



F-35 Lightning II Program

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J S F C O N S T R U C T I O N P R O G R E S S E S , F E A T U R E S U P D A T E D D E S I G N

Story by Cpl. Jakob Schulz

Work on the new F-35B Joint Strike Fighter hangars is progressing; these hangars are slated to feature many improvements over the AV-8B Harrier hangars currently in use on station.

The hangars are designed to facilitate 16 aircraft and 320 Marines.

The new hangars will have upgraded electrical and cooling systems required for the JSF. These systems are embedded in the parking shelters and hangar bays for each aircraft, so maintenance can be conducted more efficiently. Additionally, the environmental control systems are more efficient than in the old hangars.

Furthermore, maintenance work centers and operating, briefing and debriefing spaces for flight operations, are scheduled to be wired for electronic media.

With the JSF, there will also be increased security and clearances measures.

"The F-35 aircraft requires a higher security system than the legacy aircraft on the flight line and thus the hangars are outfitted with Special Access Program Facilities imbedded in the hangar," said Lt. Col. Dwight De Jong, SATAF Director. "A higher percentage of Marines working on the aircraft will require security clearances which are required for the F-35."

The station also needed to undergo construction in order to accommodate the new hangars.

"Improvements to the station's infrastructure were required due to the age and demands on our current systems and the future increase of Marines and civilians the base will eventually see to accommodate the F-35," said De Jong. "Additionally, improvements to the base communications systems were needed to bring us up to 21st century standards, so both utilities and communications improvements are being completed simultaneously."

These projects, in addition to future projects are paving the way for the Corps and the station.

"After all the construction is finished, MCAS Yuma is going to be the optimal air station in regards to facilities and access to ranges for the fifth-generation aircraft the Corps has purchased," said De Jong.

The first JSF squadron is slated to be stood up later this year.



The ongoing construction of the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter hangars, designed to accommodate more than 300 Marines on the air station, as seen from the base's highest elevated point, Feb. 7. Photo credit: Cpl. Jakob Schultz