



F-35 Lightning II Program

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‘LIGHTNING’ LEGACY LIVES ON

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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. — In 1941 the Lockheed Martin P-38 Lightning launched into service in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was instrumental in the success of American campaigns in World War II. With the same name, Lockheed Martin is carrying on the Lightning legacy with the F-35 Lightning II.

The latter, like its predecessor, is considered far ahead of its time.

When announcing the official name of the Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter July 7, 2006, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, said, “Today we name the aircraft after two great legacy aircraft (speaking also of the English Electric Lightning), two great pieces of air power history. Tomorrow this Lightning II will make a name for itself.”

In a word, power comes to mind when most discuss and compare the all-everything capabilities of the P-38 and F-35.

“What made the P-38 unique for its time was the decision to opt for twin engines,” said Karl Zingheim, exhibits manager at the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum. “Since the Army had a preference for inline engines and the best American inline engine was the Allison, Lockheed went for two of them to deliver the necessary power.”

Zingheim said the P-38 played a big part during World War II in the Pacific theater, where it became the dominant U.S. Army fighter. It was capable of photo reconnaissance missions as well as duty as a fighter-bomber and night-fighter. The P-38 was the multirole fighter for its time.

The F-35 has the capabilities to play a major role in future air campaigns.

“The F-35 Lightning II is a supersonic, multirole, stealth fighter designed to meet the future combat requirements of the United States and allied governments,” said Laurie A Quincy, F-35 Media Relations Manager for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

The F-35 is suited for air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, surveillance and reconnaissance gathering, electronic warfare and command and control roles, said Quincy. Like the P-38 in its era, the F-35 can operate in virtually any situation and no other contemporary fighter has the versatility and combined capabilities.

The P-38 was the first fighter to exceed 400 miles per hour, said Zingheim.

Similarly, the F-35 is capable of reaching great feats in comparison to other aircraft of its generation. It will be the world’s most advanced multirole fighter with the most powerful engine ever flown in a fighter, the Pratt and Whitney F135 engine, said Quincy.

Considering the magnitude of each aircrafts’ capabilities, production isn’t easy.

“The P-38 did go through an extensive development process before becoming the fighter that it was,” said Zingheim. “There was enough faith in the design concept that the Army and Lockheed Martin patiently hung on and wrung out any problems with the aircraft.”

Similarly, the F-35 program is the largest defense program in U.S. history, said Quincy.

The production process for the F-35 continues, and 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing furthers the pursuit with its F-35 variant, the F-35B, at Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

“The Marine Corps has to be ready to fight across the spectrum of war; a force that is most ready when the nation is least ready. The F-35B gives us the capability to do just that,” said Maj. Gen. Jon M. Davis, commanding general of 2nd MAW.

More than 70 years removed from the original Lightning’s groundbreaking first flight, its power and legacy continues today through its successor.

“The F-35 is going to make history as one of the great fighters,” said Quincy.

Read more: <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/84006/lightning-legacy-lives#ixzz1nFLxynkN>

