Lockheed Martin F/A-22 Raptor Meets Program's Final 2002 Flight Test Goal; DIOT&E Preparations Continue

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The Lockheed Martin -led F/A-22 Raptor air dominance fighter program team successfully launched an unarmed, short-range, heat-seeking AIM-9M missile against an aerial target on Nov. 22, completing all four Pentagon-mandated flight test goals for the year 2002. F/A-22 developmental flight-test activities continue at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., in support of the timely start of Dedicated Initial Operational Test & Evaluation (DIOTE) in 2003.

The test took place above the U.S. Army's White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, with Lockheed Martin F/A-22 test pilot James "JB" Brown III flying Raptor 4007. While supercruising -- flying at supersonic speeds without using fuel-guzzling afterburners -- at 24,000 feet, the pilot positioned his Raptor to fire on a supersonic QF-4 unmanned drone flying at 14,000 feet, several miles directly ahead of the aircraft. After launch, the missile was able to track the target and pass close enough to it that had the missile been armed with a live warhead, the missile would have detonated. This demonstrated the Raptor's short-range missile targeting and launch support capabilities.

"This was the first of two targeted live fire tests the F/A-22 program will conduct involving the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile. The second AIM-9 missile launch test is scheduled for next year," said Rick Salazar, Avionics/Armament flight-test lead at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. "Though scripted for test, this front-quarter, look-down shot is typical of those that can occur in an operational scenario, and is another step forward toward 'sharpening the talons' of the Raptor."

This test demonstrated the Raptor's unique "auto-doors" capability, which opens the F/A-22's side weapons bay doors and extends the AIM-9 missile into the slipstream once it is within range of a target. This capability also retracts the missile and closes the doors if the missile is not launched, once the target is out of the missile's range. This auto-door function helps to minimize the aircraft's exposure to enemy radar and "preserves the aircraft's stealthiness," Salazar added.

Another notable achievement demonstrated for the first time during this test was the F/A-22 Combined Test Force's ability to remotely monitor this New Mexico-based missile launch from its control rooms at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

This AIM-9 missile launch satisfies the last of four Pentagon-mandated flight-test goals the program had to accomplish by the end of 2002. The other, previously completed, 2002 flight test goals were:

-- First flight of Raptor 4010, the first Dedicated Initial Operational Test & Evaluation aircraft.
-- First aerial target intercept by an AIM-120 missile launched from a supercruising F/A-22.
-- Initial flight-testing expansion necessary for Air Force pilots to begin training for DIOT&E.

The F/A-22 Raptor is built by Lockheed Martin in partnership with Boeing, powered by Pratt & Whitney engines and made from parts and subsystems provided by approximately 1,200 subcontractors and suppliers in 46 states. Principal aircraft production activities take place at Lockheed Martin facilities in Marietta, Ga., Meridian, Miss., Fort Worth, Texas, and Palmdale, Calif., as well as at Boeing's plant in Seattle, Wash. The engines are built in East Hartford, Conn.

Final assembly and initial flight-testing of the Raptor occurs at the Marietta factory, headquarters for the F/A-22 program's contractor team. The Raptor's low-observable control surface edges, antennas and radomes are built in Palmdale while its mid-fuselage is built in Fort Worth. Boeing builds the aircraft's aft-fuselage and wings, while Lockheed Martin is the program's principal systems integrator.

The Raptor will replace the aging F-15 Eagle as America's premier front- line fighter jet starting in 2005. The Raptor has unprecedented fighter and attack capabilities with its balanced design of stealth, supercruise speed and extreme agility, along with advanced integrated avionics and the pilot- friendly cockpit. These attributes make the Raptor truly transformational and will support the goal of quick, decisive victory in future conflicts, saving American and allied lives.

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/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

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