Heia Norge! Successful F-35 Drag Chute Test in Norway

This week, Norway completed a successful test of the F-35 drag chute system at Ørland Air Base, Norway. The drag chute — unique to the Norwegian aircraft — is designed to maintain stealth characteristics. The system is housed under a small fairing on the upper rear fuselage between the vertical tails and can be used to rapidly decelerate Royal Norwegian Air Force (RNoAF) F-35s after landing on the country’s icy runways.

“Lockheed Martin is pleased with the successful first-time deployment of the drag-chute system on an operational RNoAF F-35A in Norway. This effort is the culmination of many years of design, testing, production and sustainment of the system by Lockheed Martin, and the U.S. and Norwegian governments,” said Art Sheridan, Lockheed Martin Drag Chute System Program Manager. Sheridan also noted that the first drag-chute deployment on an icy runway was accomplished on the same day by the F-35 Integrated Test Force at Eielson AFB, Alaska.

Heia Norge and congratulations to the Norwegian Ministry of Defense on this milestone. This effort is the culmination of many years of design and testing of the system by Lockheed Martin, the U.S., and Norwegian governments. Sharing technological platforms, such as the F-35, further strengthens global alliances and enables coalition-based fighting, while strengthening economic, industrial and security ties with key international partners.

Right Part, On Time, Every Time: Orbital ATK Delivers 5,000th F-35 Part

Orbital ATK, a global leader in aerospace and defense technologies recently completed and delivered their 5,000th F-35 composite part. The 5,000 composite parts equate to approximately 430 ship sets.

Orbital ATK’s Aerospace Structures Division facility in Clearfield, Utah, currently produces almost 90 percent of the upper and lower wing skins, engine nacelles, access covers and fixed skins for the F-35. Partner, Janicki Industries, then machines the parts to very exacting engineering requirements. The parts are delivered to support Lockheed Martin as the prime contractor as well as our international suppliers. Orbital ATK was awarded a contract in 2017 to also produce bullnose and blade seals for the F-35.

Orbital ATK’s advanced automated fiber placement machines have played a critical role in reaching and maintaining the high-rate production rates required on the F-35 program. This technology provides versatility in manufacturing highly complex structures that enable more mass-efficient and higher performance designs. Orbital ATK’s automated fiber placement machines also improve part quality and reproducibility. The technology is critical to reaching and maintaining high production rates required on the F-35 program.

Delivering the right parts, on time, every time demonstrates the critical role that Orbital ATK and our more than 1,500 global suppliers play in delivering the F-35 to the men and women in uniform, ensuring they can execute their missions and come home safe.
Transformational Fighter Demands a Transformational Enterprise

There is no doubt that we’re living through incredibly dynamic times, characterized by ongoing global conflicts, continued budget challenges and an unprecedented pace of new technology. While our customers around the world are embracing the transformational capability the F-35 brings to their fleets, it’s our duty to constantly look for ways that we can drive out production and sustainment costs, and look at how we can integrate and deliver new technology to the warfighter more quickly and affordably. We must look at what we can do to redefine how we produce, sustain and modernize all aspects of the F-35 weapon system.

And I believe many of the best ideas to do just that are waiting to be tapped throughout the F-35 enterprise from the people who are working on this program every day. During my recent F-35 All Hands Webcast, I encouraged all Lockheed Martin employees, suppliers and partners to support our efforts and help us in transforming the enterprise by submitting ideas to F35.Communications@lmco.com.

From ways to decrease our operating costs to processes that can improve collaboration, the ideas are coming in, in large number, and from a diverse coalition of employees. In fact, we received a transformational idea from F-35 engineer Javier Prieto regarding the use of Artificial Neural Networks for items like parts forecasting and we believe his idea can not only benefit the F-35 program but the entire corporation. I’d like to thank Javier for taking the time to submit an idea and I would like to encourage everyone to keep the ideas coming!

If you have an idea to help transform the F-35 enterprise, please send an email to F35.Communications@lmco.com.