T-50 Advanced Jet Trainer Transitioning Rapidly Into Production

The T-50 Golden Eagle advanced jet trainer program is rapidly transitioning from the Full Scale Development (FSD) phase into the production phase, according to international marketing directors Dr. Alex Jun from Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) and Robie Notestine of Lockheed Martin .

KAI is the prime contractor for the T-50, and Lockheed Martin is the principal subcontractor assisting with development of the new high-performance trainer. The two companies are joint participants in international marketing of the T-50.

"The T-50 continues to accomplish all of its FSD program milestones on schedule and with no show stoppers," said Notestine. "This has included static and fatigue structural testing, hot and cold climatic testing, and developmental testing of the aircraft, support systems and training systems. The Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) recently accomplished operational testing on the integrated logistics support system and will conduct final operational testing of both the aircraft and the ground-based training system later this summer. These will be the 'final exams,' and we expect high grades based on our success in development testing and in last year's initial operational testing."

Jun said, "Our flight test program has gone extremely well. At the start of this year Gen. Lee, the ROKAF chief of staff and an experienced fighter pilot and test pilot, flew the aircraft and was very complimentary of its high performance, excellent handling qualities, and modern cockpit and avionics.

"In April we completed our 1,000th flight out of 1,250 planned and were 90 percent complete on flight test objectives. The reliability of the aircraft is evident in that 90 percent of all test flights were completed with no discrepancies, almost unheard of for a new aircraft in development.

"We have begun weapon delivery from our lead-in fighter (LIFT) version and this month expect to deliver several types of guided missiles and 500-pound bombs. We expect to complete flight testing this September."

Notestine mentioned that the team planned to display and fly the T-50 at the air shows in Seoul and Dubai, in October and November, respectively.

"As good as the development program has been, our production program is doing even better," Jun said. "Of course, we can trace much of this success to the development program. We received our first production contract from the ROKAF just 18 months ago and started final assembly on the first aircraft last December. Now we have major components of 10 aircraft in work, with five aircraft in final assembly.

"The first aircraft is nearing completion and has already been painted. It will undergo extensive ground testing and is expected to fly in August. We are planning a rollout ceremony for this aircraft in September and hope to formally deliver it to the ROKAF soon afterward. The contract does not require delivery until December, so we are running two to three months ahead of schedule. We believe this to be unprecedented in modern times.

"All elements are on track to support initial operations of the aircraft by the ROKAF training command in early 2006.

"We all agree that the success of this program is the result of the professional expertise and teamwork of all of the participants, both from the Korean government and the international industrial team," Jun said.

Notestine indicated the ROKAF could buy additional aircraft beyond the original 94 it has planned. He added that market studies indicate potential worldwide sales of up to 900 aircraft over the next 30 years.

The T-50 Total Training System will be an ideal solution for the training needs of many top-rate air forces, Notestine and Jun agreed. With both the advanced jet trainer and the LIFT versions, student pilots will progress from primary trainers to high-performance, modern operational fighters in a very cost-effective manner. Also, potential cost savings exist due to downloading much of the initial fighter pilot qualification training from more-expensive- to-operate fighters.

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 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

High resolution photo of the T-50 is available at the following URL:
http://www.lockheedmartin.com/wms/findPage.do?dsp=fec&ci=16876&rsbci=15047&fti =0&ti=0&sc=400

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