U.S. Air Force Announces F-22 Raptor Ready For Operations World-Wide

The U.S. Air Force declared Full Operational Capability (FOC) for Lockheed Martin'sF-22 Raptor today, marking another historic occasion for the world's only 5th generation fighter in production. Gen. John Corley, Air Combat Command Commander (ACC), made the announcement from Langley Air Force Base, Va., home of ACC headquarters and the 1st Fighter Wing, the first unit to fly the F-22 operationally.

"After years of collaborative effort, a key milestone for the F-22 has been reached," said Gen. Corley. "The Raptor's success at Langley with the integration of active duty and Guard airmen is the showcase example of ACC's shared vision with Air Force leadership for the Total Force Integration of tomorrow."

FOC signifies the Raptor has fulfilled all performance and operational requirements for the weapon system, Gen. Corley said. It affirms the entire program, from the aircraft to the pilots and maintenance crews, is ready for a myriad of operations, including employment in a wartime environment.

"This announcement means the F-22 is ready for world-wide operations, should it be called upon," said Larry Lawson, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics executive vice president and F-22 general manager. "It's a great day for our nation and for the men and women who fly and maintain this incredible aircraft. They deserve the best our country can provide, and the F-22 will stand in the gap providing air dominance and air cover for those who defend us on the ground for the next four decades."

The 27th Fighter Squadron at Langley was the first squadron to become operational with the F-22. Since the initial operational capability announcement in 2005, Raptors have been delivered to three additional squadrons, which, along with an Air National Guard associate unit and an Air Force Reserve associate unit, have truly made the Raptor a Total Force asset.

"The F-22 has proven its operational capability and maturity leading up to this important announcement," said Lawson. "The Air Force declares Full Operational Capability after excelling in numerous operational tests such as the deployment to Kadena Air Base in Japan, Red Flag, Combat Hammer and the Northern Edge exercise in Alaska along with completing aircraft deliveries to the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB."

Raptors are currently assigned to five U.S. bases. Flight testing takes place at Edwards AFB, Calif. Operational tactics development is ongoing at Nellis AFB, Nev. Pilot and maintainer training takes place at Tyndall AFB, Fla. Operational Raptors are assigned to Langley AFB, Va. and at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. Raptors will also be based at Holloman AFB, N.M., and Hickam AFB, Hawaii.

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 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

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SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

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