Lockheed Martin F-22 Rated 'Mission Capable' By U.S. Air Force

Follow-On Test and Evaluation (FOT&E) for the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor was officially completed with the U.S. Air Force announcement late last week rating the world's only 5th Generation stealth fighter in operation "Mission Capable," one of the highest ratings achievable.

"This is another great day for the Air Force, the Lockheed Martin-led industry team, and of course our nation, to receive such a validating test rating," said Larry Lawson, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and general manager of the F-22 program.

The Air Force FOT&E announcement comes on the heels of the Air Force declaration last month of "Initial Operational Capability" for the F-22 Raptor. "Having this revolutionary combat capability of stealth, speed and precision ready to conduct operations anywhere in the world is good news for our allies and should cause our adversaries to pause," said Lawson.

"This was a significant milestone in terms of validating the F-22's combat capability," said Maj. Gen. Robin Scott, commander of the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), N.M. Other senior officers familiar with the evaluation also noted that this was the most complex operational test ever done on a tactical aircraft.

Follow-On Test and Evaluation, conducted primarily from Nellis AFB, Nev., leveraged the overwhelmingly effective operational performance of the aircraft and played a key role in the U.S. Air Force's ability to declare F-22 Initial Operational Capability. The evaluation tested air-to-ground Joint Direct Attack Munitions capability, and showed improved sustainment performance compared to that observed during Initial Operational Test & Evaluation (IOT&E) at Edwards AFB, Calif., in 2003-2004. The F-22 was called "overwhelmingly effective" in its air-to-air performance during IOT&E.

Currently, the F-22 Raptor flies at four U.S. bases:

* Development and modernization testing is conducted at Edwards AFB.
* Tactics development and future FOT&E will be conducted at Nellis AFB.
* A full squadron of Raptors is based at Tyndall AFB, Fla., for pilot and maintainer training.
* Raptor aircraft are being delivered to and are flying at Langley AFB, Va. The 1st Fighter Wing's 27th Fighter Squadron of Air Combat Command is the first operational squadron to fly the F-22 Raptor.

"The F-22 Raptor's unmatched features -- stealth, speed and precision -- are factors that will enable combatant commanders to use Raptors to shorten wars and save lives. That's what makes this aircraft relevant today and for the next four decades," said Lawson.

The F-22 Raptor, the world's most advanced 5th Generation 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-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 F-22 occurs at the Marietta plant facilities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 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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