get astronauts back to the moon.



This image provided by Astrobotic Technology shows the wheels of Carnegie Mellon University's lunar rover on board the Peregrine moon lander. The U.S. company's lunar lander will soon burn up in Earth's atmosphere after a failed moonshot. Astrobotic Technology says its lander is now headed back from the vicinity of the moon. Company officials expect the mission to end Thursday. Credit: Astrobotic Technology via AP

The lander also carried a rover from Carnegie Mellon University and other privately sponsored research, as well as the ashes and DNA from about 70 people, including "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry and science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke.

Another U.S. company, Intuitive Machines, is up next with its own lunar [lander](#) due to launch next month.

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