DOD Approves Lockheed Martin F/A-22 Raptor Aircraft For Full-Rate Production

The Lockheed Martin F/A-22 Raptor fighter aircraft has been given the green light by Department of Defense acquisition officials to enter into full-rate production.

An acquisition decision information paper released by the Department of Defense on April 18 states "The Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) [Michael W. Wynne] approved the full rate production capability of the F/A-22." This decision officially transitions the Air Force's premier fighter program to a new level of confidence and maturity.

"This is great news for warfighters whether they are soldiers on the ground or airmen guarding the skies," said Larry Lawson, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company executive vice president and general manager of the F/A-22 program.

"This decision reflects confidence in the performance of the aircraft demonstrated during an exhaustive Independent Operational Test & Evaluation program as well as the team's proven ability to produce the aircraft," Lawson added. "This is the culmination of a tremendous effort put forward by many in the Air Force as well as industry. The Raptor team understands the overwhelming capability the F/A-22 provides is vital today and must also be relevant for three to four decades to come."

This F/A-22 program milestone follows initial operational test findings in February and March by both the Air Force and the Department of Defense, which judged the aircraft to be "overwhelming effective" in its performance. Air Force pilots will be able to dominate any engagement with the Raptor. The F/A-22 will provide protection for troops no matter where they are, to an extent never before possible.

The F/A-22 Raptor, the world's most advanced fighter, is built by Lockheed Martin in partnership with Boeing and Pratt & Whitney. Parts and subsystems are provided by approximately 1,000 suppliers in 42 states. F/A-22 production takes place at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics facilities in Palmdale, Calif.; Meridian, Miss.; Marietta, Ga.; and Fort Worth, Texas, as well as at Boeing's plant in Seattle, Wash. Final assembly and initial flight testing of the Raptor occurs at the Marietta plant facilities.

The Raptor is slated to reach initial operational capability in December 2005 at Langley Air Force Base, Va. The F/A-22's balanced design of stealth, supercruise speed, supportability and super-agility, along with its advanced integrated avionics, will enable combat commanders to change the way future wars are fought.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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