

Lockheed Martin's Next Generation Interceptor Achieves Communications Testing Milestone, Proves Ability To Operate In Harsh Environments



This image is an artist rendering of the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) in flight. Credit: Lockheed Martin

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Aug. 8, 2022 – Lockheed Martin recently validated prototype communications radio technology for the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) during a recent test milestone. The NGI's mission is to protect the U.S. homeland from increasing and evolving intercontinental ballistic missile threats. Critically, the interceptor and its components must be able to receive and share data from the ground and throughout the mission across vast distances, at tremendous speed through harsh environments.

Through early prototype testing at Lockheed Martin's facility in Sunnyvale, California, the company demonstrated that the interceptor's communications system can operate through harsh and adversarial environments it may encounter during flight. This communication technology is important because it provides in-flight situational awareness enabling elements of the interceptor to effectively respond to complex threats.

"Early demonstrations like this allow us to learn as we go and manage risk," said Sarah Reeves, vice president and program manager of the Next Generation Interceptor program at Lockheed Martin. "This milestone continues the NGI team's successful early and often testing cadence of critical technologies within our digital system design as it matures in alignment with our Developmental Evaluation Framework."

Lockheed Martin's NGI program was born digital, using all-digital tools prior to contract award through the design and development phase. Through Agile development, the NGI team was able to rapidly create and prototype the communications capability through a focused approach on development, security, and operations (DevSecOps), reducing risk early.

The NGI team incorporated rapid prototyping, in connection with Austin, Texas, small business X-Microwave, a Quantic Company, delivering hardware platforms for software-defined radio development in weeks, rather than months, allowing for faster design evolution.

Lockheed Martin is moving with a sense of urgency, focused on continually maturing, testing and demonstrating the NGI system's components to validate system performance. The first Lockheed Martin NGI is forecast for delivery in FY2027.

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