Boeing's Workhorse Delta II Delivers Another GPS Satellite to Orbit

The reliable Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta II launch vehicle, known as the workhorse of the launch industry in its payload class, successfully delivered to orbit earlier today a replenishment Block IIR Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite for the U.S. Air Force.

The Delta II rocket carrying the GPS IIR-15 (M) spacecraft lifted off from Space Launch Complex 17A at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., at 2:50 p.m. EDT, Sept. 25. Following a nominal 68-minute flight, the rocket deployed the satellite to a transfer orbit.

"We are honored to have a continuing role in maintaining the GPS constellation, which is so vital to our nation's defense and security," said Dan Collins, vice president, Boeing Launch Systems. "The Delta team has launched all the GPS-II spacecraft and we look forward to continuing with the delivery of the replenishment satellites to keep the constellation operable 24-7."

The Boeing Delta II 7925-9.5 configuration vehicle used for today's mission featured a Boeing first stage booster powered by a Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne RS-27A main engine and nine Alliant Techsystems (ATK) solid rocket boosters. An Aerojet AJ10-118K engine powered the storable propellant restartable second stage. A Thiokol Star-48B solid rocket motor propelled the third stage prior to spacecraft deployment. The rocket also flew with a nine-and-a-half-foot-diameter Boeing payload fairing.

A redundant inertial flight control assembly built by L3 Communications Space & Navigation provided guidance and control for the rocket that enabled a precise deployment of the satellite.

Boeing provides launches for the GPS program aboard Delta II vehicles and has a planned GPS manifest through at least 2007. The GPS IIR-15 (M) is the second of the modernized GPS satellites that incorporates various improvements to provide greater accuracy, increased resistance to interference and enhanced performance for users.

The GPS network supports U.S. military operations conducted from aircraft, ships, land vehicles and by ground personnel. Additional use includes mapping, aerial refueling and rendezvous, geodetic surveys, and search and rescue operations.

GPS provides military and civilian users three-dimensional position location data in longitude, latitude and elevation as well as precise time and velocity. The satellites orbit the Earth every 12 hours, emitting continuous navigation signals. The signals are so accurate, time can be figured to within one millionth of a second, velocity within a fraction of a mile-per-second and location to within 100 feet.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.

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