

Working for the Troops

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BY ANDY ELLIS

Most successful businesses begin with the end product in mind. Lockheed Martin's Missiles and Fire Control facility in Pike County, just north of Troy, is no exception.

What sets the Pike County final missile assembly production facility apart, however, is its customer – the Department of Defense. And whether employees are placing a bronze-colored fuel tank in a cruise missile or working as a team to reach the goal of producing 30 shoulder-fired Javelin missiles a day, the pride in workmanship and sense of importance in getting the job done right is readily evident.

Tucked away in a thicket of tall, slender Southern Pine trees, the walls of production facilities on the 3,800-acre site are dotted with posters and framed illustrations of the company's ultimate consumer – American troops.

"People here take the work we do very seriously because we are the final assembly point," Pike County operations Director-General Manager Jody Glazner says, noting the numerous tests and quality checks conducted at every phase of missile assembly. "We know that what we do here is important to the defense of our country and to American troops on the battlefields of the world. Our employees take great pride in their work because they are more aware of the importance of the task at hand."

The Pike County Operations is a part of the Missiles and Fire Control sector of the Lockheed Martin Corp. Lockheed Martin, which is headquartered in Bethesda, Md., and employs nearly 130,000 workers worldwide, was formed in March 1995 with the merger of the Lockheed and Martin Marietta corporations. The corporation is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services with the overwhelming majority of its work being done under government contracts.

The Hellfire II (pictured) was the first missile to roll off the line in June 1994 at the Pike County Operations site. The Hellfire II achieves pinpoint accuracy by homing in on reflected laser energy aimed at a target from the launching helicopter, another helicopter or another platform such as a ground vehicle or ship.



The corporation is divided into five sectors – aeronautics, electronic systems, integrated systems and solutions, space systems and technology services. Missiles and fire control falls under Lockheed's electronic systems sector.

Pike County Operations' work force of close to 250 employees and an additional 20 to 25 security personnel are a part of what is widely recognized as a world-class facility. As a testament to a reputation built over its 10-year existence, a glass case inside the facility's administrative offices displays awards such as Defense Investigative Service's

Cogswell Award, *Industry Week's* "America's Best Plants" award, the 2002 Alabama Manufacturer of the Year Award and the highly prestigious Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing. Near by is a framed copy of the *Congressional Record*, dated May 20, 2004, in which Alabama Rep. Terry Everett praised Pike County Operations on its 10-year anniversary.

"Lockheed Martin-Pike County has become synonymous with both precision craftsmanship and on-target results," Rep. Everett said. "Some of the most advanced military weapon assets on the battlefield have rolled off, and continue to roll off the assembly lines at the Pike County facility. I am proud of the contributions of the 286 workers of Lockheed Martin-Pike County to keep our country safe. Job well done."

Pike County Operations is neatly divided into production areas that house Air-to-Ground Missile Systems (AGMS), Javelin/Predator, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD). The production areas cover roughly 1,000 acres of the site with the remaining 2,800 serving primarily as buffer areas.



In 2000, the JASSM (left), a cruise missile, made its debut at the Alabama facility. In May, construction was completed on a more than \$30 million expansion that doubled the size of the 40,000-square-foot production facility in order to meet the increased demand for the JASSM.

used by the airframes that carry the JASSM missile.

Glazner says the F-1 tool can rotate the missile at any height or angle, which means filing, painting and sanding can be done more efficiently and safely.

"This will allow us to quadruple our production," Glazner says, noting that the system came on line in May and should be fully functioning

in August.

The newest addition to the production line at the Pike County site is the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense or THAAD missile. The wide open, 46,000-square-foot THAAD production facility, which was completed last fall, appears cavernous at first glance, devoid of support pylons that might obstruct views of the production process.

Adding to the huge building's emptiness is the small crew that is presently at work. This year, the plant will complete two of the approximately 22-foot missiles that are capable of flying outside of the atmosphere and that use kinetic energy rather than warheads to destroy threatening missiles.

According to Glazner, the facility was "scaled to handle all foreseeable growth," and once the production is "ramped up," the facility will be capable of producing up to 30 THAAD missiles a month.

