



Employees View a *Delta II* Rocket Launch

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A group of 14 Defense Contract Management Agency Space and Missile Systems Division professionals witnessed the launch of a *Delta II* rocket on Oct. 8.

The rocket, carrying a commercial earth-imaging satellite, lifted off into a slightly hazy but otherwise clear blue sky on time and without a hitch.

Witnessing a launch in person, it's kind of like the first verse of the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem, "The Arrow and the Song."

*I shot an arrow into the air
It fell to earth I know not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.*

Immediately after engine ignition, the *Delta II* leaped off the launch pad, arced to the southwest over the Pacific and fled from view. In a few moments, only the dissolving contrail, battered by the winds aloft, remained as evidence of the launch.

The DCMA employees in the group attending the launch were

from the Carson headquarters and northern California. The group from southern California left Carson at 6:30 a.m., caravanned with a group of students from the A-Man Discovery and Learning Center, Inglewood, Calif., to the base and were joined by the northern group at the Vandenberg Visitor's Center. The students' bus soon went on its separate way, and the DCMA bus made its way to the viewing area, where guests could listen to the countdown and have an unobstructed — if somewhat distant — view of the launch.

Following the launch, the group headed for a dining facility on base and had lunch. Then it was back to the visitor's center to drop off the northern California people, then the journey home. The long ride home seemed shorter by the basking in the successful, if all too brief, launch. **C**