



# NEWS RELEASE

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SPACE & MISSILE SYSTEMS CENTER (AFMC)  
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### **Air Force Minuteman Set to be First Launch of New Millennium**

**LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.,** — For the first time ever, the Air Force will use a refurbished Minuteman II rocket motor combined with Pegasus XL upper stages to launch satellites into orbit Jan 14, expected to be the world's first space launch of the millennium. The famed Minuteman II rocket, deactivated as an offensive weapon system by Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 1991, was initially designed as an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles delivery system.

Liftoff from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., is set for 7:04 p.m. PST.

The Orbital Suborbital Program Space Launch Vehicle, a combination of rocket motors from the Minuteman II and Pegasus XL launch vehicles, is part of an Air Force effort to use surplus Minuteman II components for sub-orbital and orbital spacelift in support of U.S. Government requirements. This program is managed by the Space and Missile Systems Center Test and Evaluation Directorate located at Kirtland AFB, N.M.

The goal of this launch is to validate the OSP Space Launch Vehicle's spacelift capability. To determine the mission's success, SMC personnel will evaluate data measuring the successful separation of the payloads and detailing whether the payloads were deployed in the correct orbit.

Currently having more than 350 Minuteman II ICBMs in storage, SMC/TE is working with the vehicle contractor, Orbital Sciences Corporation, to demonstrate a reliable, economical and efficient way to put these missiles to good use.

The OSP Space Launch Vehicle can operate with two fairings allowing for the launch of oversized payloads. Using a multi-payload adapter, the vehicle is capable of launching several payloads of up to 750 lbs to a 400-nautical mile, sun-synchronous orbit. This is roughly 1.5 times the Pegasus XL capability.

The payloads for the upcoming launch are integrated to the Joint Air Force Academy Weber State University Satellite, or JAWSAT, multi-payload adapter. The four payloads are the U.S. Air Force Academy's FalconSat, Arizona State University's ASUSAT, Stanford University's OPAL satellite and the Air Force

Research Laboratory's Optical Calibration Sphere Experiment. Also attached to the multi-payload adapter are two experiments: NASA Marshall Space Flight Center's Plasma Experiment Satellite and Weber State University's Attitude Controlled Platform.

Originally set to launch Dec 7, launch officials discovered electrical problems during the mission dress rehearsal Dec 1. During this test, the C-BAND Transponder, a safety device that notifies operators on the ground that the rocket is still on its course, did not respond.

Officials had also discovered at that time that the Modular Avionics Control Hardware was not functioning properly. The MACH is a modular interface box, which controls telemetry, power transfer and ordnance commands.

After destacking the upper two stages, the Pegasus XL Orion 50 and Orion 38, and the fairing, the C-BAND transponder was replaced, and the cause of the MACH malfunction was corrected with software modifications.

The second OSP Space Launch Vehicle launch is scheduled for the spring, carrying the Air Force Research Laboratory's MightSat II.1 payload.

Spaceport Systems International is under contract to provide launch site and launch control facilities as well as range support for both launches. The launch set for Friday will be SSI's first launch.

The Space and Missile Systems Center, located at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif., is the center of technical excellence for developing and purchasing military space systems and manages more than \$56 billion in contracts. The center has an annual operating budget of more than \$5.5 billion and employs about 3,400 people worldwide. For more information, see SMC's web page at <http://www.laafb.af.mil>

Media interested in attending the launch should contact Lt. Tom Knowles at Vandenberg AFB Public Affairs at (805) 606-3595. The 30th Space Wing, located at Vandenberg AFB, will provide Range support for the launch. Range support includes, but is not limited to ensuring safe, reliable and timely launch operations in support of DoD and commercial launch operations, providing a full range of valuable weather services and control and operation of the Western Range for all spacelift and ballistic launches.

For more information about the payloads, visit the JAWSAT website at:

<http://cast.weber.edu/jawsat/jawsat.html>

TRW, the OSP Space Launch Vehicle systems engineering and technical assistance contractor for Space and Missile Systems Center, will be providing a live web-cast and satellite feed of the launch.

SATELLITE INFO: Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 5 to 11 p.m. EST / 2 to 8 p.m. PST Telstar 6C /11

Uplink Frequency: 6145

Downlink Frequency: 3920 / Vertical

Arc Position: 93 Degrees West

Those interested in viewing the webcast must first visit this site to register and receive a password:

<http://www.webcastingtv.com/jawsat/>