Air Force Successfully Launches Lockheed Martin-Built Global Positioning System Satellite

A Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite built by Lockheed Martin for the U.S. Air Force, was successfully launched today from Cape Canaveral. This was the seventh successful launch of the new-generation spacecraft, designated GPS IIR. The company has delivered 13 more of these satellites to the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. to sustain the GPS constellation.

The satellite launched today, designated GPS IIR-8, will join 26 other operational GPS satellites now on orbit. This satellite will improve global coverage and increase the overall performance of the GPS constellation.

"We are proud of our partnership with the Air Force in carrying out the important mission of the GPS system," said Rick Skinner, vice president of Lockheed Martin Navigation Systems. "We look forward to providing the warfighter as well as commercial and private users world-wide with highly accurate positioning location in a constellation where accuracy is a key performance parameter."

The Global Positioning System allows any properly equipped user to determine precise time and velocity and worldwide latitude, longitude and altitude to within a few meters. Although originally designed as a guidance and navigational tool for the military, GPS has proven beneficial in the commercial and civil markets for transportation, surveying and rescue operations.

The GPS IIR satellites are compatible with the current system and provide improved navigation accuracy, achieved by using an ITT Industries payload system. Additionally, increased autonomy and longer spacecraft life are inherent in the Lockheed Martin satellite design.

To bring new capabilities to the GPS constellation, Lockheed Martin is under contract to modernize up to eight existing GPS IIR spacecraft already built and in storage. These spacecraft, designated GPS IIR-M, will incorporate two new military signals and a second civil signal, thus providing military and civilian users of the navigation system with improved capabilities much sooner than previously envisioned.

GPS modernization is being performed at the Space Systems - Valley Forge, Pa. and ITT Industries, Clifton, N.J. facilities. First launch of a GPSIIR-M satellite will be available by July 2004. The U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, El Segundo, Calif., is the contracting agency.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, headquartered in Denver, Colo., is one of the major operating units of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Space Systems designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a variety of advanced technology systems for military, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include space launch and ground systems, remote sensing and communications satellites for commercial and government customers, advanced space observatories and interplanetary spacecraft, fleet ballistic missiles and missile defense systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced-technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's core businesses are systems integration, space, aeronautics, and technology services. Employing about 124,000 people worldwide, Lockheed Martin had 2001 sales of $24 billion.

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