Rocket Lab Completes Spacecraft Commissioning for NASA's ESCAPADE Mars Mission

February 26, 2026

LONG BEACH, Calif., Feb. 26, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Rocket Lab USA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Rocket Lab Corporation (Nasdaq: RKLB) ("Rocket Lab" or "the Company"), a global leader in launch services and space systems, today announced the successful completion of commissioning for the twin Rocket Lab-built satellites for the University of California Berkeley Space Sciences Laboratory's (UCB-SSL) Escape and Plasma Acceleration and Dynamics Explorers (ESCAPADE) mission.

Rocket Lab Completes Spacecraft Commissioning for ESCAPADE Mars Mission



Rocket Lab Completes Spacecraft Commissioning for ESCAPADE Mars Mission

With both spacecraft now fully commissioned and successfully operating at the Earth–Sun Lagrange Point 2 (L2), Rocket Lab is preparing to hand over operational control to UCB-SSL, who will lead science operations at L2 and prepare the mission for its cruise to Mars.

Under contract from UCB-SSL, Rocket Lab was selected to design, build, and provide commissioning operations of the two high delta-V Explorer-class interplanetary spacecraft for ESCAPADE. Rocket Lab moved from concept to launch readiness in just over three years, proving commercial collaboration can deliver important science key to supporting future human and robotic exploration of Mars on ambitious schedules and for significantly smaller budgets than typical interplanetary missions. This speed was made possible through Rocket Lab's vertically integrated spacecraft production, with key components including solar arrays, reaction wheels, propellant tanks, star trackers, radios, avionics, and flight software designed and built in-house.

Launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in November 2025, the twin ESCAPADE spacecraft, known as Blue and Gold, completed spacecraft commissioning and executed two precise trajectory correction maneuvers, placing both spacecraft into their loiter trajectory near L2, approximately 1.5 million kilometers from Earth.

"ESCAPADE proves what's possible when government, university and commercial teams come together with ambition, drive, and determination to do things differently," said Rocket Lab Founder and CEO Sir Peter Beck. "Rocket Lab designed and built two Mars spacecraft on a timeline most would call impossible. We have established a long track record of relentless execution across launch, spacecraft development, and complex deep space missions. ESCAPADE is yet another example of the Rocket Lab team delivering mission success for NASA and our mission partners. With Blue and Gold now positioned for their cruise to Mars, we're laying the groundwork for NASA's long term objectives at Mars. The science ESCAPADE unlocks will be crucial to designing the infrastructure needed for a lasting human presence on the Red Planet, including a Mars Telecommunications Orbiter. This is just the beginning."

About ESCAPADE: The mission will study how the solar wind strips molecules from Mars' atmosphere offering insight into the planet's atmospheric escape history and space weather environment and informing future human exploration strategies. The ESCAPADE spacecraft will continue operating in proximity to Earth, near L2, until November 2026, allowing UCB-SSL to test its science instruments and collect early heliophysics data in the Earth's magnetotail, the elongated region of the magnetosphere stretched downstream by the solar wind.

In November 2026, both spacecraft will perform a gravity assist maneuver around Earth to slingshot toward Mars. Blue and Gold are scheduled to arrive at Mars in September 2027, with science operations expected to begin in 2028.

Rocket Lab Media Contact
media@rocketlabusa.com

+ About Rocket Lab

Rocket Lab is a leading space company that provides launch services, spacecraft, payloads and satellite components serving commercial, government, and national security markets. Rocket Lab's Electron rocket is the world's most frequently launched orbital small rocket; its HASTE rocket provides hypersonic test launch capability for the U.S. government and allied nations; and its Neutron launch vehicle in development will unlock medium launch for constellation deployment, national security and exploration missions. Rocket Lab's spacecraft and satellite components have enabled more than 1,700 missions spanning

commercial, defense and national security missions including GPS, constellations, and exploration missions to the Moon, Mars, and Venus. Rocket Lab is a publicly listed company on the Nasdaq stock exchange (RKLB). Learn more at www.rocketlabcorp.com.

+ Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. We intend such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward looking statements contained in Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act") and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"). All statements contained in this press release other than statements of historical fact, including, without limitation, statements regarding our launch and space systems operations, launch schedule and window, safe and repeatable access to space, Neutron development, operational expansion and business strategy are forward-looking statements. The words "believe," "may," "will," "estimate," "potential," "continue," "anticipate," "intend," "expect," "strategy," "future," "could," "would," "project," "plan," "target," and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, though not all forward-looking statements use these words or expressions. These statements are neither promises nor guarantees, but involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other important factors that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including but not limited to the factors, risks and uncertainties included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, as such factors may be updated from time to time in our other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), accessible on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov and the Investor Relations section of our website at www.rocketlabcorp.com, which could cause our actual results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements made in this press release. Any such forward-looking statements represent management's estimates as of the date of this press release. While we may elect to update such forward-looking statements at some point in the future, we disclaim any obligation to do so, even if subsequent events cause our views to change.

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/4ac9e4cd-db5c-4ba7-9f52-75d67ceafe9c