

SpaceX launches Air Force's best GPS yet, ends banner year

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A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Sunday, Dec. 23, 2018. The rocket is carrying the U.S. Air Force's most powerful GPS satellite ever built. (Craig Bailey/Florida Today via

AP)

SpaceX has launched the U.S. Air Force's most powerful GPS satellite ever built.

A Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Sunday, hoisting the [satellite](#) into orbit.

The satellite was supposed to soar Tuesday but [rocket](#) concerns and then weather delayed the flight.

Heather Wilson, secretary of the Air Force, says this next-generation GPS satellite is three times more accurate than previous versions and eight times better at anti-jamming. It's the first in a series and nicknamed Vespucci after the 15th-century Italian explorer who calculated Earth's circumference to within 50 miles (80 kilometers).

Lockheed Martin developed the advanced GPS technology and is building the satellites at a facility near Denver.

Sunday's launch was Space X's 21st and final launch of the year, a company record.



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