

Lockheed Martin X-35A JSF Completes Taxi Tests, Readies For First Flight

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With the successful completion of taxi tests, the Lockheed Martin X-35A Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) demonstrator has finished all major pre-flight trials. The stage is now set for the aircraft's inaugural flight.

The Pratt & Whitney-powered X-35A conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) JSF variant executed taxi tests from low to medium speeds at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company in Palmdale, Calif. All of the aircraft's subsystems -- avionics, hydraulics, vehicle-management displays, electrical systems, communications, etc. -- were operational during the taxi runs and have been cleared for flight.

"Our team has done a tremendous job of getting us through these critical ground tests to the threshold of flight. We appreciate the hard work performed during the entire program by both the contractor and government team members," said Frank J. Cappuccio, vice president and program manager for the Lockheed Martin JSF. "We're ready to get this plane into the air and demonstrate the actual performance characteristics we expect from our production aircraft. Their characteristics should be very similar since our X-35A is representative of the aircraft that we are proposing for full-scale production."

Test pilot Tom Morgenfeld, who manned the controls during earlier engine runs and the recent taxi tests, will be the first to get the X-35A into the air. Morgenfeld will fly the aircraft from Palmdale to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., the site of subsequent flight-testing.

After X-35A flight tests are completed, the aircraft will be retrofitted with Lockheed Martin's unique shaft-driven lift-fan propulsion system to demonstrate the short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) performance required by the U.S. Marines and the British Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Lockheed Martin, in partnership with Northrop Grumman and BAE SYSTEMS, is in competition to build the JSF for the United States and Great Britain. Government selection of a single contractor for the Engineering and Manufacturing Development phase is set for 2001.

For information on Lockheed Martin Corporation, visit: <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/> .

For information on Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, visit:
<http://www.lmaeronautics.com/> .

For government information on the Joint Strike Fighter program, visit <http://www.jast.mil/>

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