KAI And Lockheed Martin's T-50 Lead-In Fighter Trainer Successfully Completes Ground Gunfire Tests

Ground gunfire testing was successfully completed recently on the Lead-In Fighter Trainer (LIFT) version of the T-50 Golden Eagle supersonic jet trainer. The T-50 LIFT version bridges the gap between initial pilot training and operational training.

"We were very pleased with the results of the gunfire testing," said Jeong, Kyoo Cheon, director of T-50 Avionics & Flight Control System. "All required data was successfully recorded and is being analyzed. The gun performed flawlessly and is ready for in-flight operation. The gun will be an important part of the T-50 LIFT version and is expected to be a requirement of any combat derivative of the T-50."

The gun was tested inside a new gunfiring facility at Korea Aerospace Industries' (KAI) facility in Sachon, South Korea. Supporting the tests were engineers from Lockheed Martin , the principal subcontractor for the program, and the gun supplier, General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products (GDATP).

The purposes of the tests were to verify installed gun operation, projectile path and gun port design; to measure structural response and acoustic noise levels; and to verify that no external damage to the canopy or systems results from debris expelled during gunfiring. Vibration instrumentation was installed to measure gunfire-induced vibration loads to aircraft components including avionics, flight controls and other subsystems.

Twelve hundred rounds were fired during the two weeks of tests. The ground tests are a prerequisite for gunfiring flight tests, scheduled for next year, and will be used as supporting data for aircraft certification.

A scoring system supplied by GDATP was installed in the facility to electronically measure projectile dispersion and gun bias. This information will be used for refinements to the algorithm used for aiming symbology in the pilot's head-up display.

The T-50 LIFT gun is a 20mm Gatling-type with three barrels capable of firing 3,000 rounds per minute. It is a lighter weight version of the standard six-barrel M61 gun used on the F-16 and many other aircraft. The gun will be used for both ground strafing and aerial gunnery training.

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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