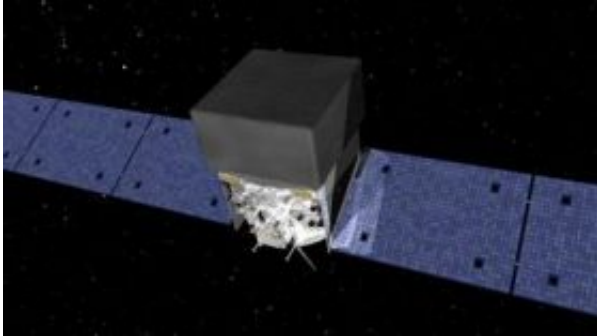


GLAST safely in orbit, getting check-ups

June 19 2008



Caption: This is an artist's conception of GLAST in orbit. Credit: NASA

A week after launch, NASA's Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope, or GLAST, is safely up-and-running well in orbit approximately 350 miles (565 kilometers) above the Earth's surface.

GLAST was successfully launched aboard a Delta II rocket from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida at 12:05 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, June 11.

For four weeks, engineers will continue to be busy around the clock turning on and checking out the various components on the spacecraft. "Things are looking good so far," said GLAST Deputy Project Scientist Julie McEnery from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. "We expect to turn the instruments on in about a week, and we can't wait to see the first gamma rays!"

Two days after launch, both of GLAST's solar arrays were rotated successfully. The solar arrays are the "wings" of GLAST that utilize the Sun's energy to power the spacecraft. That same day, flight software controlled heaters were enabled. Those heaters are important because they help GLAST to operate in the cold of space.

"Once the Large Area Telescope is operational, GLAST will survey the entire sky every three hours, using the sky survey control mode," said Kathy Turner, U.S. Department of Energy GLAST Program Manager, Germantown, Md. Sky survey is the primary science fine pointing control mode for the mission.

On Monday, June 16, "Two star trackers are also now acquiring and identifying stars," said GLAST program manager Kevin Grady of NASA Goddard. "All systems continue to function well as the activation continues," he said.

NASA's GLAST mission is an astrophysics and particle physics partnership, developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy, along with important contributions from academic institutions and partners in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, and the U.S.

Source: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

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