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The GLAST Large Area Telescope

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The Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope (GLAST) is a next generation high-energy gamma-ray observatory designed to explore the sky over more than four energy decades (20 MeV–300 GeV) with unprecedented sensitivity and resolution. The Large Area Telescope (LAT), the main instrument on board GLAST, is a pair conversion telescope designed and built exploiting the state of the art in high-energy physics detector technology; a significant fraction of the advance in sensitivity (roughly a factor of 30) over the predecessor CGRO-EGRET instrument, is in fact accomplished by means of the largest and by far most complex (70 square meters of Silicon Strip Detectors for a total of almost 1 million of channels) Silicon Tracker ever built for a space mission. With the launch date now firmly established for the beginning of June 2008, this is a particularly exciting moment for the whole collaboration. The first two months of operation will be devoted to a carefully planned calibration activity, which will prepare the instrument for the real science data taking phase, continuing over the following 5–10 years. The operation experiences, as well as the highlights from this initial on-orbit verification phase, will be presented in this talk.

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