



# F-35 Lightning II Program

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## SHEPPARD GRADUATES FIRST INTERMEDIATE F-35 AVIONICS CLASS

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**SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas** -- Sheppard graduated the Air Force's first intermediate class for the F-35 avionics career field June 19, 2014.

Officially known as intermediate general avionics principles, IGAP bridges the gap between the students' initial training in electronic principles and their follow-on training to work on the aircraft itself down at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Built by the Lockheed Martin corporation as a multi-role fighter, the F-35 Lightning II is a 5th generation fighter that combines stealth with a variety of sensor-based capabilities.

Avionics students will be responsible for making sure the electronic systems on the aircraft function correctly in order to get the mission done.

"They're going to be working on the newest and the best fighters in the world...without that general flight line knowledge, it's going to be taking a lot more time out of the actual F-35 maintainer's time to get them (students) spun up on the basics of avionics," said Staff Sgt. Westley Latina, 365th Training Squadron F-35 IGAP instructor.

Training frontline Airmen to produce higher quality avionic maintenance students is a mission Latina is eager to complete as a first-time instructor.

"It's different from what I'm normally used to teaching," he said. "I'm an F-16 avionics troop by trade. I'm an F-16 avionics instructor, but being able to get on a new program with the F-35 and help bring these maintainers down to Eglin to where they can get trained up jet-specifically, it's a pretty big privilege for me as an instructor to be a part of."

Airman Ryan Beattie, F-35 IGAP student, looks forward to working on the aircraft and seeing it for the first time.

"I enjoy working with my hands...I'm excited to learn how these jets work," he said.

At the end of the graduation, Airmen stood at attention with new certificates tightly clutched in their hands as they got one step closer to being fully qualified avionic specialists.



Sheppard graduated the Air Force's first intermediate class for the F-35 avionics career field June 19, 2014. Avionic maintenance technicians focus on making sure the electronic components of an aircraft function correctly. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jelani Gibson)