

New Lockheed Martin Weather Satellite Operational

Ensures Access to Data Critical for Military Operations

PRNewswire-FirstCall
SUNNYVALE, Calif.

A Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Block 5D-3 spacecraft, built under contract for the U.S. Air Force by Lockheed Martin, completed on-orbit checkout, was declared operational and turned over to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for operations. The Flight 16 (F16) DMSP satellite was launched Oct. 18 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. on a Lockheed Martin-supplied Titan II launch vehicle.

During the past 30 days the DMSP Early-Orbit Team at the NOAA Space Operations Control Center (SOCC) in Suitland, Md. successfully completed on-orbit checkout of the spacecraft and instruments. Having been declared operational, the satellite was turned over to the National Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) Integrated Program Office (IPO). The IPO Assistant Director of Operations then delegated F16 command authority to the NOAA Office of Satellite Operations.

"This milestone -- our first fully-upgraded Block 5D-3 spacecraft with its additional capabilities -- is a giant step in the DMSP program," said Jeff Smith, DMSP program director for Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Sunnyvale, Calif. "Our partnership with the Air Force on the DMSP program began in 1966. Today, we still share a common goal to ensure that commanders have access to critical environmental data during preparation and execution of military operations."

The F16 DMSP satellite is a Block 5D-3 series that accommodates larger and more advanced sensor payloads than earlier generations. They also feature a more advanced attitude control system for precision pointing; a more powerful on-board computer with increased memory -- allowing greater spacecraft autonomy; a higher rate command link for shorter ground contact times; and increased battery capacity that prolongs the mission duration.

DMSP, operated by 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 create visible and infrared images of 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. Currently, four additional Block 5D-3 satellites are maintained at Space Systems' operations in Sunnyvale for storage, functional testing and upgrading. The spacecraft are shipped to Vandenberg for launch when requested by the Air Force. Now in its fourth decade of service, DMSP has proven invaluable in scheduling and protecting military operations on land, at sea and in the air.

The U.S. Air Force's 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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