RECORD BREAKER — VMSC's Scout scored a record-setting 26 consecutive successes by orbiting NASA's Small Astronomy Satellite (SAS-B) from Italy's sea-based San Marco platform off the east coast of Africa.

And Yet Another One . . .

The Scout launch vehicle, after its two big successes in November, is scheduled to add another to its list in mid-December by sending aloft Germany's AEROS from the Western Test Range in California.

The 280-pound aeronomy satellite contains four German experiments and one from NASA to investigate the upper atmosphere and the ionosphere and study the influence of ultraviolet radiation as a main energy source.

Scout will launch the German spacecraft in a near-polar, elliptical orbit with initial altitudes ranging from 140 to 500 miles above the earth.

As AEROS orbits, the four German experiments will measure electron density, extreme ultraviolet solar radiation, electron and ion temperatures and the density of ions and neutral particles. NASA's experiment, called Neutral Atmosphere Temperature Experiment (NATE), will measure temperature and total density of neutral particles.

At the low point of each orbit, the satellite will dip into the earth's atmosphere causing gradual decreases in speed due to atmospheric friction. After four to five months its orbit will decrease to a low point of about 135 miles and a high point of approximately 360.

When this occurs, a small hydrazine powerplant in the satellite will be fired to increase the orbit back to an apogee or high point of more than 275 miles and extend the data-gathering life of the mission to at least six months.

If AEROS is launched as scheduled, it will represent the third satellite launched by the Scout in less than a 31-day period.

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