

ROKAF Successfully Completes Initial Operational Assessment Of KAI/Lockheed Martin T-50 Supersonic Advanced Jet Trainer Early

- The Last Prerequisite for Production Decision

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The Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) has successfully completed the Initial Operational Assessment (IOA) of the T-50 supersonic advanced jet trainer well ahead of schedule. The first of 26 test flights began on July 28, and the last flight was completed on Aug. 14, more than two weeks ahead of the anticipated one-month schedule.

The T-50 is being developed by Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI), with the assistance of Lockheed Martin.

The T-50 IOA was the last of three key prerequisites for the Initial Production Authorization decision by the government of the Republic of Korea, expected this October. The other prerequisites were the first 105 flights of developmental flight testing and the initial Integrated Logistics Assessment, both of which had been successfully completed earlier this year.

IOA is similar to Initial Operational Test and Evaluation flying performed in the United States and is used to perform an early evaluation of operational suitability to support an initial production decision.

"This is an important milestone in the life of the program," said Col. Lee, Hee Woo, director of Development Management of ROKAF. "We knew we had a solid, reliable aircraft. Now, we are confident the aircraft will perform very well operationally as a fast jet trainer. I think there is no question this aircraft will meet all of the ROKAF requirements."

The T-50 IOA was performed at Sacheon Air Base, South Korea, the location of T-50 production and developmental flight testing. Evaluation was performed by five non-test pilots who represent the ROKAF training command. They flew from both the front and rear seats of the trainer. Three T-50 test pilots served the roles of both simulated student pilot and safety pilot.

The period of performance for IOA was estimated to be one month, and potentially longer, depending on the progress of the evaluation. In spite of several days lost due to monsoon rains, the evaluation was completed using the two Full-Scale Development test aircraft in the anticipated 26 flights in fewer than three weeks.

"The T-50 not only was a wonderful aircraft to fly and should be a great fast jet trainer, it was remarkably reliable at this stage of its development," said Maj. Lee, Choong Hwan, lead T-50 IOA evaluation pilot. "Of the 26 evaluation flights, we experienced no air aborts, and 24 flights, or 92 percent, were completed with no discrepancies observed on the aircraft. This aircraft is going to get a big thumbs-up from both its pilots and maintenance personnel. I look forward to flying it again in my career."

Flight profiles were representative of operational flying forecast for the T-50. Evaluation included the following: typical training scenarios; instructor pilot ability to monitor and fly the aircraft during training flights; aircraft handling and performance characteristics gear up; takeoff and landing characteristics; and suitability of the aircraft to permit a direct transition of new pilots from the T-50 to a high-performance, modern fighter such as the F-16.

Follow-on operational assessment flights (approximately 64 flights) are planned through 2005. These evaluations are for validation of operational capabilities of the current baselines of the advanced jet trainer and the lead-in fighter trainer versions, plus identification of potential enhancements.

BACKGROUND

The T-50 Golden Eagle is being developed by KAI for the Republic of Korea Air Force. Lockheed Martin, as principal subcontractor to KAI, is providing technical expertise for the program and is responsible for developing the T-50 avionics system, flight control system and wings. The two companies are cooperatively marketing the T-50 internationally.

Korea Aerospace Industries Ltd. is the Republic of Korea's national aerospace company established in 1999 with the consolidation of Samsung Aerospace, Daewoo Heavy Industries and Hyundai Space and Aircraft Co. KAI lines of business include fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter aircraft and satellites. Its major products are the KF-16, KT-1 basic trainer, T-50, SB427 helicopters, UAVs, aerostructures and KOMPSAT satellite program.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, 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-27J, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. 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. The corporation reported 2002 sales of \$26.6 billion.

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