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News in Brief

GPS satellite launches resume Following the July 3, 1991 malfunction of the positioning system, the United States Air Force once again resumed launching of satellites on February 23, successfully sending 12 out of 24 Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites into orbit.

The second GPS system will be composed of 24 satellites, three of which will act as backups. It is estimated that the remaining 21 will form a network by June, 1993. The next launch is scheduled to take place around April 2. After this, launches are planned to take place every two months. This incomplete GPS system played a major role during the Gulf War.

After this program is completed, at least four satellites will be provided for users anywhere in the world, at any time. The United States Army, Navy, and Air Force will use the radio signals from these satellites for accurate positioning. Their positioning accuracy is within 16 meters. GPS users will also include the armed forces of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

(reported by Xie Ping)

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