Lockheed Martin Meets F-35 Schedule Commitment With Roll-Out Of Radar-Signature Test Aircraft

A detailed, full-scale representation of the Lockheed MartinF-35 Lightning II stealth fighter rolled out of the Fort Worth factory today, with production-representative Very Low Observable airframe structure and coatings. Along with dedicated flight test aircraft, the model will be a key component in validating the F-35's radar-evading properties.

"Today's milestone is the realization of an F-35 test schedule commitment we made more than two years ago," said Dan Crowley, F-35 executive vice president and program manager for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike fighter program. "We continue to achieve outstanding progress in F-35 design, development, production, ground test and early flight test."

J.D. McFarlan, Lockheed Martin vice president of F-35 Development, said the F-35 Highly Accurate Low Observable (HALO) radar pole model is fully representative of the F-35's radar signature. "The aircraft will be used in tests that provide data about the radar-signature characteristics of the F-35 aircraft family."

Initial testing of the model will occur in Lockheed Martin's new Acceptance Test Facility in Fort Worth - a radio frequency-secure building - with follow-on testing conducted at a remote site. The Acceptance Test Facility will be used to provide the required data on the stealth performance of all F-35s before delivery. At the remote site, the model will be affixed to a tall pole and tested in the open air, hence the term "pole model."

Crowley said the program is making crucial progress across all fronts. "All nine F-35 partners are on track with the United States, Italy and Norway having down-selected to the F-35. We are on track to support the Low Rate Initial Production delivery plan and to meet the Initial Operational Capability dates of the services. Test aircraft are returning from missions without technical problems in 80 percent of our flights. Engine performance has been flawless in flight. The first eight development aircraft all were delivered within 60 days on average of the schedule we committed to in February 2008, and the list goes on."

Key partners in the construction of the model included Janicki Industries, Fain Models and Northrop Grumman.

"As the first F-35 air frame to complete all production finishing processes, HALO also provided the Component and Aircraft Final Finishes teams with valuable experience that will translate to improvements in processes for all subsequent production aircraft," McFarlan said.

The F-35 is a supersonic, multi-role, 5th generation stealth fighter. Three F-35 variants derived from a common design, developed together and using the same sustainment infrastructure worldwide will replace at least 13 types of aircraft for 11 nations initially, 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 146,000 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 2008 sales of $42.7 billion.

F-35 and Lightning II are trademarks of Lockheed Martin Corporation.

For additional information, visit our Web site:
http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact:

SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

Web Site: http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

https://news.lockheedmartin.com/2009-06-15-Lockheed-Martin-Meets-F-35-Schedule-Commitment-With-Roll-Out-of-Radar-Signature-Test-Aircraft