

Amazing SpaceX images highlight perfect Falcon 9 landing

January 20 2017, by Nancy Atkinson



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket just before landing on the drone ship 'Just Read the Instructions' in the Pacific Ocean, on January 14, 2017 following the launch of 10 Iridium NEXT satellites into orbit. Credit: SpaceX

SpaceX was able to celebrate a successful return to flight this week with

a picture-perfect launch of the Falcon 9 rocket on January 14, 2017 that successfully delivered a fleet of ten advanced Iridium NEXT mobile voice and data relay satellites to orbit. But the icing on the cake was the dead-center landing and recovery of the Falcon 9 booster on their drone barge (named "Just Read The Instructions") in the Pacific Ocean, off the west coast of California.

SpaceX released some images from the landing that are absolutely stunning.

The Falcon 9 launched from Space Launch Complex 4E on Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, and the main goal of the mission was to deploy the payload of the first ten Iridium Next communication satellites to low Earth orbit. Iridium plans to eventually have a fleet of 81 such satellites.

It was the first launch for the commercial company since the September 1, 2016 [explosion](#) on the launchpad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida during a routine launchpad test. The explosion destroyed the Falcon 9 rocket and the payload of the Amos-6 communications satellite, which had an estimated value of \$200 million. The explosion was traced back to a failure of a high-pressure helium vessel inside the Falcon 9's second-stage liquid-oxygen tank.



A stunning view of the Falcon 9 rocket just before landing on a barge in the Pacific Ocean, on January 14, 2017 following the launch of 10 Iridium NEXT satellites into orbit. Credit: SpaceX



Another view of the SpaceX Falcon 9 booster after landing on a barge in the Pacific Ocean on January 14, 2017. Credit: SpaceX



The Falcon 9 booster sitting successfully on the barge after landing. Credit: SpaceX

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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