

Precision, Environmental Sensitivity Are Hallmarks Of New F-35 Robotic Coatings Facility At Lockheed Martin

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An 82,000-square-foot facility that will employ advanced robots to apply precisely measured coatings to F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) components also will set new standards for environmental friendliness.

JSF program officials dedicated the cavernous F-35 Robotic Component Finish Facility at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth on Tuesday, Sept. 14. The building, which connects to the factory floor where F-35s are being assembled, contains five multi-purpose finish rooms and two robotic finish rooms, along with control and support areas. Both robotic and human workers will use the facility to apply a variety of coatings to a wide array of F-35 parts, both small and large.

"This facility will improve coating speed, precision and efficiency, all of which will contribute to cost-containment on this affordability-based program," said Robert T. Elrod, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and F-35 JSF program general manager. "Just as importantly, the facility's minimal environmental impact will stand as the new touchstone for military aircraft programs."

Energy conservation and emissions control are key elements in the facility's operation. Chilled-water use is reduced by 40 percent and steam use is cut by 60 percent over previous systems. The air-handling equipment, which maintains critical temperature and humidity conditions inside the building, extracts up to 10,000 gallons of water per day from the outside air and recycles it in a nearby cooling tower. Robots will apply aircraft coatings that are free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and a high-efficiency air-filtration system will remove more than 99 percent of particulate emissions from the facility. The new facility exceeds Lockheed Martin's already-stringent standards for safeguarding the environment.

The F-35 program already has received recognition for its efforts to promote environmental responsibility. In April 2003, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented its Environmental Achievement Award to Lockheed Martin's Palmdale, Calif., plant for the company's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Design for Environment process, which made dramatic reductions in the program's use of hazardous materials. The award recognized "exceptional work and commitment to the environment."

The F-35 is a next-generation, supersonic, multi-role stealth aircraft designed to replace the AV-8B Harrier, A-10, F-16, F/A-18 Hornet and the United Kingdom's Harrier GR.7 and Sea Harrier. Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 in conjunction with Northrop Grumman and BAE SYSTEMS. Companies worldwide are participating in the F-35's development. Two propulsion teams, led by Pratt & Whitney and General Electric, are developing separate interchangeable engines for the F-35.

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 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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