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Sealed Up, Ready to Go: U.S. Air Force's SBIRS GEO Flight-4 Missile Warning Satellite Encapsulated for Launch

Current SBIRS' constellation continues to deliver outstanding infrared surveillance performance

CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION, Fla., Jan. 11, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Air Force's fourth Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO) satellite built by Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) was encapsulated on Jan. 9. The SBIRS GEO Flight-4 satellite is now ready for its planned Jan. 18 launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket.

The U.S. Air Force's SBIRS GEO Flight-4 satellite, built at Lockheed Martin's Sunnyvale, California satellite manufacturing factory, was encapsulated on Jan. 9.

During encapsulation, SBIRS GEO Flight-4 was sealed in its launch fairing, an aerodynamic, nose-cone shell that protects the satellite during launch. In the coming days, the fairing with the satellite enclosed will be mounted on top of the Atlas V rocket as launch preparations continue.

SBIRS GEO Flight-4 is the latest satellite to join the Air Force's orbiting network of satellites equipped with powerful scanning and staring infrared surveillance sensors. The sensors collect data for use by the U.S. military to detect missile launches, support ballistic missile defense, expand technical intelligence gathering and bolster situational awareness on the battlefield.

Back on the ground, a sophisticated new SBIRS ground control system serves as the nerve center for the entire SBIRS satellite constellation and receives large amounts of data from the satellites' powerful sensors. The SBIRS control system and its operators convert this data into actionable reports for defense, intelligence and civil applications.

"SBIRS provides our military with timely, reliable and accurate missile warning and infrared surveillance information," said Tom McCormick, vice president of Lockheed Martin's Overhead Persistent Infrared systems mission area. "We look forward to adding GEO Flight-4's capabilities to the first line of defense in our nation's missile defense strategy."

Lockheed Martin manufactured the SBIRS GEO Flight-4 satellite at its Sunnyvale, California, facility. The satellite was delivered to Florida on Oct. 31, 2017.

Building on SBIRS
The Air Force's SBIRS program continues to grow resilient, persistent, space-based infrared surveillance capabilities.

The planned launch of SBIRS GEO Flight-4 comes just 12 months after the launch of SBIRS GEO Flight-3, which in March 2017 sent its first images back down to Earth in a milestone known as "first light." These two satellites join SBIRS' GEO-1 and GEO-2, which received Air Force Space Command Operational Acceptance in 2013, and have performance that matches, and in some cases exceeds, requirements.

The next SBIRS satellites, GEO-5 and GEO-6, will bring increased resiliency, production efficiency and the ability to add new advanced sensor suites to the constellation using Lockheed Martin's modernized LM 2100 satellite bus. In September, a system Critical Design Review for the modernized design for GEO 5 and 6 was conducted with the Air Force, authorizing the satellites to enter into the manufacturing and integration phase.

At the center of SBIRS is its ground control system, which receives and processes a vast amount of satellite data. In late 2016, the Air Force operationally accepted "SBIRS Block 10," a new control system developed by Lockheed Martin, which includes enhancements like faster data collection times, improved threat detections, and improved target tracking and infrared information to enable troops to see dimmer targets faster.

SBIRS Block 10 also provides the Air Force with greater efficiency by consolidated ground control for the legacy Defense Support Program, as well as SBIRS satellites and payloads in GEO and Highly Elliptical Orbits.

For additional SBIRS information, photos and video visit: www.lockheedmartin.com/sbirs.

About Lockheed Martin
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