Boeing JSF Concept Demonstrator Completes Second Flight

The Boeing Joint Strike Fighter X-32A concept demonstrator today completed its second test flight, five days after it took to the air for the first time.

Boeing test pilot Fred Knox took the X-32A to an altitude of 10,000 feet and attained an air speed of more than 200 miles per hour. During the flight, which lasted 50 minutes, Knox conducted a series of maneuvers and tests to establish the X-32A's basic airworthiness before it is subjected to more strenuous maneuvers.

"The airplane continues to fly as well as we hoped, just like the simulations," Knox said. "Today's flight is another step forward for the Boeing One Team."

Today's flight is the second of what will be a five-month flight-test program at Edwards, with approximately 50 test flights totaling about 100 hours to validate the JSF's flying characteristics.

The X32A's second flight was delayed two days due to high winds that exceeded the limits defined by test flight guidelines.

The X-32A and X-32B carry "X" designations rather than the more familiar "Y" because they are concept demonstrators, not prototypes. As such, they will not compete in a "fly-off" competition to determine who is selected to proceed to the next phase of the program.

During flight test the JSF X aircraft must successfully demonstrate three objectives to the satisfaction of the customer:

- commonality and modularity among JSF variants;
- low-speed carrier approach flying and handling qualities;
- short takeoff, transition, hover and vertical landing.

The JSF One Team, led by Boeing, is a multinational effort that includes leading aerospace and technology companies from the United States, United Kingdom, Denmark and The Netherlands, as well as representatives from the U.S. government's JSF program office.

The X-32A is one of two concept demonstrators Boeing is building to demonstrate the design concepts used for the operational JSF. It will demonstrate conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) for the U.S. Air Force and carrier approach flying qualities for the U.S. Navy. The X-32B, which is expected to fly in the first quarter of 2001, will demonstrate short-takeoff-and-vertical-landing (STOVL) requirements for the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.K. Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. Boeing recently installed the propulsion system in the X-32B aircraft at the Palmdale test site.

Boeing is the world leader in design, production and support of CTOL and STOVL strike fighters, as well as in large scale "system of systems" integration and lean, efficient design and manufacturing for military and commercial programs.

Boeing is competing to build the JSF under a four-year U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps concept demonstration contract, while also defining the design for the operational JSF. A competition winner is scheduled to be selected in 2001.

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