Lockheed Martin Receives $1.5 Million Contract For Lightweight Kinetic Energy Net Armor

The U.S. Army Applied Aviation Technology Directorate has awarded Lockheed Martina $1.5 million contract that continues development of the Kinetic Energy Net (KEN) armor design. KEN is a modular composite armor system developed by Lockheed Martin that is lighter than current aircraft armor, but offers comparable protection.

"Kinetic Energy Net is a new direction in armor that doesn't trade weight for strength," said Glenn Miller, vice president of Technical Operations and Applied Research at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "Aircrews operate in some of the most exposed places on the battlefield, but due to weight constraints users don't have as much armor protection as they'd like. We developed KEN armor so it can also be integrated directly into the aircraft structure instead of attaching plates to the fuselage, which adds weight."

Tests have confirmed that the KEN system offers more protection than steel plates, and it has a significant weight advantage. Additionally, Lockheed Martin realized a 13 percent reduction in weight against advanced ceramic and composite armor designs. The company's goal in the next phase of the program is to cut total weight by over 40 percent, all without losing protective capability.

"Our passion for invention is making a world of difference for the people on the other side of that armor," said Gil Metzger, director of Force Projection & Power Management Systems at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "The Lockheed Martin development team comprises some of the best innovators in the advanced materials and armor industries. We are moving forward and improving an already impressive design to realize the lightest, most effective armor technology known today."

Lockheed Martin will further improve KEN armor performance by incorporating new forms of advanced ballistic materials and experimental strike faces. Future efforts may see armor applications transition from air vehicles to ground vehicles and even ground structures requiring lightweight ballistic protection.

KEN is an impressive addition to Lockheed Martin's armor family, which also includes TekShield(TM). The TekShield System of Survivability Solutions includes armor for ground vehicle applications, transparent armor, armor for buildings and reactive armor.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 136,000 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 2009 sales of $45.2 billion.

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