



NROL-129 Launch Press Kit



NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE



NROL-129

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) is proud to support its first dedicated launch out of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia, in partnership with NASA Wallops, Northrop Grumman, Virginia Space and the U.S. Space Force Space and Missile System Center.

The NROL-129 mission will carry four payloads designed, built and operated by the agency and will launch aboard a Northrop Grumman Minotaur IV rocket NET July 15, 2020 from Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport Pad OB. NROL-129 supports NRO's overall national security mission to provide intelligence data to United States' senior policy makers, the Intelligence Community and Department of Defense.

NROL-129 will be NRO's 54th launch since 1996 and its first launch on a Minotaur IV. The NRO's next launch from NASA Wallops Flight Facility is scheduled for 2nd Quarter CY2021, and the NRO looks forward to its continued collaboration with its launch partners on the Virginia Space Coast.

NRO Mission

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) is an Intelligence Community element and Department of Defense organization responsible for developing, acquiring, launching and operating America's reconnaissance satellites, as well as operating associated data processing facilities in support of national security. Using NRO data, the National Security Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and other NRO mission partners produce intelligence products for the President, Congress, national policymakers, warfighters, and civil users.

The NRO uses a variety of satellites to meet these mission needs – from small sats to

more traditional satellites. This approach allows the NRO to pursue a hybrid overhead architecture designed to provide global coverage against a wide range of intelligence requirements, carry out research and development efforts, and assist emergency and disaster relief efforts in the U.S. and around the world.



Mission Patches

The #NROL129 mission is represented by two launch patches featuring two warrior figures working together to defend our nation's interests and deny our enemies sanctuary. The patches include the phrase "Our Time has Come," which symbolizes that these payloads will enable the NRO's continued support to both defense and intelligence operations in support of national security.



Rocket & Launch Facts

Minotaur IV has four stages; the first three stages utilize government-furnished solid rocket motors from decommissioned Peacekeeper ICBMs. The commercial solid rocket upper stage is an Orion 38. Minotaur IV is capable of launching payloads up to 1,730 kg (3,814 lb.) to low Earth orbit; Minotaur IV made its maiden flight on 22 April 2010.

Northrop Grumman

To date, Northrop Grumman Minotaur rockets have completed 26 missions out of every major U.S. spaceport with 100% success. Under the U.S. Air Force Orbital/Suborbital Program-3 (OSP-3) contract, Northrop Grumman integrates, tests and provides space launch services for the Minotaur I, IV, V, VI and C family of rockets. The OSP-3 contract is managed by the Rocket Systems Launch Program, which is part of U.S. Space Force and Missile Systems Center (SMC). OSP-3 expands on OSP-2 by continuing to use excess ICBM motors, and includes potential Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle new entrant launch vehicles. The OSP-3 contract allows for an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity with a \$900M ceiling based on a firm fixed price service contract strategy.

Rocket Name:
Minotaur IV

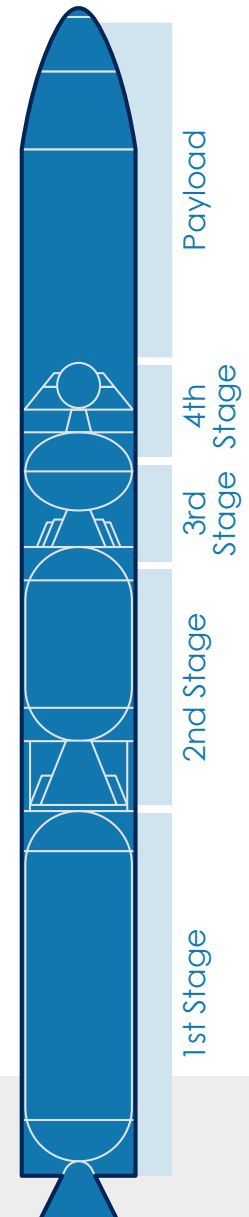
Fuel Type:
Solid

Height:
23.88m

Diameter:
2.34m

Launch Date:
NET July 15

Window Opens:
9 a.m. EDT





Site Info

NROL-129 will launch from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS) Launchpad OB. The MARS launch complex is located adjacent to NASA's Wallops Flight Facility

(WFF), in Wallops Island, Virginia. WFF previously ran the complex until 2003, and under a contract with the Commonwealth of Virginia continues to provide various support services to MARS launches. Today, the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia known as

'Virginia Space', owns and operates MARS. The MARS launch complex consists of three individual launch pads, LP-0A, LP-0B, and Launch Complex-2. LP-0B became operational in 1999, and was subsequently upgraded in 2003 with the construction of a mobile service tower completed in 2004.



LP-0B (left) and LP-0A (center, with the large water tower).



Recent Successes

The combination of commercial capabilities, technological advancements, and government-developed systems provides opportunities to expand the supplier base, improve performance, reduce cost, and enhance resiliency.

-Dr. Chris Scolese, Director, National Reconnaissance Office

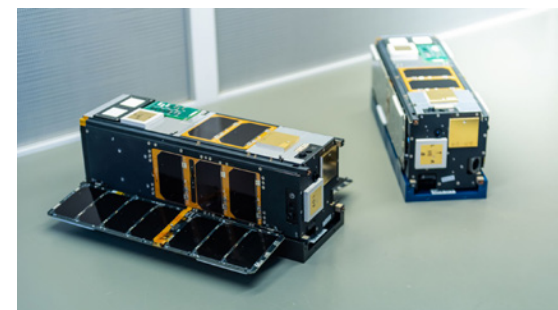
The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) recently collaborated with NASA, Northrop Grumman, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport in November 2019 to launch two NRO research and development CubeSats via rideshare as part of the

Northrop Grumman-12 (NG-12) Cygnus resupply mission to the International Space Station. The two CubeSats are part of the NRO's IMPACT program, which provides early evaluation of new technologies in space—together the CubeSats hosted 14 technology demonstrations ranging from materials to solar cells to star tracker experiments and on-board processors. After traveling to the ISS, the CubeSats later deployed to their final orbit for their intended research. Read more [here](#).

