Air Force Honors Defense Communications Satellite Program

The U.S. Air Force has named the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) Life Extension Team as a winner of the 2006 Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award. The prestigious award, sponsored by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and administered by the Air Force Manpower Agency (AFMA), recognizes outstanding team performance and shares best practices within the Air Force. The DSCS Team received this award for developing innovative methods for estimating and maximizing the fuel on board the DSCS satellite constellation.

Lockheed Martin is the prime contractor for the Air Force DSCS constellation, which provides uninterrupted secure voice and high-data rate communications to Department of Defense users; essential tools in monitoring events and deploying and sustaining forces anywhere in the world. The DSCS III satellites on-orbit today have a design life of 10-years. However, the team's ability to better estimate the on-board fuel, combined with new techniques for maximizing fuel usage, allows the DSCS satellites to exceed their design life by several years.

"The DSCS program office's satellite life extension efforts help to save up to five million dollars per year," said Brig Gen Ellen Pawlikowski, MILSATCOM Systems Wing Commander. "By extending the life of the DSCS constellation and by sharing these innovative techniques with other space programs, the team's work will be felt for many years to come."

The team included the Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Center's Military Satellite Communications Systems Wing, Los Angeles Air Force Base, the 3rd Space Operations Squadron, Schriever Air Force Base, The Aerospace Corporation and Lockheed Martin Space Systems.

"We are proud that the DSCS team has been selected for this important honor," said Julie Sattler, vice president, Advanced EHF and Operational Programs, Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Sunnyvale. "The team's achievements will enable the DSCS program to provide vital communications links to U.S. and Allied Forces around the globe well into the future."

Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Sunnyvale, Calif., is the prime contractor for the DSCS III program. The last in a series of 14 DSCS spacecraft built for the Air Force was successfully launched on August 29, 2003 and is fully operational.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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