Boeing Delivers Major F-22 Section Ahead of Schedule

Boeing mannounced it delivered the aft fuselage section for the third F-22 Raptor three weeks ahead of its revised production schedule - a strong indicator that projections for reduced flow time and reduced costs in building future F-22 components are accurate.

Boeing delivered the aft fuselage approximately 15 percent under budget in man hours, according to Bob Barnes, F-22 program manager and vice president for Boeing.

"We're receiving higher quality parts from our suppliers earlier than expected, and we've improved our processes over our first-time efforts," Barnes said. "We're climbing the learning curve at a good rate."

The titanium and composite structure arrived in Marietta, Ga., where F-22 team partner Lockheed Martin will attach it to the rest of the fuselage. The third F-22 Raptor will never fly, but will undergo rigorous static testing to validate that it can withstand the loads - or the structural pressures -it will experience in flight. In an "ultimate test," the aircraft will be taken to 150 percent of its load limit - potentially enough to break off its wings.

Because flight-related systems did not need to be installed, a shorter production schedule for the third aft fuselage was already in place. However, Boeing delivered the component an additional three weeks earlier within the condensed schedule.

Boeing is teamed with Lockheed Martin and Pratt & Whitney to design and build the F-22 fighter for the U.S. Air Force. As a team partner, Boeing shares in F-22 contractor investments and shares in team profit and/or loss. In addition to the aft fuselage, Boeing is responsible for the wings, radar, mission software, avionics integration and test, life support systems and training systems.

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