In January 2020, NRO collaborated with Rocket Lab and the New Zealand Space Agency to launch NROL-151, our first dedicated mission from New Zealand. NROL-151 was the first launch under the NRO's Rapid Acquisition of a Small Rocket (RASR) contract, announced in April 2018. RASR enables NRO to explore new opportunities for launching small satellites through a streamlined, commercial approach. This approach allows the NRO to pursue the use of both large and small satellites for an

integrated architecture designed to provide global coverage against a wide range of intelligence requirements. Read more [here](#).

In June 2020, NRO again collaborated with Rocket Lab to launch our second mission of 2020 aboard a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand. The launch, also procured under the RASR contract, was named "Don't Stop Me Now" by Rocket Lab and carried three payloads designed, built and operated by NRO, as well as two additional CubeSats - one for NASA and the other from the University of New South Wales, Canberra Space. Read more [here](#).



Two CubeSats from NRO's IMPACT program.



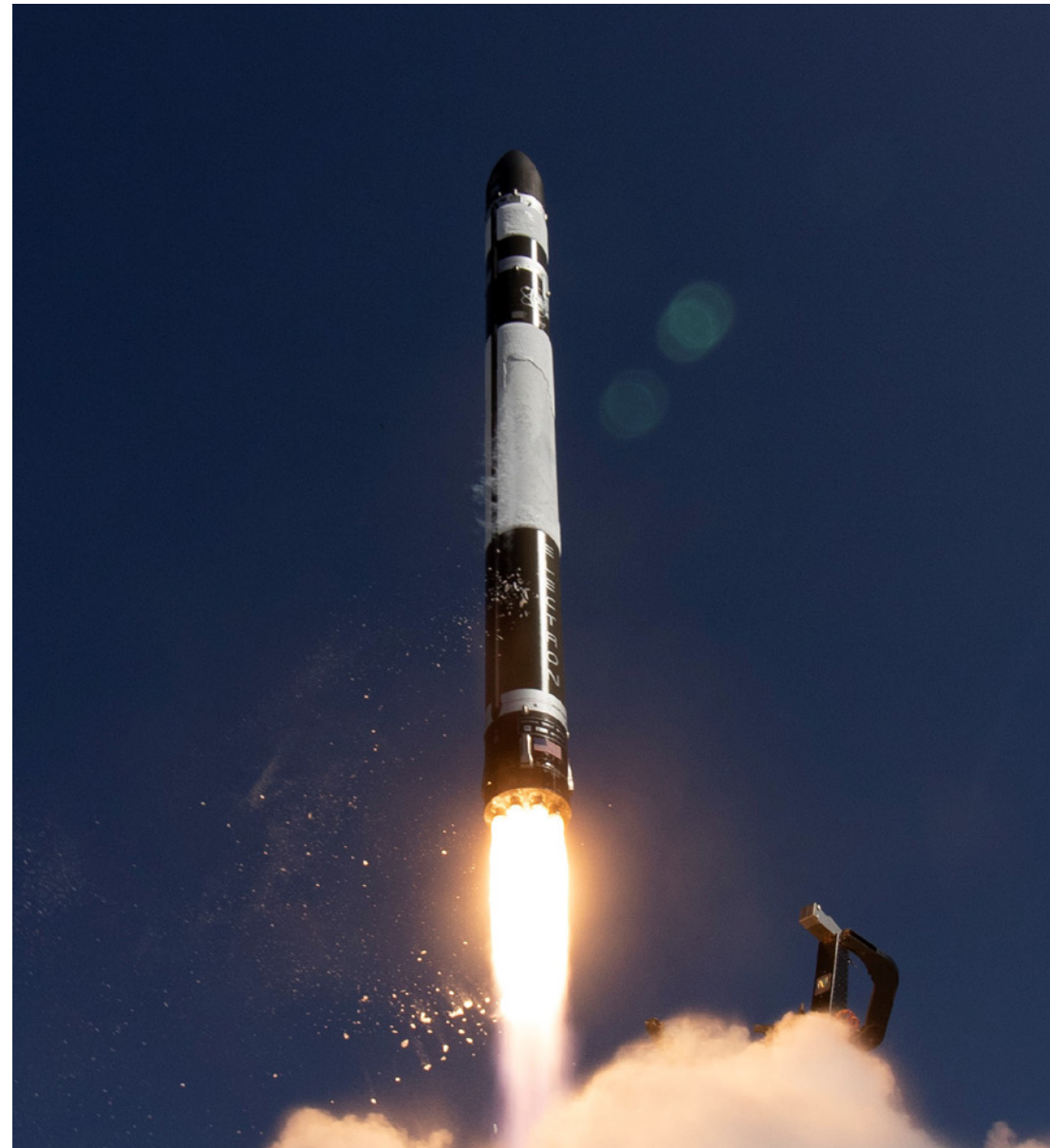
Future Launches

Upcoming Scheduled launches—

- NRO's next two scheduled launches are NROL-44 and NROL 101, both from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in 3rd Qtr of CY2020
- The next NRO launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base is scheduled for 4th Qtr CY2020
- The next launch from NASA Wallops is scheduled for 2nd Qtr CY2021
- The next launch from New Zealand is scheduled for 2nd Qtr CY2021

 **Watch Live! U-Stream on NASA's Youtube Channel [here](#)**

 **Follow @NatReconOfc on Twitter and Instagram on launch day**



NROL-151—NRO's first dedicated launch onboard a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, Jan. 31, 2020.