

KAI And Lockheed Martin's T-50 Lead-In Fighter Trainer Makes First Flight

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The Lead-In Fighter Trainer (LIFT) version of the T-50 Golden Eagle supersonic fast jet trainer made its initial flight on Aug. 29.

The aircraft was flown by the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) from the air base at Sacheon, South Korea. Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) is the prime contractor in the development of the T-50, and Lockheed Martin is the principal subcontractor.

The second T-50 LIFT aircraft will be the fourth and final flight-test aircraft in the Full-Scale Development program and is expected to have its first flight this week.

"We are excited about adding the LIFT aircraft to our flight-test fleet," said Park, No Sun, T-50 program director and plant manager of KAI's Sacheon plant. "We will begin conducting stores testing and much more avionics testing. Also, these two aircraft will allow us to significantly increase our test-flight rate."

The main differences from the advanced jet trainer (AJT) T-50 version are the addition of a radar and an internal 20 mm gun. The multimode radar is the APG-67(V)4 built by Lockheed Martin's Naval Electronics & Surveillance Systems. It is the latest version of a system that is operational on Taiwan's Indigenous Defensive Fighter.

The gun is produced by General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products. It is a three-barrel variant of the six-barrel M61 20mm cannon, which is standard on U.S. fighters. The internal gun system is mounted behind the cockpit in an arrangement similar to the F-16 and carries 205 rounds of ammunition in a linear linkless feed system.

Both T-50 versions have seven stores stations (one on each wingtip, two under each wing and one on the fuselage centerline), have a stores management system, are able to carry up to 9,500 pounds of external load and will be certified to carry up to three 150-gallon external fuel tanks.

The T-50 LIFT version will be certified to employ the gun and various combinations of SUU-20 training dispensers (carrying BDU-33 practice bombs and 2.75-inch rockets), MK-82 500-pound bombs, MK-83 1,000-pound bombs, MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, TGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground training missiles, AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and the Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation pod.

The LIFT version will be used by ROKAF to train its new graduate pilots in basic fighter tactics and weapons employment. ROKAF also refers to the T-50 LIFT version as the A-50.

"The T-50 LIFT will provide us greater efficiency and cost savings," said Col. Lee, Hee Woo, director of Development Management of ROKAF. "First, the pilots selected for fighters will transition rapidly from the T-50 AJT that they flew in the undergraduate program and can concentrate on the new tactical skills. Second, with the T-50's near-fighter capabilities, we can download much of the basic fighter training that is being performed in our operational fighters, thus preserving service life on the latter and reducing operational and support costs for our air force."

The first flight met its goals of checking airworthiness, basic systems operation and handling qualities of the aircraft, plus the test instrumentation and telemetry. All systems functioned properly, with no anomalies. During the 41-minute flight, the test aircraft reached a maximum altitude of 22,000 feet and a maximum speed of 310 knots indicated airspeed.

"As expected, the T-50 LIFT aircraft performed identically with the AJT version," said Maj. Lee, Choong Hwan, ROKAF T-50 test pilot for the first flight. "The common performance and handling characteristics will simplify testing, documentation and training for our pilots."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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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