

## **Lockheed flies 1st sensor-equipped F-35, albeit 1 year late**

The Lockheed Martin F-35 programme on 6 April reached the first flight milestone more than one year behind schedule with an aircraft equipped with a full suite of advanced sensors.

The BF-4 flight test aircraft was airborne for 15min (sic) , reaching an altitude of 15,500ft (4,700m). Besides standard flight tests, test pilot David Nelson also "checked" the operation of the mission systems, Lockheed says. The previous schedule called for first flight of BF-4 in March 2009.

The F-35 features what Lockheed describes as the "most comprehensive sensor package ever to fly in a fighter", according to a company statement.

Sensors include the Northrop Grumman APG-81 active electronically scanned array (AESA), the Lockheed electro-optical targeting system, Northrop distributed aperture system, BAE Systems electronic warfare system and VSI helmet-mounted display system.

Lockheed now has flown five (sic) different flight test aircraft, including the now-retired AA-1 airframe.