Boeing JSF X-32B Completes Vertical Landing With USMC Pilot

Maj. Jeff Karnes today became the first U.S. government test pilot to complete a vertical landing in the Boeing Joint Strike Fighter X-32B aircraft.

Karnes, an experienced U.S. Marine Corps short-takeoff-and-vertical-landing (STOVL) pilot with more than 1,200 hours flown in the AV-8B Harrier, performed the landing after transitioning the aircraft to a hover from conventional flight.

"In a word, it was impressive," Karnes said. "I was very comfortable throughout all of the STOVL maneuvers, and the workload was much reduced compared to similar tasks in a Harrier. I was able to perform a short takeoff, transition to conventional flight then back to semi-jetborne flight, and decelerate to vertical landing well within plus or minus one foot of landing accuracy. Amazingly, all this was possible during my first attempt at a short takeoff and vertical landing in the X-32B."

During flight testing here, the X-32B has validated the Boeing direct-lift approach to the STOVL requirements of the Marine Corps and the United Kingdom's Royal Navy and Air Force.

Boeing has completed the program's government test requirements thanks to an outstanding integrated test team composed of pilots and engineers from the U.S. and U.K. governments and the Boeing One Team. X-32B flight testing is to conclude later this month.

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