Second Milstar Satellite Built By Lockheed Martin Achieves 10 Years In Service

Space-Based Network Vital to National Security

The second U.S. Air Force Milstar communications satellite, built by a team led by Lockheed Martin, has surpassed its 10-year design life of on-orbit service and will continue to provide secure, reliable and robust communications to U.S. and Allied Forces around the globe well into the future.

Originally launched aboard a Lockheed Martin Titan IV launch vehicle from Cape Canaveral on Nov. 6, 1995, the satellite is one of two Block I spacecraft on orbit equipped with a UHF and Low Data Rate EHF payload provided by Northrop Grumman Space Technology of Redondo Beach, Calif., and equipped with crosslink payloads to communicate between on-orbit satellites, built by Boeing Satellite Systems, El Segundo, Calif. The first Milstar satellite, now on orbit for over 11 years, continues to provide robust communications service since its launch on Feb. 7, 1994.

"The Milstar system is truly a national asset which has provided significant value to the warfighter for the last decade," said Leonard F. Kwiatkowski, vice president and general manager, military space, Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Sunnyvale. "Built by a talented and dedicated group of people, Milstar has greatly improved battlefield communications, delivering critical secure, real-time, connectivity among forces in the field, and their commanders anywhere on the globe. We are extremely proud of Milstar's outstanding record of performance, its ongoing vital contribution to our national security and the added value it is providing to the nation as it exceeds design life."

The Air Force transitioned to the Block II configuration with the successful launch of the first Milstar II satellite in 2001. The Milstar Block II system offers a variety of enhanced communications features for the U.S. military, including the Medium Data Rate EHF payload also built by Boeing Satellite Systems, which can process data at speeds up to 1.5 megabits per second.

Milstar is the Defense Department's most technologically advanced telecommunications satellite system, which provides critical, secure links to U.S. national leaders, air, land and sea forces around the globe. The Milstar system is the only survivable, endurable means that the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command have to maintain positive command and control of this nation's strategic forces.

The Milstar system's capabilities were cited by the Department of Defense as essential to the U.S.-led coalition's success in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Milstar's voice, data and video teleconferencing communications were also used recently in the military's coordination of necessary resources for hurricane relief operations.

Last year, the U.S. Air Force/Lockheed Martin-led Milstar team was selected as the winner of the 2004 National Air and Space Museum Trophy for Current Achievement for the successful development, deployment, and operation of the Milstar constellation. The award ranks with the most distinguished honors and awards of the Smithsonian Institution.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Sunnyvale, Calif. is the prime contractor, satellite bus provider, ground command & control provider and lead systems integrator for Milstar.

The final Milstar II satellite was launched successfully on April 8, 2003, creating the first space-based global communications network and providing a secure communications network which can transmit voice, data, and imagery, in addition to offering video teleconferencing capabilities for the Department of Defense. The Milstar team is led by the MILSATCOM Joint Program Office at the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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