Poland F-16 Has Successful First Flight

Lockheed Martin announces successful completion of the maiden flight of the first Polish F-16 aircraft. The flight took place in Ft. Worth, Texas, USA and marks a key milestone in the success of the Peace Sky program. The F-16 flown yesterday is part of a 48-aircraft order by the Government of Poland and is planned for delivery to the Polish Air Force later this year.

The pilot for the first flight was Paul Hattendorf, a company test pilot for Lockheed Martin. He performed numerous system checks, including engine throttle transients at various altitudes and radar checks using a photo chase F-16 as a simulated target. Hattendorf also took the aircraft to supersonic speeds and performed high-g maneuvers during the flight, which lasted just over an hour. After several additional check flights by both company and U.S. Air Force test pilots, this first Polish F-16 is scheduled to be ferried to Edwards AFB, Calif., in April for more system-specific testing.

"The Poland Peace Sky program continues to progress right on schedule," said Irma Sippel, director of the Poland F-16 program. "First flight is a significant milestone and the first of several leading to the planned arrival of the aircraft in Poland later this year. We continue to be excited about our progress and about meeting our customer's expectations."

The F-16, selected by 24 countries, is the multi-role fighter of choice. It has more than 12 million flight hours among more than 4,300 aircraft produced.

"The record number of customer reorders reinforces the value of this incredible fighter, which shares technological enhancements with the 5TH Generation F-22 and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter," said June Shrewsbury, vice president of F-16 programs. "Today's F-16 is the most advanced fighter in international service. It is the most combat-tested multi-role aircraft, carrying the most up-to-date weapons and having lowest possible acquisition, operation and support costs."

When delivered, Polish F-16s will be the most advanced in NATO. Features of the Block 52+ include an AN/APG-68(V) 9 radar fire control system and a Sniper Extended Range pod, which is an advanced targeting pod designed with an infrared pointer, laser, day TV, forward looking infrared, laser spot tracker and advanced algorithms. The pod delivers superior tracking performance and reliability. Additionally, the multi-role fighter developed for Poland is equipped with a helmet-mounted cueing system used for directing precision guided munitions and off-boresight missiles as well as for increasing pilot situational awareness. The aircraft is designed to be fully interoperable with NATO and European Union missions.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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