Lockheed Martin Delivers First Mid-Life Upgrade P-3 Orion

The first Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion with new Mid-Life Upgrade (MLU) enhancements was delivered to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials in ceremonies here today.

The newly re-winged P-3 will soon make its first flight and will immediately be a game-changer for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. This aircraft is the first of many that will benefit with increased availability and reliability for critical homeland security missions.

"The P-3 Orion is unsurpassed in its flexibility in maritime patrol and reconnaissance," said Ralph Heath, president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. "The Mid-Life Upgrade will ensure this national asset continues to provide second-to-none service for the next 20 years."

Lockheed Martin's P-3 MLU program provides a technically proven, low-risk, cost-effective solution replacing the aircraft outer wings, center wing lower surface and horizontal stabilizer with new production components.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection will receive up to 14 upgraded P-3s for deliveries planned through 2015. This first CBP MLU aircraft was completed in 14 months. To date, Lockheed Martin has 52 MLU kits under contract with six operators from four nations.

"We are excited about our partnership with Customs and Border Protection," said Ray Burick, Lockheed Martin P-3 Programs vice president, "and we are committed to providing them with modernization enhancements to sustain the P-3 for decades to come. The MLU integrates well with our 10-year site and depot P-3 Fleet Maintenance Program, now underway with CBP."

The MLU replaces all fatigue-life limiting structure with enhanced-design components and incorporates a new metal alloy that is five times more corrosion resistant, greatly reducing the cost of ownership for P-3 Operators. The MLU removes current aircraft flight restrictions and extends the structural service life of the P-3 up to 15,000 hours and adds 20 years of operational use.

P-3 Orion is the standard for maritime patrol and reconnaissance, and is used for homeland security, hurricane reconnaissance, anti-piracy operations, humanitarian relief, search and rescue, intelligence gathering, antisubmarine warfare and, recently, to assist in air traffic control and data gathering over the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

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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SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

Company News On-Call: http://www.prnewswire.com/comp/117281.html

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