

F/A-22 Raptor Program Operations Accelerating Toward High-Rate Production

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The F/A-22 Raptor air dominance fighter program -- led by Lockheed Martin -- is producing aircraft at an ever increasing rate and is on track for 2004.

"During the first half of this year, we built 10 Raptors -- that's almost as many jets as we built during all of 2003," said Ralph Heath, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. and general manager of the F/A-22 Raptor program. "We're well on our way to building the 19 F/A-22s we promised the Air Force we'd build during 2004."

Earlier this month, the Air Force awarded the F/A-22 program its fourth production lot contract -- raising the current number of Raptors on order to 74 production jets, with 50 aircraft yet to be built through 2006. In addition, the President's Fiscal Year 2005 defense budget includes a request for 24 more jets, to be built as part of F/A-22 production lot 5.

Looking forward, Raptor production lot 6 is expected to include 26 F/A-22 aircraft and the Pentagon is expected to make a decision during 2005 as to whether the Raptor program is ready to begin high-rate production -- approximately three aircraft per month. "We believe the F/A-22 is on solid footing and ready to move into high-rate production starting with production lot 6 during 2006," Heath said.

Meanwhile, Initial Operational Test & Evaluation (IOT&E) of the F/A-22 Raptor is underway. While Lockheed Martin has no formal role in the Air Force's independent IOT&E assessment of the F/A-22, "we're confident that the Raptor's transformational warfighting capabilities will be proven, and that the F/A-22 will be deemed operationally effective as a result of these trials," Heath said.

IOT&E is expected to conclude this summer, with a final report on the F/A-22's performance expected before year's end.

In summary, the F/A-22 program is "wrapping up development, ramping up production, awaiting the final results of IOT&E, and working with the Air Force to plan for the continuous improvement of the Raptor through the service's spiral development modernization process; this will ensure the F/A-22 remains on the cutting-edge and capable of defeating sophisticated threats and performing other vital military missions for decades to come," Heath said.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The F/A-22 Raptor air dominance fighter is the world's first military aircraft to benefit from a balanced design incorporating of stealth, speed, extreme agility and superior information technologies that enable the jet to simultaneously conduct air-to-air and air-to-ground combat missions successfully and with near impunity amid large numbers of sophisticated airborne and ground-based threats. 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 1,000 subcontractors and suppliers in 43 states. To date, 27 F/A-22 aircraft have been delivered to the U.S. Air Force, with Raptors in operation at Edwards AFB, Calif., Nellis AFB, Nevada, and Tyndall AFB, Florida where they routinely demonstrated the F/A-22's unique and transformational warfighting capabilities. The Raptor will replace the U.S. Air Force's F-15C Eagle; the service has a requirement for at least 381 F/A-22s. Initial operational capability of the F/A-22 is expected to be achieved December 2005 at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, research and 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, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2. The company produces major components for the F-2 fighter, and is a co-developer of the C-27J tactical transport and T-50 advanced jet trainer.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2003 sales of \$31.8 billion.

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