

DoD's LARGEST TELESCOPE GETS "FIRST LIGHT"

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MAUI, Hawaii (AFNS) – The Ring Nebula (M57), approximately one-half light-year in diameter – or 2.95 trillion miles wide – and 1,500 light years away, is the first image captured by the Department of Defense's largest telescope, a 4-meter-class telescope completed here in July.

This first image, also known as "first light," was recorded recently with a 15-second exposure, using an ST-8 Charge Couple Device camera from Santa Barbara Instrument Group.

Telescope officials with the Directed Energy Directorate of the Air Force Research Laboratory expect image quality will improve after the primary mirror figure control is calibrated, enhanced sensors are installed, and the telescope completes additional testing.

The telescope, which is part of a \$150 million Advanced Electro-Optical System, took two years to construct. Able to view a baseball-sized object 500 miles in space, the telescope will view and track satellites passing overhead.

Editor's Note: This information is in the public domain and may be accessed at <http://www.af.mil/news> on the World Wide Web.



Air Force News Photo

THE RING NEBULA (M57), APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF LIGHT-YEAR IN DIAMETER – OR 2.95 TRILLION MILES WIDE – AND 1,500 LIGHT YEARS AWAY, IS THE FIRST IMAGE CAPTURED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S LARGEST TELESCOPE.