Lockheed Martin-Built Titan II Successfully Launches Military Weather Satellite From Vandenberg Air Force Base

Final Refurbished Missile Completes 100% Mission Success Record

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VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.

A Lockheed Martin-built Titan II launch vehicle successfully placed the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Block 5D-3 spacecraft into orbit this morning for the U.S. Air Force. The Titan II lifted off at 9:17 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time from Space Launch Complex 4West at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. DMSP will be used for strategic and tactical weather prediction to aid the U.S. military in planning operations at sea, on land and in the air.

This launch marked the end of an era for the Lockheed Martin Titan team as the final refurbished intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) -- dubbed Titan II -- flew a perfect mission, capping an overall success record of 100 percent.

"Everyone at Lockheed Martin who has ever been a part of the Titan program watched with pride this morning as we launched another important space asset for our military forces," said G. Thomas Marsh, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "The Titan II program has been an outstanding example of partnership between the Air Force and Lockheed Martin, and we are very proud to fly the final rocket successfully and round out a perfect Titan II record."

Titan II ICBMs served as the vanguard of the United States' strategic deterrent for more than two decades. In the late 1960s, 10 Titan IIs also successfully launched astronauts as part of the Gemini program. When the Titan II ICBMs were decommissioned, the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles, Calif., contracted with Lockheed Martin to refurbish 14 for use as space launch vehicles. Today's mission marked the 13th consecutive successful Titan launch. There are no current plans to launch the 14th vehicle.

DMSP, operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is used for strategic and tactical weather prediction to aid the U.S. military in planning operations at sea, on land and in the air. Equipped with a sophisticated sensor suite that can image visible and infrared cloud cover, the satellite collects specialized meteorological, oceanographic and solar-geophysical information in all weather conditions. The DMSP constellation comprises two spacecraft in near-polar orbits, C3 (command, control and communications), user terminals and weather centers. The most recent launch of a DMSP spacecraft took place on Dec. 12, 1999 from Vandenberg Air Force Base. That launch marked the first of the Block 5D-3 satellites.

The Space and Missile Systems Center at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. manages the DMSP and Titan programs.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company 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 a full-range of space launch systems, including heavy-lift capability, 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 employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2002 sales of $26.6 billion.

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