

Lockheed Martin's FCS 'MULE' Vehicle Selected For Development And Production

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Lockheed Martin's Future Combat System (FCS) Multifunction Utility Logistics and Equipment (MULE) vehicle has been selected by the FCS Lead System Integrator (LSI) team of Boeing and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to enter into negotiations for the System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase of the U.S. Army's FCS program. The MULE SDD phase could potentially be a \$200 million-plus program.

The MULE offers an extraordinary capability that will transform the Army. Its unique mobility will enable the vehicle to go everywhere the soldier can go and more. It will allow soldiers of the transformed Army to use technology to do the dull, dirty and dangerous jobs of the current forces, freeing them to focus on the success of their missions.

"We're pleased the LSI selected Lockheed Martin as a partner and provider on the FCS MULE," said Gene Holleque, director - Unmanned Systems for Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "The MULE will increase the efficiency of the total force by complementing, not replacing, man and manned platform functions. It provides for future growth through spiral development, and possesses an open architecture designed to take full advantage of the rapid evolution of technology."

The highly mobile platform is designed specifically to meet the requirements of the Objective Force soldier for dismounted operations. The MULE's unique, highly advanced 6x6 independent articulated suspension, coupled with in-hub motors powering each wheel, provides extreme mobility in complex terrain, far exceeding that of vehicles utilizing more conventional suspension systems.

It will climb at least a 1.5-meter step, far exceeding requirements, and provides the vehicle with the mobility performance and surefootedness required to safely follow dismounted troops over rough terrain, through rock and debris fields, and over urban rubble. This technology also allows the MULE to cross 1.5-meter gaps, traverse side slopes greater than 40 percent, ford water to depths over 1.25 meters, and overpass obstacles as high as 0.5 meter while compensating for varying payload weights and center of gravity locations.

The MULE, a 2.5-ton class vehicle for the Future Combat System, includes three variants: Transport, Air Assault and Countermine.

The Transport MULE configuration is designed to support the Objective Force soldier by providing the volume and payload capacity to carry the equipment and supplies to support two dismounted Infantry Squads. Multiple tie-down points and removable/foldable side railings will support virtually any payload variation. It is suited to support casualty evacuation needs as well.

The Air Assault version will be armed with a rapid-fire suppressive weapon and an anti-tank capability. It is designed to provide immediate, heavy firepower to the dismounted soldier.

The Countermine variant is designed to provide detection and marking of mines and minefields, greatly increasing the safety and mobility of the infantryman.

"Lockheed Martin delivered the first fully digital vehicle to the Army, the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), and is committed to delivering its first unmanned digital vehicle," Holleque added. "Successful experience in these programs represents a jumpstart of two or more years in system trades, design analyses, perception and control algorithms, system validation, and testing. This represents a 'fast start' of a new development for the Transformed Army. This is important because the customer's mission is our own."

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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