Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Begins S-3 Viking Full Scale Fatigue Testing

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company yesterday began full scale fatigue testing (FSFT) of a U.S. Navy S-3 Viking anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft at its facility here.

"This marks an important milestone in the S-3 program," Mark Jarvis, the S-3 program's manager, said. "The future of the U.S. Navy S-3 community hinges upon the data generated by these fatigue tests."

The S-3 Viking has been and continues to be the backbone of the U.S. Navy's ASW fleet and one of the key components of the U.S. Navy's worldwide maritime dominance. Originally built at Lockheed Martin's Burbank, Calif., facility, the S-3 has been in naval service since the 1970s.

The S-3 is currently certified for a structural life of 13,000 hours, which the Viking fleet is rapidly approaching. The S-3 FSFT program will determine how much longer the Navy could keep their Vikings flying.

"The U.S. Navy and the Defense Department have chosen to extend the operational service of this much honored aircraft, and it is up to the Lockheed Martin/Navy Integrated Product Team to determine by how much that service can be extended," Jarvis said. "Their decision to continue operational use of the S-3 Viking will provide the Navy with extended and unmatched ASW capability for years to come."

The U.S. Government, with data provided by LM Aeronautics' FSFT program, hopes to certify the S-3's operational life through 17,750 flight hours through these fatigue tests. Lockheed Martin has been prepping an S-3 fatigue test article since winning the Navy's $40 million contract for this work in 1998. The fatigue testing -- which encompasses "bending and flexing" the aircraft to determine the physical limitations of the components and materials from which it is made -- should conclude in late 2002.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company is a leader in the design, development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F-22, C-130J, F-117, U-2, X-33 and Joint Strike Fighter, among other renowned aircraft.

LM Aeronautics is a unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Lockheed Martin is headquartered in Bethesda, Md., and is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced-technology systems, products and services. The corporation's core businesses are systems integration, space, aeronautics, and technology services.

For more information about LM Aeronautics, please visithttp://www.lmaeronautics.com/ . For more information about Lockheed Martin Corporation, please visit http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

MAKE YOUR OPINION COUNT - Click Here
http://tbutton.prnewswire.com/prn/11690X58386971

SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

Website: http://www.lmaeronautics.com/
http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

Company News On-Call: http://www.prnewswire.com/comp/117281.html or fax,
800-758-5804, ext. 117281
