Lockheed Martin F-35 Flight Test And Production Progress Report

FORT WORTH, Texas, Feb. 23, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin's [NYSE: LMT] F-35 program continues to build on its 2011 flight test success. For 2012, the baseline F-35 System Development and Demonstration (SDD) flight test plan calls for the accumulation of 1,001 test flights and 7,873 test points. However, growth in test point requirements throughout the year is anticipated, and the plan will be adjusted as needed.

As of Feb. 20, the F-35 Lightning II 5th Generation multirole fighter had conducted 114 flight tests and achieved 773 test points. A portion of the earned test points came from work added to the flight test baseline plan. Lockheed Martin has delivered three F-35s to the Department of Defense (DOD) year to date.

Since Jan. 1, the F-35 program accomplished several flight test and production milestones:

- On Jan. 9, AF-4, an F-35A Conventional Takeoff and Landing (CTOL) test aircraft, reached the highest altitude to date in an F-35; 43,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL).
- Lockheed Martin ferried the first two production model F-35B Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft to the U.S. Marine Corps on Jan. 11. The aircraft, known as BF-6 and BF-8, are now assigned to the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing's Marine Fighter/Attack Training Squadron 501 residing with the host 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Fla.
- Demonstrating the ongoing maturation of the F-35 integrated sensor suite, AF-3, an F-35A CTOL test jet, completed the first low Distributed Aperture System (DAS) approach on Jan. 17.
- On Jan. 18, the first night flight in the history of the Lockheed Martin F-35 program was completed at Edwards AFB, Calif. Piloted by Lockheed Martin test pilot Mark Ward, AF-6, an F-35A CTOL test jet, took off at 5:05 p.m. PST and landed after sunset at 6:22 p.m.
- With the ferry flight of BF-7, an F-35B STOVL, Eglin AFB, Fla., became home of the largest F-35 fleet in the DOD on Jan. 19. BF-7 was the 23rd F-35 Lightning II delivered to the DOD.
- On Jan. 20, citing the tremendous progress the F-35B STOVL variant made in 2011 Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta rescinded probation for the F-35B, almost a full year ahead of schedule.
- The F-35 SDD fleet including AA-1, the original test aircraft, crossed the 2,500 flight hour threshold on Jan. 25.
- On Feb. 16 at Edwards AFB, Calif., AF-1, an F-35A CTOL test jet, flew the first external weapons test mission in program history.

Cumulative flight test activity totals for 2012 through Feb. 20 are provided below:

- F-35A CTOL jets have flown 46 times.
- F-35B STOVL aircraft have completed 45 flights.
- F-35C Carrier Variant (CV) jets have flown 23 times.

From the start of flight testing in December 2006, F-35s have flown 1,704 times, including the production-model flights and AA-1, the original flight test aircraft. For video highlights of the F-35 program, click here.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th Generation fighter, combining advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations and advanced sustainment. Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 123,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's net sales for 2011 were $46.5 billion.

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