Lockheed Martin Delivers 1,000th Vertical Launch ASROC Missile

Lockheed Martin recently marked the production and delivery of the 1,000th Vertical Launch ASROC (VLA) missile during a ceremony at the company's Akron, OH, facility. The milestone VLA missile is part of a contract for the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force.

The world's only urgent attack operational antisubmarine warfare (ASW) weapon for surface combatants, VLA missiles provide vessels with the capability to attack submarines beyond the submarine's attack range, even in adverse weather conditions. Lockheed Martin supplies VLA missiles to the U.S. Navy as well as the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force through a combination of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and direct commercial sales.

"The VLA missile has proven to be a very robust weapon," said Capt. Tom Wears, U.S. Navy program manager. "This weapon will be a critical component of the U.S. Navy's inventory for many years."

"This milestone demonstrates the longstanding teamwork and commitment from the VLA Program Team to our customers and to the warfighter," said Rick Perez, vice president of Lockheed Martin's Defense Systems market segment.

"We are pleased that the VLA missile is the primary ASW weapon for Japan's newest surface combatant ships," said Naoji Tomita, vice president and general manager, Mitsubishi International Corporation. Mitsubishi is Lockheed Martin's trading partner for the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force.

Development of the VLA missile began in 1984 and production units have been delivered to the U.S. and allied navies since 1992.

To provide defense against existing and future ASW threats, Lockheed Martin is currently extending the range of the VLA. This new missile, the VLA Extended Range (VLA-ER), will provide four to five times more range by adding a wing glide kit to the existing system. VLA-ER reuses nearly 90 percent of the existing VLA and includes a common configuration allowing both ship and air launch.

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.

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