Lockheed Martin Awarded Phase II Advanced Composite Cargo Aircraft Flight Demonstration Contract

The United States Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) has authorized Lockheed Martinto proceed to Phase II of the Advanced Composite Cargo Aircraft (ACCA) Flight Demonstration contract.

"This contract represents an important first step to advance composite usage on next-generation tactical air mobility transports," said Frank Cappuccio, executive vice president and general manager, Advanced Development Programs (the Skunk Works(R)), Lockheed Martin.

Under the contract, Lockheed Martin will build and flight-demonstrate an X-Plane type aircraft with emphasis on innovative structural configurations and concepts to include advanced prototyping and composite technologies. Its solution involves replacement of the mid/aft fuselage and empennage of a Dornier 328J aircraft with advanced composites within the required 12-month schedule.

"With ACCA we are attempting to reinvent the manufacturing paradigm through the strategic use of composite manufacturing technologies," said Frank Mauro, vice president, Advanced Systems Development, Advanced Development Programs (the Skunk Works(R)), Lockheed Martin. "This is an important opportunity to forever change the way composites are used in aircraft manufacturing, leading to lighter, less expensive, more durable aircraft that are easier to maintain."

Lockheed Martin's integration of advanced composites on the ACCA flight demonstrator will enable a reduction of 80-90 percent in parts count and a dramatic reduction in corrosion and fatigue issues compared to conventional aircraft manufacturing approaches. Planned growth provisions will allow it to be used well into the future as a technology workhorse for additional air mobility advanced transport experiments. Further, ACCA will provide production traceability allowing the key technologies to be applicable to a broad spectrum of next generation aircraft including long range strike, unmanned systems and future air mobility transports.

ACCA is a capstone demonstration of several technologies developed under recent Department of Defense Contracted Research and Development (CRAD) programs, particularly the Composite Affordability Initiative. "AFRL is excited to authorize Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works(R) to proceed with their highly innovative demonstration program," said Barth Shenk, AFRL program manager. AFRL is currently investigating opportunities for Aurora Flight Sciences to collaborate with Lockheed Martin and AFRL in the demonstration of additional technologies and capabilities for future transport structures.

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.

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