

First Battery Of THAAD Weapon System Activated At Fort Bliss

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The U.S. Army today activated the first battery of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) Weapon System, developed by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and produced by Lockheed Martin, in a ceremony at Fort Bliss, TX.

Alpha Battery/4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, 32nd Army Air & Missile Defense Command will receive 24 THAAD interceptors, three THAAD launchers, a THAAD Fire Control and a THAAD radar as part of the initial fielding. In addition, the battery will have logistics support assets, such as the Battery Support Center and Integrated Contractor Support System, as well as the necessary spares for a fielded unit.

"This is a historic day for the U.S. Army's Air Defense community," said Tom McGrath, program manager and vice president for THAAD at Lockheed Martin. "The first battery receiving the THAAD Weapon System signifies that we are one step closer to the day THAAD will be protecting our Soldiers, friends and allies around the globe."

The A4 Battery is receiving the THAAD Weapon System now to allow the unit to prepare for full-system fielding beginning in 2009. Unit training on the THAAD equipment is already underway. The first New Equipment Training Classes began in April, and the battery is well on its way to creating an operational unit.

"The THAAD Weapon System is enjoying excellent success in this current development phase," McGrath continued. "THAAD's precision engagement capabilities, combined with the power of the hit-to-kill engagement, offer the Warfighter tremendous protection from the threats of today and tomorrow. Soldiers from Fort Bliss have successfully operated the THAAD system in flight testing for two years, and will continue as flight testing progresses."

THAAD flight testing continues later this year, with two flights scheduled before the end of Fiscal Year 2008 in September and two during FY09, which commences October 1. Since November 2005, the THAAD Weapon System program has conducted seven successful flight tests, including four tests involving the successful intercept of threat representative targets.

A production contract for the first two fire units was awarded to Lockheed Martin in late 2006. THAAD launcher and fire control and communications unit production will take place at Lockheed Martin's manufacturing facility in Camden, AR. Interceptor production is conducted at Lockheed Martin's Pike County Facility in Troy, AL.

THAAD is designed to defend U.S. troops, allied forces, population centers and critical infrastructure against short-to intermediate-range ballistic missiles. THAAD comprises a fire control and communications system, interceptors, launchers and a radar. The THAAD interceptor uses hit-to-kill technology to destroy targets, and THAAD is the only weapon system that engages threat ballistic missiles at both endo- and exo-atmospheric altitudes.

A key element of the nation's Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS), THAAD is a Missile Defense Agency program, with the program office located in Huntsville, AL. The agency is developing a BMDS to defend the United States, its deployed forces, friends and allies against ballistic missiles of all ranges and in all phases of flight.

Lockheed Martin is a world leader in systems integration and the development of air and missile defense systems and technologies, including the first operational hit-to-kill missile. It also has considerable experience in missile design and production, infrared seekers, command and control/battle management, and communications, precision pointing and tracking optics, as well as radar and signal processing. The company makes significant contributions to all major U.S. missile defense systems and participates in several global missile defense partnerships.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, 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 2007 sales of \$41.9 billion.

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