

Lockheed Martin-Built GPS Satellite Declared Fully Operational

PRNewswire-FirstCall
COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.

A U.S. Air Force/Lockheed Martin team has completed on-orbit checkout of the upgraded Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite launched successfully March 20 from Cape Canaveral. The spacecraft, designated GPS IIR-11, has been declared fully operational for navigation users around the globe.

Built by Lockheed Martin in Valley Forge, Pa., the satellite features significant upgrades, including an advanced antenna panel that will deliver greater performance and power for GPS receivers. The launch represented the 50th GPS mission for the Air Force and was dedicated to the late Dr. Ivan A. Getting, the founder of the GPS concept, who passed away in October 2003. A plaque was attached to the satellite featuring one of Getting's best-known quotes, "Lighthouses in the Sky, Serving All Mankind."

The GPS IIR team is now gearing up for its next launch, scheduled for June 4, 2004, from Cape Canaveral. Last week, the Air Force announced that the mission, designated GPS IIR-12, had been moved up by six weeks from its previously scheduled date to take advantage of a launch range vacancy.

"Congratulations are in order to the entire GPS IIR team for its ability to execute a swift on-orbit checkout and once again achieve mission success for our customer," said Dave Podlesney, GPS program director for Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Valley Forge, Pa. "We are extremely proud of our partnership with the Air Force and look forward to soon delivering another high performance spacecraft to our military and civilian users around the globe."

GPS IIR satellites are designed to improve global coverage and increase the overall performance of the global positioning constellation. Lockheed Martin has delivered 21 of these satellites to the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. There are now a total of 28 GPS satellites on orbit, including 10 new-generation GPS IIR spacecraft. Air Force Space Command's 2nd Space Operations Squadron (2SOPS), based at Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., manages and operates the GPS constellation for both civil and military users.

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.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2003 sales of \$31.8 billion.

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