SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND
Media Release

SPACE SYSTEMS COMMAND
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Space Systems Command, United Launch Alliance prepare to launch U.S. Space Force (USSF)-51 mission for National Security Space Launch (NSSL) program

Summary: Launch will be last NSSL mission using Atlas V rocket as USSF continues its transition to the new Vulcan system and will mark the historic end of an era for National Security Space Launch program via the workhorse Atlas family of rockets dating back to 1957.

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. – The U.S. Space Force's (USSF) Space Systems Command (SSC) and United Launch Alliance (ULA) are preparing for USSF-51, a classified National Security Space Launch (NSSL) mission, with launch no earlier than 6:45 a.m. EDT (3:45 a.m. PDT) July 30, 2024, from Space Launch Complex (SLC) 41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station (CCSFS), Florida. It will be the last NSSL launch on at Atlas rocket.

The launch will be livestreamed at www.ulalaunch.com and other media websites approximately 30 minutes ahead of liftoff.

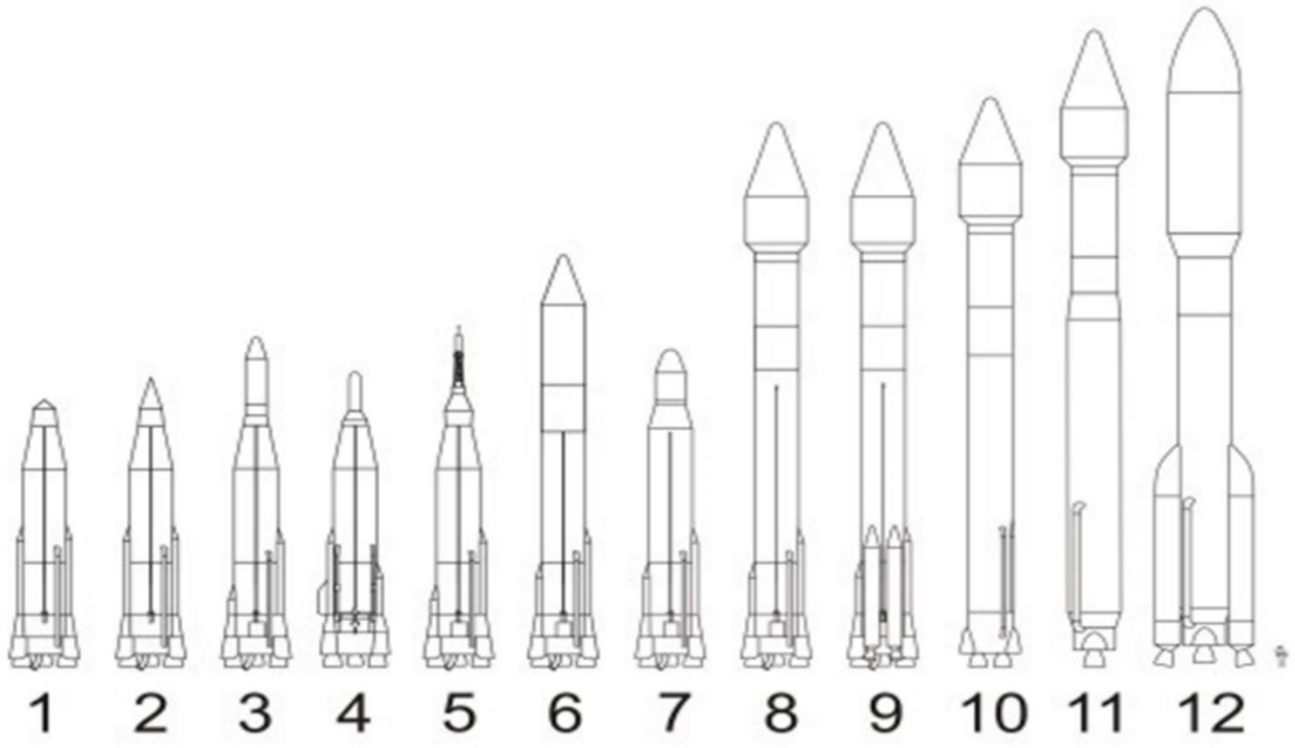
"The Space Force Atlas V team has an amazing record of serving our National Security Space lift needs," said USSF Col. Jim Horne, senior materiel leader for SSC's Launch Execution Delta. "We have always worked extremely well with this team, and this mission, our last launch with the Atlas V, is looking great!"

During its lifetime since 1957, the Atlas family has launched almost every category of space vehicle including military, government, and commercial weather, communications, and science satellites, experimental satellites, robotic probes for exploration, planetary orbiters and rovers, lunar explorers, space planes, two capsules carrying cargo and one with astronauts for the International Space Station (ISS), and one telescope. The Atlas V is the last major variant in the Atlas launch vehicle family. It was first used for the NSSL program on March 9, 2007, for the STP-1 mission and has since been tapped for 52 more NSSL-procured launches as the true workhorse for national security space missions, accounting for just over half of the program's total. This will be Atlas V's 53rd and final launch for the USSF. The launch vehicle also launched other national security missions for other agencies.

"The Atlas V launch system has been the stalwart for national security launches over the past 20 years," said Dr. Walt Lauderdale, USSF-51 mission director. "This mission, together with all those preceding, demonstrates the Atlas V integrated government/industry team's commitment to safely deliver critical assets to space. This NSSL partnership is a prime example demonstrating our resiliency and capacity to support national security objectives in a time of evolving Great Power competition. Whether it's a new launch system or one that is tried and tested for decades, we follow the same disciplined processes to produce a great result—pinpoint orbital insertion. These launch capabilities support our government, our men and women in harm's way and our allies too, in ways that can only be conducted from and through space."

