



F-35 Lightning II Program

Public Affairs Release – 2011 05 11

EDWARDS RECEIVES 1ST AF PRODUCTION F-35

by 95th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

5/11/2011 - EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- The Air Force accepted into its fleet the first of a planned 1,763 production-model F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters when aircraft AF-7 arrived at Edwards May 6, to begin its flight test program.

"What is unique about AF-7 is that it is the very first F-35 sold to the U.S. Department of Defense by Lockheed-Martin," said Lt. Col. Hank Griffiths, 461st Flight Test Squadron commander and director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force.

"This aircraft joins AF-3 as one of two avionics test airplanes at Edwards, and once its sister airplane, AF-6, arrives later this week, we will have three mission systems F-35A's dedicated to the System Development and Demonstration program."



Edwards' newest F-35 Lightning II arrived for flight testing just before dusk, May 6. AF-07 is the first production-model F-35 delivered to the Air Force. (photo by Darin Russell, Lockheed Martin) [Click here for high resolution.](#)

The signing of formal acceptance documents for the jet took place at Lockheed Martin's F-35 final-assembly plant in Fort Worth, Texas.

"This first aircraft is the cornerstone of our tactical aviation future," said Larry Lawson, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and F-35 program general manager. "The F-35 family of aircraft will bring all-new levels of capability to the air forces of the free world, and these jets are at the front of the line. Only with the vision of our government and international customers could this day have been made possible."

F-35s have completed more than 840 flights, including production-model flights, since flight testing began in late 2006. In addition to AF-7, eight more production-model F-35s have rolled out and are being prepared for delivery.

The F-35 Lightning II is the most advanced multirole fighter in the world, combining Very Low Observable stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations and reduced sustainment costs. The Lightning II's sensor suite is the most powerful and comprehensive of any fighter in history, and will merge with an unprecedented networking capability to give unmatched situational awareness. Supersonic launch of internal weapons - including maximum-speed (Mach 1.6) launch of internal air-to-air missiles - is a feature of all F-35s.

Three distinct variants of the F-35 will replace the A-10 and F-16 for the Air Force, the F/A-18 for the Navy, the F/A-18 and AV-B Harrier for the Marine Corps, and a variety of fighters for at least nine other countries.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems.

