Avionics Integration For F-35 First Flight Shows Early Success At Lockheed Martin

Initial integration testing of the Communication, Navigation and Identification (CNI) suite for the first flight of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter has begun at Lockheed Martin's Mission Systems Integration Lab (MSIL) in Fort Worth.

The initial tests of the first-flight CNI suite verified the operation of UHF and VHF communication, radar altimeter, intercom, integrated caution and warning, and identification-friend-or-foe capabilities. Over a three-week period the team tested each capability, generating early confidence in the system's design and stability.

Assembly of the first F-35 is under way, with first flight planned for 2006.

"The F-35's first-flight CNI system is being integrated into the Mission Systems Integration Lab and initial tests were flawless," said Bob Elrod, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and F-35 JSF program general manager. "The success of these early tests highlights the contributions and teamwork of multiple team partners, and helps to keep the F-35's first-flight schedule on track."

The F-35's first-flight CNI system was designed and integrated by Northrop Grumman'sSpace Technology sector, mostly using current-inventory federated systems. Northrop Grumman developed a customized interface adaptor unit to serve as the "interpreter" between these off-the-shelf components and the F-35's displays and controls.

Hardware and software integration of the F-35's integrated CNI suite will begin soon at Northrop Grumman's Radio Systems lab facilities in San Diego.

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. Three F-35 variants -- a conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL), a short-takeoff/vertical-landing (STOVL) and a carrier variant (CV) -- each derived from a common design will ensure that the F-35 meets the performance needs of the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, the U.K. Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, and allied defense forces worldwide, while staying within strict affordability targets.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 in collaboration with its principal partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE SYSTEMS. Northrop Grumman's Space Technology sector is leading an international team that is providing the F-35's CNI suite.

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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