

SPARTA/WRESAT

When WRESAT entered orbit on 29 November 1967 it made Australia only the fourth nation to have launched its own satellite from its own territory. It was largely a publicity stunt made possible by the national trait of scrounging.

In 1966 and 1967 American, British and Australian scientists conducted tests at Wommera on the characteristics of missiles re-entering the atmosphere. The project was called 'Special Anti-missile Research Tests, Australia', SPARTA for short. The tests used a special launcher comprising a Redstone first stage and two small upper stages. Ten SPARTA rockets were brought to Australia, nine for tests and one in reserve.

When it turned out that the tenth SPARTA would not be needed for the tests Australian scientists dreamed up the idea of using it to launch a satellite on the cheap. The Australian and American governments agreed, but it had to be done quickly. A satellite was designed and built by scientists at the Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) in about ten months. It was launched on 29 November 1967 and remained in orbit until 10 January 1968 after completing 642 orbits of the Earth.

This model represents SPARTA/WRESAT on the morning of 29 November 1967.

New Ware Space Kit Series 1/144 kit. Completed in March 2006.



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