T-50 Golden Eagle Delivers Disciplined Performance In Training For Next Generation Fighter Pilots

Training for future generations of fighter pilots is now a reality, as the T-50 Golden Eagle looks forward to graduating additional classes of Korean air force student pilots this year.

The third class of officers has graduated from the T-50's total advanced training system, meaning 41 officers have graduated to date, announced J.R. Wildridge, director of T-50 Business Development for Lockheed Martin during a briefing at the Farnborough Air Show today.

The T-50, co-developed by Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) and Lockheed Martin, is Korea's first indigenous supersonic aircraft and the world's only high performance, supersonic trainer in production today. The T-50 is exceeding the expectations of operational pilots with its technological advances and capabilities.

"The T-50 provides a cost-effective bridge for air forces around the world, from primary training to high performance fighters," said Wildridge. "The T-50 is relatively easy to fly in terms of airframe design, digital flight controls, and on-board systems. It includes embedded training features, a mission planning and debriefing system, as well as a comprehensive ground-based training system."

The supersonic T-50 with its maneuverability, endurance and systems integration provides an excellent capability and functions as a lead-in fighter trainer (LIFT) for the Republic of Korea Air Force. The main differences from the advanced jet trainer (AJT) are the addition of armament and multi-mode fire control radar.

Currently, the ROKAF is using the T-50s delivered last year for instructor pilot training. Plans are to deliver a total of 72 T-50s to the ROKAF for AJT and LIFT. To date 25 aircraft have been delivered to the ROKAF, all on schedule.

Both KAI and Lockheed Martin agree that with both the advanced jet trainer and the LIFT versions, student pilots will progress from primary trainers to high-performance, modern operational fighters in a very cost-effective manner, providing an ideal solution for the training needs of many air forces around the world.

Development of a light combat variant of the T-50, called the FA-50, is expected to begin later this year. The Korean government is also expected to order at least 60 FA-50s to replace older aircraft in Korea's inventory, and has also announced its intent to build 10 additional T-50 aircraft for the ROKAF's use as part of an aerial demonstration team called the "Black Eagles."

KAI is the prime contractor for the T-50 and Lockheed Martin is the principal subcontractor assisting with development of the new high-performance trainer. The two companies are joint participants in international marketing of the T-50.

Korea Aerospace Industries Ltd. is the Republic of Korea's national aerospace company, established in 1999 with the consolidation of Samsung Aerospace, Daewoo Heavy Industries and Hyundai Space and Aircraft Co. KAI lines of business include fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter aircraft and satellites. Its major products are the KF-16, KT-1 basic trainer, T-50, SB427 helicopter, UAVs, aerostructures and KOMPSAT satellite program.

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 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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