



STAR-1 weapon tested on F-16

TAAS, FORMERLY ISRAEL MILITARY Industries, has test flown the STAR-1 anti-radiation weapon on a Lockheed Martin F-16. The carriage trials are part of a plan to develop the weapon, a variant of the company's Delilah decoy, for customers requiring a stand-off capability for air-defence suppression missions. The system will be equipped with a global-positioning/inertial navigation system and with a broadband (2-18 GHz) seeker. TAAS has offered the STAR-1 to potential customers, and full-scale development will begin only after a first contract is signed.

First F-5E Tiger IV avionics upgrade tests completed

NORTHROP GRUMMAN has completed the first phase of flight-testing of the F-5E Tiger IV avionics upgrade. The initial 12 flights concentrated on evaluating the air-to-air modes of the Westinghouse APG-66 pulse-Doppler radar, says F-5 demonstration project engineer Tom Cooke.

The upgraded aircraft was used to demonstrate a doubling in radar-detection range compared to be basic aircraft, which has a non-coherent APQ-159 radar. Preliminary

results suggest that the upgrade "is very successful so far", says Aziz Soltani, head of the F-5 avionics-integration programme.

The aircraft has been grounded for a software upgrade and a further seven flights are planned, predominantly to test the air-to-ground modes of the integrated weapon-system, and weapon delivery, says Cooke. Radar air-to-ground modes and improvements to the pilot-vehicle interface will be evaluated, says Soltani.

The Tiger IV demonstrator was first flown on 20 April and is scheduled to be on static display at the worldwide F-5 operator's meeting at the US Air Force's San Antonio Air Logistics Center at Kelly AFB, Texas, in late October, early November. Flight-test data will be available by then for potential upgrade customers to peruse.

The F-5E is on loan to Northrop Grumman under a pioneering co-operative research-and-development agreement with the USAF, which has provided the US Navy aircraft in return for test results. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ DETECTION SUCCESS

Westinghouse's AAR-54(V) passive missile-warning system detected and classified all 14 missiles fired during US Navy live-fire demonstrations. The ultraviolet-based system was mounted on a QF-4 drone and used to cue an ALE-47 flare dispenser.

SR-71 Blackbird is back on song

GUY NORRIS/PALMDALE

LOCKHEED MARTIN is confident that it will be funded to refurbish a third SR-71 Blackbird for the US Air Force in 1996, following the successful reconditioning of the first aircraft, which was formally handed over on 28 June.

Lockheed Martin "Skunk Works" SR-71 programme manager, Justin Murphy says: "Congress has told us that funds are to be put in the fiscal year 1996 budget to re-activate the third aircraft. We feel pretty confident that it will happen." He adds that the third SR-71, which is stored inside the Skunk Works, could be returned to service within four months of refurbishment starting.

Lockheed Martin began working on the current \$30 million SR-71 contract in January.

Despite being handed over to the USAF's 9th Reconnaissance Wing, the first SR-71 will remain at the Skunk Works in Palmdale, California, until 1 September, when the two Blackbirds contracted for refurbishment will be ferried to nearby Edwards AFB.

The aircraft will then be used for reconnaissance missions on detachment from Edwards, rather than being based at the 9th's headquarters at Beale AFB, California.

The second SR-71 will be fitted with a Unisys air-to-ground datalink which provides "...a common link with the U-2", says Murphy. The first aircraft will also be retrofitted with the datalink, which accepts digital inputs from the Loral advanced synthetic-aperture radar system (ASARS-1), and digital and analogue electronic-intelligence inputs from the electromagnetic reconnaissance system. Reconnaissance information can be downlinked in real time, recorded for later playback and downlink, or downloaded to the ground.

The first refurbished SR-71 was flown to Mach 0.94 on an initial test flight on 26 April and, during a second high-speed test on 23 May, it achieved a speed of Mach 3.3 — 1,890kt (3,500km/h) — at 81,000ft (24,700m). This is just 13.5kt short of the absolute speed record established by the type in July 1976. The second SR-71 is due to have its first flight in early August. □

Medium-range TRIGAT progresses

THE PARTNERS in the multinational third-generation anti-tank weapon system (TRIGAT) have completed development of the medium-range version of the missile.

The final major milestone in the development phase was achieved in mid-June, with warhead-qualification tests involving four successful firings, destroying 1m² (10.7ft²) targets at almost 2km (1nm) range.

"Warhead performance exceeded specification against the most advanced armours designed for future battle tanks," says Euromissile Dynamics Group.

According to Werner Figge,

programme manager for the medium-range TRIGAT at German partner Daimler-Benz Aerospace, 200 missiles and 20 firing posts will now be delivered to the armed forces of the three main participating nations — France, Germany and the UK — for technical and operational trials due to begin in the third quarter.

Deliveries of operational systems will start in 1998. The participating nations, including Belgium and the Netherlands, need a total of 70,000 missiles.

The development programme has cost DM650 million (\$470 million) to date, says Figge. □