Lockheed Martin Adds Night Vision Goggle Capability To U.S. Air Force's F-16 Mission Training Center

Lockheed Martin successfully demonstrated the addition of a night vision goggle capability to the F-16 Mission Training Centers (MTC) it produces for the U.S. Air Force. The enhancement, which enables pilots to train more realistically, was demonstrated for Air Force officials during a recent Critical Design Review, satisfying a major milestone for the production to field night vision goggle (NVG) capability in all F-16 MTC pilot training systems.

"Current combat missions require pilots to use NVG and master that skill in order to ensure their decisive advantage," said Jerry Keehner, Lockheed Martin program director of simulation and training. "The NVG training capability provides pilots night sensory and visual cue training, which is crucial for mission preparedness and flight safety."

In training, pilots will wear goggles fitted with a night-vision display channel correlated with the cockpit visual scene. Controlled by helmet-mounted sensors, the NVG allows pilots to see the appropriate night-vision database in every direction. Working under a $3.7 million Air Force development contract, Lockheed Martin teamed with MultiGen-Paradigm, Inc., and Silicon Graphics, Inc. to create the hardware and sensor system package.

"Because of the unique tool set our team developed, we are able to successfully integrate the night vision database with the high-fidelity out the window visual database," said Jeff Prulhiere, Lockheed Martin F-16 MTC program manager. "In the aircraft, pilots can see below their goggles to gain aspect cues so we incorporated that realism into the training. We also improved the head tracking concept by using ultrasonic sensors in the cockpit to instantly track the pilots head movements and therefore increase responsiveness in the NVG system."

Two four-cockpit MTCs are supporting training at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, and Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. A two-cockpit MTC is operational at Mt. Home AFB, Idaho. A four-cockpit MTC will be delivered to Misawa Air Base, Japan, in 2005.

The F-16 MTC delivers immersive training with realistic visual cues and real-time correlation between the high-resolution 360-degree visual system and the high-fidelity simulation of aircraft performance. F-16 MTCs will be capable of long-haul network operations tied with other Air Force simulation assets over a long-haul network.

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.

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