Lockheed Martin Presents Weather Satellite Model To Air Force Weather Agency

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company has presented a model of a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Block 5D-3 spacecraft to the Air Force Weather Agency (AFWA) here. Since 1966, the U.S. Air Force has launched more than 30 Lockheed Martin DMSP satellites. Now in its fourth decade of service, the DMSP has proven itself to be a valuable tool in scheduling and protecting military operations on land, at sea and in the air.

"We are delighted to be able to provide this satellite model to our colleagues here at the Air Force Weather Agency," said Mike Gott, Space Systems DMSP program director. "Our decades long partnership with the U.S. Air Force on the DMSP is a source of genuine pride for our company, and this model is but a small token of the significance we assign to the mission we share in collecting and exploiting environmental data in support of our military men and women." The model was presented to Brig. Gen. Thomas Strickford, Director of Weather, HQ USAF.

"DMSP satellites have been workhorses for Air Force Weather and the Department of Defense," said Col. Charles L. Benson, commander, AFWA. "The Air Force Weather Agency is delighted to have to the opportunity to display a detailed replica."

DMSP satellites are 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 satellites collect 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 October 18, 2003 from Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The mission of Air Force Weather Agency is to maximize our nation's aerospace and ground combat effectiveness by providing accurate, relevant and timely air and space weather information to Department of Defense, coalition, and national users, and by providing standardized training and equipment to Air Force Weather. AFWA is a Field Operating Agency, reporting to United States Air Force Director of Weather, Deputy Chief of Staff Air and Space Operations (USAF/XOW). AFWA is the DoD's Meteorological Satellite Center of Excellence.

AFWA traces its heritage to the organization of the Meteorological Service of the Signal Corps during World War I. On July 1, 1937, the Secretary of War transferred responsibility for weather services to the Army Air Corps. The official lineage of AFWA began April 14, 1943, when the Army Air Forces organized and activated the Weather Wing, which quickly established itself at Asheville, N.C. In 1945, the Army Air Forces redesignated the Weather Wing the Army Air Forces Weather Service and in early 1946, the service moved to Langley Field, Va. On March 13, 1946, it was redesignated the Air Weather Service and assigned to the Air Transport Command, followed soon thereafter with a move to Gravelly Point, Va.

With the formation of the United States Air Force in 1947, Air Weather Service assumed the responsibility of worldwide weather reporting and forecasting for both the Air Force and the Army. In 1948, Air Weather Service moved to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., and was assigned to the newly activated Military Air Transport Service, which was later redesignated Military Airlift Command. Air Weather Service relocated to Scott Air Force Base, Ill., in 1958, where it remained for nearly four decades. The Air Force designated Air Weather Service a Field Operating Agency and re-assigned it to Headquarters United States Air Force, in 1991. On Oct. 15, 1997, Air Weather Service was redesignated the Air Force Weather Agency and relocated to Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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 Martinemploys 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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