



National Reconnaissance Office Release

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NRO launches first dedicated launch from Wallops Island

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) successfully launched its first dedicated mission from NASA Wallops Flight Facility, Virginia, at 09:46 a.m. EDT on July 15, 2020.

The NROL-129 mission launched aboard a Northrop Grumman Minotaur IV rocket from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport's Pad 0B. This was the first Minotaur mission from Wallops since 2013.

"NROL-129 represents a collaboration between the NRO and our industry partners to design, build, launch and operate a system of satellites that will demonstrate revolutionary capabilities of value to the nation and our allies," said Dr. Chris Scolese, the agency's director. "Despite facing challenges in 2020, we have found new and better ways to collaborate with our partners from a distance, relentlessly pursuing our mission and denying sanctuary to our adversaries. I want to thank all of those involved across NASA, Northrop Grumman, Virginia Space, the Space and Missile Systems Center, and of course, the NRO for pulling together to make this launch a success."

This mission is the NRO's third launch of 2020 and carried four payloads designed, built and operated by the agency.

"The NRO is committed to providing resiliency in our operations through diversified launch options, and the success of NROL-129 is the culmination of years of steadfast collaboration with our civilian, military and commercial space partners to help us achieve that commitment," said U.S. Air Force Colonel Chad Davis, director of the NRO's Office of Space Launch. "We have a long record of developing, delivering, launching and operating the world's most advanced space collection systems and capabilities in support of national security, and we're happy to add our first dedicated launch from the Virginia Space Coast to that history."

The NRO's next launch, NROL-44, is currently scheduled for August 2020 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida.

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The NRO is the Intelligence Community element and a Department of Defense agency responsible for developing, acquiring, launching, and operating America's intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.