

GAVRT Operators Visit JPL



The **GAVRT** Operators visited the **In-Situ Instruments Laboratory (ISIL)** containing a “Mars Yard” designed to simulate the surface of Mars for rover testing. The testing ensures the rovers can safely traverse the planetary surface with minimal guidance. Currently the rovers “Spirit” and “Opportunity” have lasted eight times longer than originally expected and are still going strong! January 3 marked the 2-year anniversary for the rover Spirit and January 24 marked the 2-year anniversary for Opportunity.

The **GAVRT** operators were also given a tour of the Space Flight Operations Facility (**SFOF**). It's the ‘mission control’ of JPL for all robotic spacecraft in deep space. Here they keep track of every current mission collecting data twenty-four hours a day, 365 days each year, much like our own ‘mission control’. They were recently in charge of the ‘Stardust’ mission that just landed in the Utah desert on January 15th. Sorry, but no photos are allowed to be taken there (but it's really cool)!

The **Spacecraft Assembly Facility (SAF)** is a clean room designed for the assembly of certain spacecraft parts in a sterile environment. It is one of the largest clean rooms with such a high level of purity.

