Lockheed Martin F-35A Achieves Another Milestone: Deploys To Edwards Air Force Base For Expanded Testing

The Lockheed Martin F-35A successfully flew from Fort Worth, Texas, to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Oct. 1 to begin expanded flight testing and initiate test activities at Edwards. Flying non-stop for more than 1,000 nautical miles, this was the aircraft's first long-range, cross-country flight.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20081003/LAF058)

"The ferry flight out was perfect," said F-35 Test Pilot Jeff Knowles. "The aircraft performed exactly as expected. Inflight refueling was flawless and we landed with no maintenance discrepancies. We couldn't have asked for a more successful first long-range flight."

During the F-35's deployment to Edwards, the flight test team will conduct ground and flight test activities for propulsion, aerial refueling and logistical support, and will hold training exercises for the test team.

"We expect to begin local Edwards flight operations next week after the test team has received the appropriate local-area orientation," said Doug Pearson, Lockheed Martin vice president of the F-35 Integrated Test Force. "Support from the Air Force Flight Test Center has been outstanding and I look forward to an efficient, innovative and very productive F-35 flight test program."

All 19 F-35 Developmental Test aircraft are currently in production and will be completed by the end of 2009. Additionally, production has begun on the first four Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) aircraft.

The F-35 Lightning II is a supersonic, multi-role, 5th generation stealth fighter, formidable at both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. The three F-35 variants are derived from a common design and use the same sustainment infrastructure worldwide to replace at least 13 types of aircraft for 11 nations, making the Lightning II the most cost-effective fighter program in history.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 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 is a global security company that 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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