

Space Image: Sputnik 1

October 5 2011

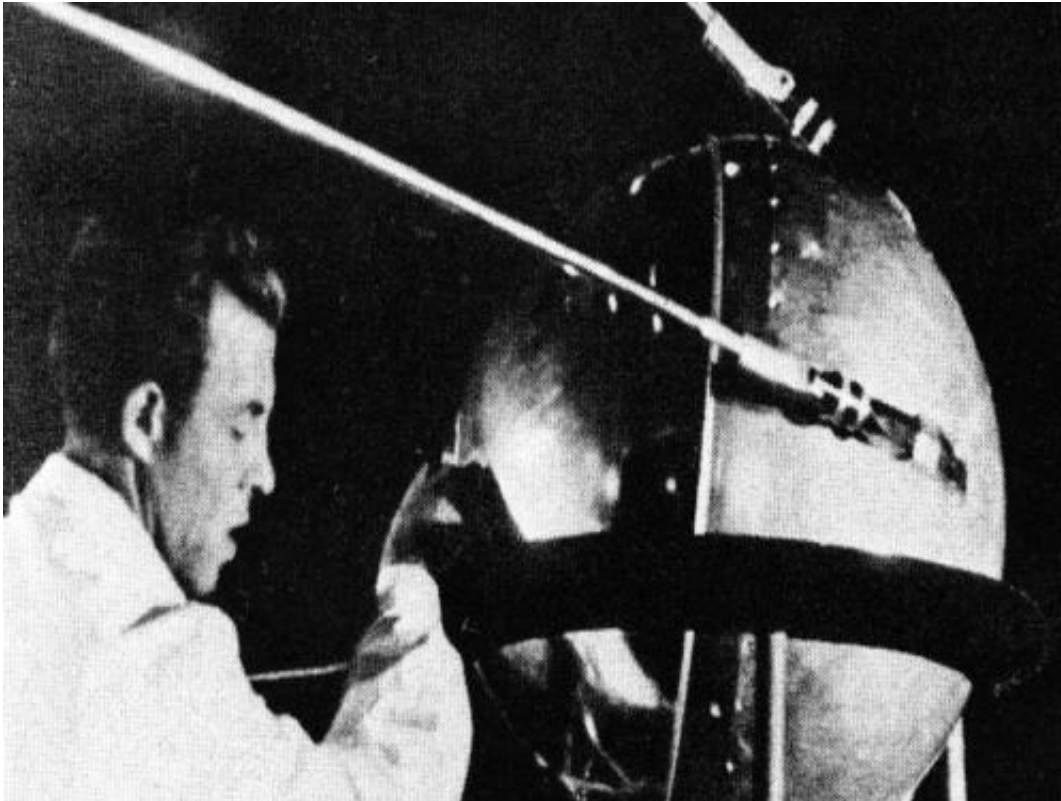


Image Credit: NASA/Asif A. Siddiqi

(PhysOrg.com) -- On Oct. 4, 1957, Sputnik 1 successfully launched and entered Earth's orbit. Thus, began the space age.

The successful [launch](#) shocked the world, giving the former Soviet Union the distinction of putting the first human-made object into space. The word 'Sputnik' originally meant 'fellow traveler,' but has become

synonymous with 'satellite' in modern Russian.

This historic image shows a technician putting the finishing touches on Sputnik 1, humanity's first artificial satellite. The pressurized sphere made of [aluminum alloy](#) had five primary scientific objectives: Test the method of placing an artificial satellite into [Earth orbit](#); provide information on the density of the atmosphere by calculating its lifetime in orbit; test radio and optical methods of orbital tracking; determine the effects of radio wave propagation through the atmosphere; and, check principles of pressurization used on the satellites.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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