T-50, World's Only New Supersonic Trainer, Moving Forward In Development And Production

The T-50 Golden Eagle, being developed by Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) with the assistance of Lockheed Martin , is moving forward rapidly in both development and production, according to T-50 International marketing directors Robie Notestine of Lockheed Martin and Dr. Alex Jun of KAI.

"The T-50 team -- consisting of the Republic of Korea government, the Korean Air Force, KAI, Lockheed Martin and the rest of the top-notch suppliers -- have worked extremely well together since Full Scale Development began seven years ago," said Jun. "We believe the expertise and cooperation of this team is resulting in the world's best jet trainer."

Notestine explained how a supersonic, high-performance trainer is necessary to smooth the transition of new pilots to their first operational fighter. He pointed out that the T-50 closely approximates the performance and handling qualities of modern fighters, yet it is easy and safe to fly. He mentioned cost savings associated with operating one-type aircraft for all jet training needs. "The T-50 can also offload basic weapons and tactics training from the more expensive-to-operate fighters in operational squadrons," he said.

Notestine described T-50 features that are common with modern operational fighters, providing high performance. These include low drag external lines with wing-body blending, a variable camber swept wing with strakes, relaxed static stability, a rugged airframe capable of 8g turns, a powerful afterburning turbofan engine and a digital electronic flight control system. The Lead-In Fighter Trainer version also has an internal 20mm gun, a modern multimode radar and a multirole weapons capability with seven external store stations.

"The T-50 not only has the performance, it also has the integrated avionics, cockpit and other subsystems that are typical of modern fighters," Notestine said. "In addition, the T-50 has a number of special features that significantly enhance its utility as a trainer and provide additional safety."

The T-50 team pointed out that their program is the first to offer a total training system package that includes a full-up ground-based training system for both pilots and maintenance personnel.

"The T-50 Full-Scale Development program is doing very well and is on track for completion at the end of 2005," said Jun. "All ground testing is on schedule. Flight testing is also doing well, with more than 450 flights completed using four test aircraft. We recently began high-angle-of-attack testing, and the aircraft is very well behaved when forced into this regime by overriding the limiters."

The production program is off to a fast start. Last December the contract for the first 25 aircraft was issued by the launch customer, the Republic of Korea. Already, major components for the first two aircraft are coming together at KAI's modern factory in Sacheon, South Korea. This will lead to fuselage mate of the first aircraft this December, followed by completion and delivery late next year. All of this and the associated integrated logistics support and training systems will support initial operations by the Republic of Korea Air Force in early 2006, in accordance with the program schedule.

"Market potential for ROKAF is between 100 and 300 aircraft," said Notestine. "And there are prospects for another 600 aircraft sales on the international market, for a total potential of 900 aircraft over the next 25 years."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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, 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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