Second Ground-Test F-35 Lightning II Rolls Out On Schedule, Prepares For Testing In The United Kingdom

Lockheed Martin's second F-35 Lightning II ground-test aircraft rolled out on Wednesday at the company's Fort Worth plant, where it will be fully instrumented before being shipped to the United Kingdom for testing.

The new F-35, called AG-1, is the full-scale static test article for the conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) variant, which will be flown by the U.S. Air Force and eight of the nine F-35 partner countries. The static test aircraft for the short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) variant was delivered earlier this year and has successfully completed a third of its planned test program in Fort Worth.

"AG-1 will be placed in a state-of-the-art test rig where twisting, bending and pulling forces are applied to validate that the CTOL variant's structure can sustain the tremendous forces and loads exerted during flight," said Dan Crowley, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and F-35 program general manager. "This test article enables F-35 to retire technical risk as quickly as possible so flight testing can progress toward the CTOL's full nine-G performance envelope on schedule."

In late March, AG-1 will depart Fort Worth by truck and will be transferred to a cargo ship for the final voyage to the BAE Systems Structures Laboratory in Brough, England. Arrival is expected in late April. Prior to shipping, AG-1 will undergo pressure testing of the canopy and fuel tanks, and will be outfitted with final instrumentation and load-application pads and fittings.

Upon the completion of the full-scale static testing program, AG-1 will be shipped back to the United States.

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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