



F-35 Lightning II Program

Release – 07.11.2019

New Program Executive for F-35 Lightning II Office

Outgoing F-35 Program Executive Officer Reflects on Program Accomplishments

With a commitment to carry the program forward, a new leader took charge of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office during a ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial, July 11, Washington D.C.

A veteran of leading multifaceted defense acquisition programs, Lt. Gen. Eric Fick assumed the watch from Vice Adm. Mat Winter, as the Program Executive Officer for the F-35 program. The F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office is the Department of Defense's agency responsible for developing and acquiring the F-35A/B/C, the next-generation strike aircraft weapon system for the United States Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and twelve allied and partner nations.

General Fick entered the Air Force in September of 1990 after graduating from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor's degree in Aerospace Engineering. He has served as a logistics plans and programs officer, F-16 mechanical systems engineer, computational fluid dynamics research engineer, Joint System Program Office Chief of Test, Air Staff Branch Chief, and as the Deputy Chief of the Air Force Senate Liaison Office. General Fick has commanded at the squadron and group level and served twice as an Air Force Program Executive Officer. Additionally, he has logged more than 350 hours in the T-38, F-15, F-16, and other military and civilian Experimental aircraft.

Prior to his current assignment, as Deputy PEO, General Fick was the Director of Global Reach Programs for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, where he was responsible for the \$5.6 billion airlift, air refueling, training, and special operations

As deputy PEO for the past two years, Fick became quite familiar with the current state of the program and its vast complexity. Fick thanked Winter for his determined leadership, vision and success across the program during his lead.

"Since he took helm of the F-35 program in 2017, Vice Admiral Winter has been passionate about ensuring the F-35 Program's three lines of effort: Production, Development and Sustainment, were met to the highest standards, while meeting the challenges with vigor and constantly striving for excellence. His acquisition leadership has been steadfast, effective and decisive," said Fick. "His leadership skills with key F-35 enterprise stakeholders, steered us on a course for the ultimate mission accomplishment – bringing the best weapons system possible to the warfighter."

As the F-35 PEO, Winter was responsible for overseeing the \$428 billion program which simultaneously developed, tested and fielded three next generation strike fighter aircraft for the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, eight international partners and four foreign military sale countries.

Winter's departure as PEO also coincides with his retirement after 35 years of United States Navy service. With the change in PEO from U.S. Navy to U.S. Air Force, the program's Service Acquisition Executive switches from Air Force to Navy, with Assistant Secretary of the Navy, James Geurts, assuming the duties.

"We have proven the F-35's lethality as it has effectively carried out combat missions and participated in several multinational exercises, where it dominates the battlespace", said Winter. "Our commitment remains to deliver affordable, effective F-35 air systems that ensure the taxpayer's investment provides the warfighter with the tools to keep our nation safe. The F-35 Enterprise is growing its strategic importance around the world."

"As the operational tempo increased, the requirement to modernize the F-35 Fleet becomes critical. We are embracing true agile acquisition processes, and are transitioning from a developmental and initial production environment to a full-rate production and continuous software modernization environment, delivering technically feasible, operationally relevant capability," added Winter.

"It has been an honor to serve alongside so many great leaders and support our nation and allies," said Winter. "The F-35 weapon system is now operational and forward deployed around the world. The size of the fleet continues to grow and we are rapidly expanding its capability. The F-35 is a game-changer for the air combat superiority of the United States and its allies and partners, - and will be for decades to come - I know the program is in good hands as we transition leadership today to Lt. Gen. Fick."

Winter reflects on his tenure with the program

"The F-35 program is more than a program; it is truly a global enterprise built upon a broad spectrum of stakeholders joined together by a common goal - to support the warfighter with dominating capabilities," Winter explains. "When I first became the F-35 program PEO, I gave our warfighters, stakeholders, and JPO teammates my commitment to provide timely continuous communications, make prudent transparent decisions, and deliver on our commitments through crisp, accountable execution. These core tenets of my commander's intent focused our thinking as we transitioned to the follow on development phase, ramped up to full rate production and expanded global sustainment operations for the growing F-35 fleets and forces."

"As the 'quarterback' for the joint force, the F-35 provides new transformational capabilities that will fundamentally change the way our nation's military operates around the globe," said Winter. "More than a fighter jet, the F-35's ability to collect, analyze and share data is a powerful force multiplier that enhances all airborne, sea, and ground-based assets in the battlespace, while ensuring our warfighters can execute their mission and return home safe."

"The F-35 program plays a central role in our National Defense Strategy which calls for building a more lethal joint force, strengthening global alliances, and reforming business practices to enhance affordability. The F-35 weapons system is a multi-mission, next-generation strike fighter that provides our warfighters unmatched, game-changing technology in the domains of sensing, stealth, penetration, strike and interoperability."

"The unique F-35 Partnership brings together our three U.S. Services (USAF, USMC, USN), with our eight Partner nations (UK, IT, NLD, TUR, CAN, AUS, DNK, NOR), and four Foreign Military Sales customers (ISR, JPN, ROK, BEL); each of whom are integral to the planning and execution of the complete F-35 program. The F-35's projected service life extends out for more than 50 years (2075+), and to ensure the aircraft remains combat-ready and ahead of adversaries, the enterprise will continually deliver enhanced capability to the warfighter with a focus on affordability and speed," said Winter.

