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Boeing has delivered ahead of schedule the wings for the first F-22 production aircraft to team partner Lockheed Martin. The two 2,000-pound titanium and composite structures were delivered last week and will be mated with the plane's fuselage in Marietta, Ga., later this month.

The ahead-of-schedule delivery is another positive result of Boeing's ongoing lean manufacturing efforts. In late 1999, Boeing began using a new wing-assembly tool, which has improved quality and reduced the time it takes to build a set of wings.

"We have incorporated a number of advanced manufacturing processes into our factory and continue to see results, including reduced cycle times," said Bob Barnes, Boeing vice president and F-22 program manager. "Boeing and the entire F-22 team are constantly looking for ways to reduce program costs."

Boeing previously delivered wings for nine test aircraft to support the program's engineering and manufacturing development phase, and also for eight production representative test vehicles that will be used for operational test and evaluation and tactics development at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. The Raptor is scheduled to be operational in 2005.

Boeing is teamed with Lockheed Martin and Pratt & Whitney to design and build the F-22 Raptor for the U.S. Air Force. Boeing supplies the F-22's wings and aft fuselage, integrates and tests the advanced avionics and is responsible for the training and life-support systems.

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