F-35 Finishes All Taxi Testing, Prepares For Flight

The first Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II successfully completed all ground taxi tests today, among some of the last activities clearing the way for its inaugural flight.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20061212/DATU049)

In a series of tests that began on Dec. 7, F-35 Chief Pilot Jon Beesley guided the fighter along the runway at increasing speeds to evaluate the aircraft's ground handling and systems. On Dec. 12, Beesley executed two final taxi runs, the first at 80 knots (~ 92 m.p.h.) and the last at 110 knots (~ 127 m.p.h.). Pushed along by the Pratt & Whitney F135 turbofan -- the most powerful fighter engine in history -- the Lightning II performed its final taxi runs successfully and as predicted.

Over the next 24 hours the flight test team will review all taxi-test data, and although the date for first flight is not definite, the flight window will be from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. CST when all conditions -- weather, etc. - - are "go."

Media will be immediately apprised via Media Advisory upon conclusion of the flight about a press availability at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth. There also will be a Live International Press Teleconference to be held at the same time, as well as information for a same-day satellite video feed of first flight.

* Flight photos will be available after the flight on site and online at http://www.lockheedmartin.com/wms/findPage.do?dsp=fnec&ti=129&cpi=1&rsbci=1 and http://www.teamjsf.com/ .

* A phone-in news conference will begin about two hours after completion of first flight. Call-in information will be provided in a subsequent advisory.

* The satellite video feed will be released shortly following completion of first flight.

* Satellite-coordinate information will be provided in a subsequent advisory.

* The flightline media opportunity at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth will also be available at the conclusion of the phone-in news conference.

The stealthy F-35 is a supersonic, multi-role, 5TH Generation fighter designed to replace a wide range of existing aircraft, including AV-8B Harriers, A-10s, F-16s, F/A-18 Hornets and United Kingdom Harrier GR.7s and Sea Harriers.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 Lightning II with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems. Two separate, interchangeable F-35 engines are under development: the Pratt & Whitney F135 and the GE Rolls-Royce Fighter Engine Team F136.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 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.

For additional information, visit our Web sites:
http://www.lockheedmartin.com/
http://teamjsf.com/

An F-35 electronic media kit is available at: http://www.lockheedmartin.com/wms/findPage.do?dsp=fec&ci=15965&rsbci=13151&fti

=0&ti=0&sc=400

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