Pride in the accomplishments and hard work of the F-35 Enterprise

The F-35 weapons system is meeting all of its performance requirements. In 2018, the F-35 program completed the most comprehensive, rigorous, and safest developmental flight test program in aviation history. More than 9,200 sorties, 17,000 flight hours, and 65,000 test points were achieved to verify the design, durability, software,

sensors, weapons capability and performance for all three F-35 variants. Ninety-one F-35s were delivered during calendar year 2018, a nearly 40% increase from the previous year. More than 55 aircraft have been delivered so far this year and we're on track to deliver 131 in 2019.

The F-35 global alliances and capabilities continue to grow. Milestones for the program's International Partners from May 2017 to July 2019 include: First Aircraft Arrivals (FAA) for Norway, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia; declarations of Initial Operating Capability (IOC) for Israel, Italy and the United Kingdom; and training for Korean Maintenance personnel began in January at Eglin AFB in Florida.

In 2019, F-35 flight testing continues in support of phased capability improvements and modernization of the F-35 air system. This agile framework, known as Continuous Capability Development and Delivery (C2D2), provides timely, affordable, incremental warfighting capability through technically feasible, operationally relevant improvements to maintain air dominance against evolving threats to the United States and its allies.

More than 400 F-35s are currently in the global fleet, and by the end of 2019 there will be almost 500 air systems delivered. Production ramp-up will continue as operational testing concludes this summer and the program enters a full-rate production decision in the fall. To prepare for this major production ramp, production experts from across the United States government are working with industry partners to lean out production process flow, increase production quality, deliver parts on time and at reduced cost. To achieve these efficiencies, the program has incorporated a number of performance initiatives and incentives across the entire supply chain to support F-35 production lines in Italy, Japan and the United States.

The F-35A unit cost now sits under \$89 million, the lowest price to date for the program

Driving down cost is critical to the success of this program and the cost of each fighter is steadily declining. For the twelfth consecutive year, the average cost of an F-35 was lowered. More specifically, unit costs for the F-35B and F35C were lowered to \$115.5 million and \$107.7 million, respectively; representing a 5.7% and 11.1% reduction from previous lot aircraft – making these unit costs the lowest to date. In fact, the most common variant of the fighter now costs no more to build than the latest version of the Cold War fighters it is replacing. While at the helm, Winter's leadership drove the price down about 14% across all 3 variants and 3 production lots.

Goals and Challenges

The F-35 Enterprise is embracing true agile acquisition processes, and is transitioning from a developmental and initial production environment to a full-rate production and continuous modernization environment, while simultaneously sustaining a substantial growth of global operations. -- This environment requires the F-35 Program to remain focused, with a true sense of urgency, to build on successes and become more agile to support the warfighter.

"To support the F-35 global fleet and the Secretary of Defense's directive to attain an 80 percent mission capability rate for the operational fleet by the end of 2019, government, international allies, and industry representatives are increasing spare part supplies, accelerating depot activations, and implementing reliability and maintainability improvement plans to ensure maintainers get the parts they need, when they need them, to sustain F-35s more efficiently," said Winter. "To speed up repairs and lower costs, we are leveraging government capabilities at fleet readiness and air logistics centers and we are empowering flight line workers with greater authority to streamline standard maintenance actions. Though these combined sustainment and logistic actions and initiatives will improve overall F-35 readiness for the warfighter, we still face considerable challenges to realize these goals."

"2018 was a very good year and thus far, 2019 has already surpassed last year's accomplishments with many more to come. However, challenges remain to affordability and timely capability delivery. The threats and adversaries we face today are more complex and advanced than ever before. The F-35's success is of vital

importance to our National security. The F-35 enhances our international alliances and is a critical nexus for future coalition operations. It is a vast, complex, rapidly growing and accelerating program that is moving in the right direction,” added Winter. “Our steadfast focus is on the continued advancement, development, delivery, and sustainment of an affordable global F-35 weapons system that supports the peace and, if called upon to do so, swiftly and decisively wins the fight every time.”

“As my tour as the Program Executive Officer of the F-35 Joint Program Office comes to an end, I could not be more proud of the teams’ efforts across the Enterprise. We are in a great place for the program – and the momentum that has driven us forward, will no doubt continue to deliver affordable, effective capabilities to our warfighter,” Winter concluded.



“I am truly honored and humbled to have been appointed to lead this amazing Enterprise.”
Lt. Gen. Eric Fick, F-35 Joint Program Office, Program Executive Officer

“The best ships in the Navy are Friendships, Partnerships and Leadership.”
Vice Admiral Mat Winter. (Ret.)



Lt. Gen. Eric Fick, USAF, and Vice Admiral Mat Winter, USN, congratulate each other after the completion of the change of command for the F-35 Joint Program Office.

F-35 Social Media:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/theF35JPO>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/f35jpo/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/F35JPO/>