Boeing Delta II Rocket Stands Ready to Launch USAF Navigation Satellite

A U.S. Air Force Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite launched aboard a Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta II rocket 11 years ago, is scheduled to be replaced during an April 21 launch.

The Boeing Delta II stands ready to carry the replacement satellite into orbit when the 30-minute launch window opens at 11:05 p.m. EDT. The satellite will separate from the rocket's upper stage 25 minutes after liftoff.

Boeing has been involved in the Air Force's GPS program since 1974, when the company won contracts to build developmental satellites and receiver sets. Boeing is currently working on design, development and production of third generation GPS satellites. To date, all 30 GPS satellites and original 24 (excluding the Block 1 satellites used during the research and development phase of the GPS program) in orbit have been launched aboard Delta II rockets. The company currently has an additional 17 launches manifested for the global navigation system.

"The satellite that will be replaced was one of the original 24 satellites in the GPS constellation, which was lifted into orbit aboard a Delta II," said Will Hampton, Boeing director of U.S. Air Force Delta II programs. "Boeing recognizes the importance of GPS to the many users, both government and commercial, and we are committed to helping make the U.S. Air Force the world's preeminent air and space force."

Recognized as the world's leading satellite navigation system, GPS operates via a constellation of 27 satellites and a ground control system. Thousands of terminals work together to help locate and guide military and civilian users in the air, at sea, on the ground and in space.

The Delta II is a medium-capacity expendable launch vehicle derived from the Delta family of rockets that has logged 277 launches since 1960.

The Delta II rocket is manufactured in Huntington Beach, Calif., with final assembly in Pueblo, Colo. The rocket is powered by the RS-27A engine built by Boeing in Canoga Park, Calif. Launch coordination and operations for this mission are provided by the Delta launch team at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

Alliant Techsystems, Magna, Utah, builds the graphite epoxy motors for boost assist. Aerojet, Sacramento, Calif., manufactures the second-stage engine, Cordant Technologies, Elkton, Maryland, builds the third-stage motor, and L3 communications, Teterboro, N.J., builds the guidance and flight control system.

Boeing Delta Web Site

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