



Los Angeles Air Force Base Media Release



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U.S. AIR FORCE AEHF-1 SATELLITE ARRIVES AT OPERATIONAL GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT

LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE BASE, El Segundo, Calif. – The U.S. Air Force’s first Advanced Extremely High Frequency military communications satellite completed a 14-month journey to reach its intended operational position in geosynchronous orbit, Oct. 24.

The AEHF team will now start an approximately four-month detailed test and checkout phase of all spacecraft systems before the Space and Missile Systems Center transfers satellite command authority to Air Force Space Command’s 14th Air Force in early 2012.

Shortly after launch August 14, 2010, the AEHF-1 orbit-raising plan was modified as a result of an anomaly with the bi-propellant propulsion system, which was intended to place the spacecraft near its operational orbit. A joint team of Air Force, Lockheed Martin, The Aerospace Corporation, and Aerojet engineers responded to the anomaly, planning and executing a sophisticated campaign of approximately 500 burns which entailed two phases: one phase using hydrazine thrusters and the other using the Hall Current Thruster electrical propulsion system. The revised orbit-raising plan safely delivered AEHF-1 to its intended orbit while maintaining its required 14 years of mission life.

“I am extremely proud of the entire AEHF team for its ability to apply engineering excellence, superior teamwork and remarkable creativity to accomplish this very important milestone in the Program,” said Dave Madden, director of SMC’s MILSATCOM Systems Directorate. “The next chapter for AEHF-1 – on-orbit test and checkout – is even more important as the satellite transitions to its operational mission of delivering protected communications to Department of Defense users and our international partners.”

AEHF is a joint service satellite communications system that will provide survivable, global, secure, protected, and jam-resistant communications for high-priority military ground,

sea and air assets. The AEHF System is the follow-on to the Milstar system, augmenting, improving and expanding the MILSATCOM architecture.

AEHF is developed by the MILSATCOM Systems Directorate at Los Angeles AFB, Calif. The MILSATCOM Systems Directorate plans, acquires and sustains space-based global communications in support of the president, secretary of defense and combat forces. The MILSATCOM enterprise consists of satellites, terminals and control stations and provides communications for more than 16,000 air, land and sea platforms.

Media representatives can submit questions for response regarding this topic by sending an e-mail to smcpa.media@losangeles.af.mil.

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