

T-50 Achieves Operational Ceiling Milestone

Lockheed Martin and Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) announced today that the T-50 Golden Eagle advanced supersonic trainer reached its operational ceiling of 40,000 feet on Nov. 25.

"We are very satisfied to reach the operational ceiling so early in the flight-test program," said Lt. Col. Cho, Gwang-Je, test pilot for this flight. "The aircraft feels very comfortable and safe at 40,000 feet altitude, and all systems operated normally."

The maximum service ceiling for the T-50 is estimated to be 48,500 feet, the altitude where rate of climb is limited to 100 feet per minute at maximum power (full afterburner). However, the operational ceiling has been set at 40,000 feet.

Before reaching the operational ceiling, a climb was made to 35,000 feet, where throttle transients were performed. At 40,000, flutter and stability and control tests were performed at Mach 0.6. Testing at higher speeds at this altitude will be conducted in the near future.

The T-50 is the only modern trainer in development that has an engine afterburner, an essential device for attaining higher altitudes, supersonic speeds and high agility. The T-50 first engaged its afterburner Oct. 15 and will make its first takeoff using afterburner in the coming weeks. The afterburner has performed flawlessly.

The milestone flight was made in aircraft No. 1. The two test aircraft in the flight test program have accumulated a combined 24.1 flight hours in 24 flights.

The T-50 Golden Eagle is a supersonic advanced jet trainer being developed by KAI for the Republic of Korea Air Force. Lockheed Martin, as principal subcontractor to KAI, is providing technical expertise in all aspects of the program and is responsible for developing the T-50 avionics system, flight control system and wings. The two companies are cooperatively marketing the T-50 internationally.

The T-50 Full-Scale Development program began in 1997 and will continue through 2005. Initial production authorization is planned for the third quarter 2003 with production deliveries to begin in 2005.

The T-50 will have the maneuverability, endurance and advanced systems to prepare future pilots to fly current and next-generation fighters like advanced F-16s, the F/A-22 and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. These same characteristics give it an excellent capability as a lead-in fighter trainer and potential light-combat aircraft derivative in many air forces.

Korea Aerospace Industries Ltd. is the Republic of Korea's national aerospace company established in 1999 with the consolidation of Samsung Aerospace, Daewoo Heavy Industries and Hyundai Space and Aircraft Co. KAI lines of business include fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter aircraft, and satellites. Its major products are the KF-16, KT-1 basic trainer, T-50, SB427 helicopters, aerostructures and KOMPSAT satellite program.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, is a leader in advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Lockheed Martin Corp., headquartered in Bethesda, Md., is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. Employing about 125,000 people worldwide, Lockheed Martin had 2001 sales of \$24 billion.

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