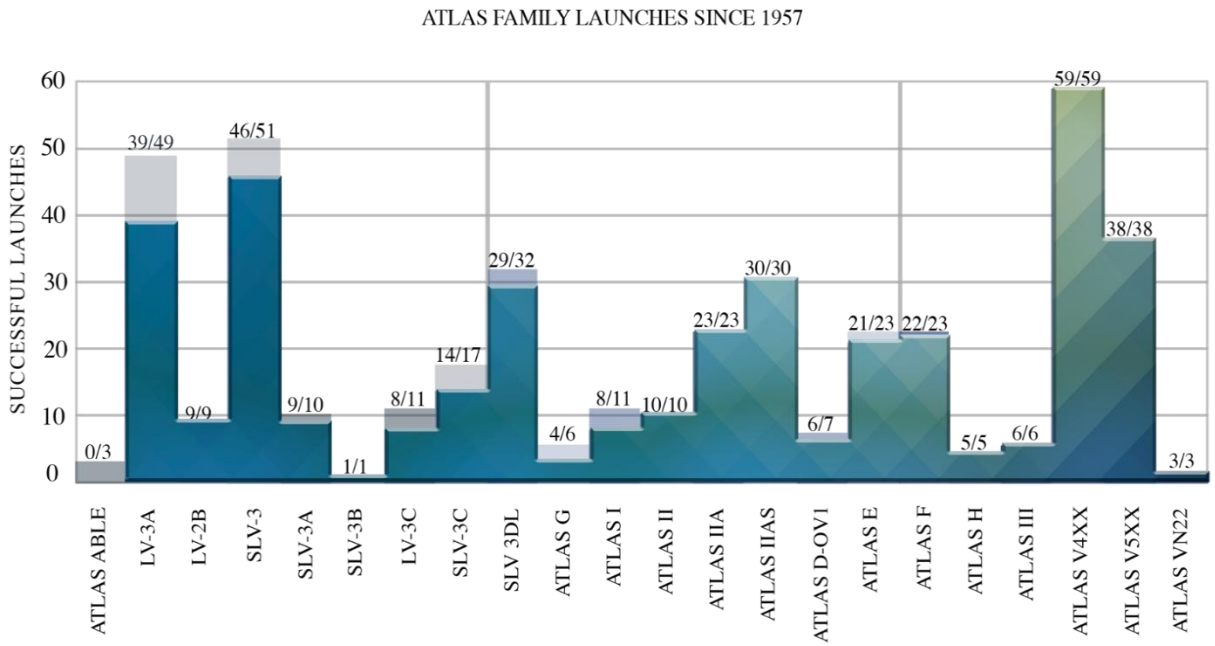
Although it's being retired from the NSSL program, an additional 15 commercial and non-defense missions, including crewed launches, are planned for the Atlas V. Additionally, NSSL anticipates employing the Vulcan system upon completion of the certification process.

The history of the Atlas family dates to 1957 with 682 total reported Atlas launches. The SM-65 Atlas was the first operational Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) developed by the U.S. and the first member of the Atlas family of large liquid-fueled rockets. It was built for the U.S. Air Force by the Convair Division of General Dynamics at an assembly plant located in Kearney Mesa, San Diego, CA. Development dates back to 1946 but over the next few years the project underwent several cancellations and re-starts. The missiles saw only brief ICBM service, and the last squadron was taken off operational alert in 1965.



1 B, 2 B Score, 3 Agena, 4 F, 5 Mercury, 6 Centaur, 7 H, 8 IIA, 9 IIAS, 10 IIIA, 11 V 4XX, 12 V 5XX

The Atlas-Agena and Atlas Centaur satellite launch vehicles were also derived directly from the original Atlas. The Atlas-Centaur evolved into the Atlas II, various models of which were launched 63 times between 1991 and 2004. The Atlas family skipped Atlas IV (honoring the legacy and contributions of the Titan IV rocket) and continued with the *Atlas V 4XX* and *5XX* configurations. The Atlas V was developed by **Lockheed** Martin as part of the U.S. Air Force's Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program. The inaugural Atlas V launch was on August 21, 2002. In 2006, operation was transferred to United Launch Alliance (ULA). The *Atlas V 4XX* launch vehicles have had 59/59 successful launches, the *5XX* have had 38/38, and *VN22* configuration has 3/3. Though this family of launch vehicles is nearing retirement, the contributions made by the Atlas family, and those team members that made it possible, will benefit generations to come.



As a tribute to the Atlas family history, the 2024 Cape Canaveral 10 Miler Medal to be held in December, has selected the Atlas ICBM for its medal and patch.

Within Space Systems Command, Assured Access to Space (AATS) delivers space mobility and logistics to secure our nation's interests in, from, and to space. AATS provides launch services to deploy the space-based capabilities needed by our Nation's warfighters, intelligence professionals, decisionmakers, allies, and partners. AATS operates and sustains the world's busiest spaceports, enabling National Security, civil, and commercial launches that bolster our Nation's defense, technological leadership, and economic security. Additionally, AATS is developing on-orbit servicing, mobility, and logistics capabilities to sustain space-based capabilities and expand traditional logistics into the space domain.

Space Systems Command is the U.S. Space Force's field command responsible for acquiring and delivering resilient war fighting capabilities to protect our nation's strategic advantage in, from, and to space. SSC manages a $15.6 billion space acquisition budget for the DoD and works in partnership with joint forces, industry, government agencies, and academic and allied organizations to accelerate innovation and outpace emerging threats. Our actions today are making the world a better space for tomorrow.

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Interested media representatives may submit questions regarding this topic by sending an e-mail to **sscpa.media@spaceforce.mil**