Initial Operational Capability Declared For Australia's RAAF F-35A

Lockheed Martin Australia ready to sustain 5th Generation force

CANBERRA, Australia, Dec. 28, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds, CSC, and Minister for Defence Industry, Melissa Price MP, today declared Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for Australia's F-35As, making Australia the seventh country to declare IOC for its F-35 fleet. Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) will sustain the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) F-35A fleet, which will play a crucial role in defending Australia's national interests.

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"This IOC ushers in a new era of Australian air power that gives the RAAF transformational and game-changing capabilities," said Joe North, Lockheed Martin Australia chief executive. "As the Original Equipment Manufacturer and lead industry sustainment partner for Australia's F-35A fleet, Lockheed Martin congratulates the RAAF on achieving this milestone, and we stand ready to support the fleet with our industry partners."

Bill Brotherton, acting F-35 vice president and general manager, acknowledged the unwavering dedication of the joint government and industry team who contributed to this milestone. "This team's focus on delivering the most effective, survivable and connected fighter in the world ensures the sovereign protection of Australia and strengthens the future of the F-35 coalition," Brotherton said.

The most advanced fighter jet ever built, the F-35 continues to be a catalyst for the transformation of the Australian Defence Force, utilizing its sensors and low observable technology to operate with impunity in contested airspace and fuse a picture of the battlespace for other air, land and sea assets. Along with its advanced weapons capacity and superior range, the F-35 offers unparalleled combat capabilities.

The F-35 program is also a catalyst for evolving Australia's robust and resilient defense industry capability. With every F-35 manufactured containing Australian-made parts, more than 50 Australian companies have benefited from $2.7 billion Australian dollars ($2 billion) in contracts for the development, production and sustainment of the aircraft. The F-35 program creates more than 2,400 high-tech manufacturing jobs for Australian industry.

With more than 600 aircraft operating from 26 bases and ships across the globe, the F-35 plays a critical role in today's global security environment. More than 1,200 pilots and 10,000 maintainers have been trained on the aircraft. Nine nations have F-35s operating from their home soil.

Australia currently has a fleet of 33 F-35As, and RAAF crews have surpassed more than 8,780 flight hours to date, with more than 45 pilots and 600 maintainers supporting the fleet.

For additional information, visit www.f35.com.

About Lockheed Martin
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