Lockheed Martin And Vought Industries Team To Offer New P-3 Wings For Worldwide Fleet Life Extension

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Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, a business area of Lockheed Martin Corporation, has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc. to manufacture wings for the P-3 Orion. The average age of the worldwide P-3 fleet is approaching 25 years. With new wings, the service life of the more than 450 aircraft being flown by 16 countries could be extended an additional 25 years.

"We're bringing Lockheed Martin's expertise in maritime patrol and Vought's manufacturing expertise together to further support the worldwide Orion fleet and enable operating navies a cost-effective solution for maintaining their maritime patrol capability," said Tom Wetherall, director of P-3/S-3 programs for LM Aeronautics.

Vought has already begun to set up a production line. The tooling needed to build P-3 wings consists of more than 5,500 separate tools, ranging from 10-pound drill guides to three-ton jigs. The tooling will be set up, cleaned and prepared for use over the next few months. Vought estimates that new production wings could be available as early as 2004.

The concept of re-winging is not new to the P-3. In 1993, Lockheed Martin began working with the Royal New Zealand Air Force on a cost-effective approach for extending the service life of its six P-3 Orions. The program, called Project Kestrel, proved that re-winging the P-3, combined with other selected structural modifications, is a low-risk and cost-effective way to extend the life of the Orion.

"We have had discussions with many P-3 operators who are interested in re-winging some or all of their fleet," said Erich Smith, vice president of military programs for Vought. "Vought is experienced in wing production and airframe design, development and production. We're committed to investing in tooling and other machinery for this business. We're pleased to work with Lockheed Martin and its customers on this program."

Lockheed Martin and Vought first teamed over 30 years ago to win the U. S. Navy S-3A Viking program. As part of the Lockheed Martin team, Vought designed and produced the wing, undercarriage, engine mount pods and tail assemblies for all 187 aircraft. From contract award through delivery of the last aircraft, the entire program was completed in less than 10 years, on schedule and within budget.

Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc. is the world's largest independent supplier of aerostructures. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, the company provides wings, fuselage subassemblies, empennages, nacelles, thrust reversers and other components for prime manufacturers of aircraft. Vought has 6,000 employees and annual sales exceeding $1 billion. It has operations in Dallas; Hawthorne, Calif.; Stuart, Fla.; Milledgeville, Ga.; and Perry, Ga.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, 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, JSF, F-117, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. is a unit of Lockheed Martin Corp., headquartered in Bethesda, Md. Lockheed Martin is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. Employing about 125,000 people worldwide, Lockheed Martin had 2001 sales of $24 billion.

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

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

For information on Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc., visit:http://www.voughtaircraft.com/

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