Glazner says the THAAD program selected Pike County Operations for missile production due to its outstanding performance in building quality products, as well as its attention to cost-control and manufactur-

"Being a final assembly production facility means that we are an ordinance facility," Glazner says. "For safety reasons, we are required to maintain a substantial buffer."

The Hellfire II, part of the AGMS product line, was the first missile to roll off the line in June 1994. The Longbow missile, another AGMS product, began construction shortly after. The production of a pair of shoulder-fired, anti-armor missiles — the Javelin and the Predator — also soon found a home at Pike County Operations.

In 2000, the JASSM, a cruise missile, made its debut at the facility. In May, construction was completed on a more than \$30 million expansion that doubled the size of the 40,000-square-foot production facility in order to meet the increased demand for the JASSM. As part of the expansion, a portion of the facility was automated. An overhead monorail system capable of moving as many as 12 missiles at once through the final stages of production was added. The key to the monorail system is the newly developed "F-1" tool, which is equipped with the same attachment hardware

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ing detail on several other Department of Defense programs currently being produced at the location.

"JASSM and THAAD really take Pike County to the next level in terms of missile production," Glazner says. "These are highly-skilled programs and it is a real testament to the type of skilled work force we have available."

The economic impact on the Pike County area is tremendous. Glazner says Pike County Operations has service contracts nearing \$3 million and accounts for nearly \$10 million annually in payroll and benefits. Last year alone, Pike County Operations shipped a record number of missiles that accounted for roughly 25 percent of Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control's revenue.

"Twenty-five percent of around \$3.8 million in sales is a sizeable amount, and that is coming from right here in Pike County," Glazner says.

And while Pike County Operations' track record over the last 10 years is one of steady growth, Glazner believes the future will be even brighter.

The future includes production of two new missile systems – the Joint Common Missile (JCM) and the Loitering Attack Missile (LAM).

Lockheed Martin won the Army's contract worth an initial \$53 million over the next four years to develop the JCM, which will serve as the replacement for the current Hellfire anti-tank missile, as well as the Longbow and Maverick missiles. The Army plans to buy more than 54,000 of the new missiles, meaning the contract could be worth more than \$5 billion over the next 20 years.

Part of the work on the JCM, which is still in the development phase, will be completed at Lockheed Martin's Huntsville facility, while the final assembly production will take place at the Pike County facility.

"We foresee slow but steady growth. Out in the 2009-2010 timeframe, we could approach 400 to 500

employees," Glazner says. "It is always difficult to predict the defense industry, but these contracts have the potential for growth. We expect them to be a large portion of our work in the future."

Glazner says Lockheed Martin saw something special in Pike County and the state of Alabama when deciding to locate here more than 10 years ago.

"One of the things that got Lockheed's attention in Alabama was primarily the available work force," he says. "Many people in the work force here come from an agricultural or textile background and consequently have very strong work ethics. The people here are very smart, trainable

year, Glazner has been extremely impressed by the training program established through the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) program. In consultation with Pike County Operations' officials, AIDT prepares manuals and training supplies and makes instructors available to help train potential employees. In the case of the Pike County facility, potential employees are trained in an on-site facility in four-hour sessions, three nights a week for nine weeks.

"I have been associated with other training programs and the training program here at Pike County is the best," Glazner says. "There is no



Lockheed Martin won the Army's contract worth an initial \$53 million over the next four years to develop the Joint Common Missile (above). Part of the work on the JCM, which is still in the development phase, will be completed at Lockheed Martin's Huntsville facility, while the final assembly production will take place at the Pike County facility.

and capable."

In addition, Glazner points to the support the company has received from the Pike County community and the state of Alabama as a key to its success.

"We have huge support at the state and federal level, as well as the local level," Glazner says. "What was amazing to me was the dedication and initiative the state of Alabama has to bringing businesses here."

Although he has been at the Pike County facility for a little more than a

doubt that the difference is AIDT's involvement. The business environment from an economic development standpoint in Alabama is very strong, and I think AIDT plays a major role in that."

Glazner says Lockheed Martin is proud to be in Pike County and the state of Alabama. "We are pleased and proud to be in Alabama. We are not the largest (business), but the work we do here is highly skilled work," he says. "We are a preferred place to go to work." ■