

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Celebrates 80 Years with Free 2017 Calendar



{All photos courtesy NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's [Flickr account](#)}

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is a vital part of our space program. They are celebrating their 80th anniversary, and they want you to celebrate their history with them.

On October 31, 1936, the first rockets were tested by seven men, mostly grad students out of Caltech, who would go on to found JPL.



Helical beam antennas from 1951.

Sponsored by the U.S. Army and officially named in 1944 (almost 14 years prior to NASA's founding in July 1958), JPL was initially founded to develop rocket technology and missile systems in response to German V-2 rockets.

The connection between the space race and the Cold War is well documented, and JPL's first years are heavily steeped in that connection, and included building Explorer 1 in response to Sputnik. NASA's forming caused JPL to be transferred to this new agency, and the organization switched to focusing more on the payloads of the rockets, placing the lab at the center of the space race.

Unlike other government agencies, JPL is structured as a federally funded research agency, and so is staffed by Caltech employees rather than government employees.

As part of their 80th anniversary, JPL has released a free 2017 calendar you can download, filled with photos from both JPL and NASA, and including anniversaries and events. They also have an interactive timeline of JPL's biggest moments. You can access both of these, as well as more history of JPL, over on the **JPL website**. JPL has regular open houses, and I hope to attend one myself one day now that I'm in Los Angeles.

https://youtu.be/bYGiEg-nkIA?list=PLTiv_XWHnOZr1hhI3LTwma-ChrntY5iOF

*You can see more of Angie's work (and her social media connections) over at **[her website](#)**.*

[Follow @twitter](#)

[Follow @twitter](#)

