



Satellite vacuum testing

## To Boldly Go...

U.S. Space Command represents first new branch of the military established since 1947

**T**he Department of Defense has established the first new branch of the U.S. military since the formation of an independent U.S. Air Force in 1947: the U.S. Space Command.

United States Space Command (USSPACECOM) was formed August 29, 2019 as the newest of the 11 unified commands, with General John "Jay" Raymond as its first congressionally confirmed commander. "Establishing USSPACECOM was a critical step that underscores the importance of the space domain and its strategic contributions to U.S. national security," states the USSPACECOM public affairs officer, who requested anonymity. "The USSPACECOM establishment accelerated our space capabilities to address the rapidly



evolving threats to U.S. space assets, and the importance of deterring potential adversaries from putting critical U.S. space systems at risk.

According to the Commander's Narrative on the organization's website (<https://www.spacecom.mil/Narrative/>) and supplied by the public affairs office: "Today's complex global security environment presents challenges more significant than we've seen in many years. As highlighted in our National Defense Strategy (NDS), we are facing the 'reemergence of long-term, strategic competition characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order.' That formidable threat is particularly acute in the space domain, where for years we have enjoyed unfettered access to its advantages, having conquered every challenge we have faced there.

"Our singular focus will be on combat—how to develop, train, execute, and win," the commander declares. "That is what makes our mission qualitatively different from that of our predecessors. With allies and partners, USSPACECOM will protect and defend the space domain by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and when necessary, fighting to win. In short, we will implement our vision of one unified team with combat ready forces prepared to fight for and preserve United States and allied space superiority."

USSPACECOM is temporarily headquartered in Colorado Springs, with personnel and functions at Peterson Air Force Base and Schriever AFB, Colorado, Offutt AFB, Nebraska, and Vandenberg AFB, California. The final size of the

command will be determined through ongoing detailed manpower analysis.

USSPACECOM will partner with the U.S. space program under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). "USSPACECOM is the command authority responsible for conducting Human Space Flight Support Operations for today's crewed space flight missions," notes the public affairs officer. "The Department of Defense is partnering with NASA for recovery and retrieval operations to ensure crewed spacecraft can be safely recovered. The DoD supports operations by providing capsule tracking and airspace deconfliction via ground, aircraft, and ship-based radars. Further DoD support is provided by ship-launched Navy helicopters that will be airborne throughout the test to provide photo/video imagery and assist Navy swimmers and divers in recovery operations. Medical support will be provided aboard the rescue vessel to NASA personnel if needed. DoD support is also provided by the various military installations that provide personnel, offices, storage space, lodging, training and equipment. Some of these installations include Naval Base San Diego, NB Coronado, Offutt AFB, Vandenberg AFB, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Johnson Space Center and Patrick AFB. The DoD provides operational support resources requested by NASA and validated by the DoD Manager for Human Space Flight operations, U.S. Space Command."

USSPACECOM is the first combatant command to be solely focused on the space domain, with responsibility for everything 100 kilometers and outward. 

### SpaceX Falcon 9 CRS-18 rocket launch