



F-35 Lightning II Program

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F - 35 B C O N D U C T S F I R S T N I G H T T I M E V E R T I C A L L A N D I N G

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. - An F-35B Lightning II completed the first short takeoff and vertical landing during a test mission at night to expand the flight envelope and deliver capability to the warfighter.

Marine Corps test pilot Maj. C.R. Clift conducted the flight April 2 to gather data on the helmet and lighting conditions for night time operations. The test was one of a series of events being conducted to prepare for the second of three scheduled at-sea test periods during the development program. The first F-35 ship trials occurred in 2011, when two F-35Bs performed 72 vertical landings and takeoffs aboard the USS WASP, a large-deck amphibious ship.

The F-35B is the variant of the Lightning II designed for use by the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as F-35 international partners in the United Kingdom and Italy. The F-35B is capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings to enable air power projection from amphibious ships, ski-jump aircraft carriers and expeditionary airfields.

"The completion of this test event demonstrates the F-35B is one step closer to delivering a critical capability to the U.S. Marine Corps and F-35B partners in the United Kingdom and Italy" said Lt. Gen. Chris Bogdan, F-35 Program Executive Officer. "There is plenty of work to be done and progress to be made, but we're on a solid path forward."

The F-35B has conducted approximately 700 short takeoffs and completed more than 380 vertical landings including the first operational vertical landing aboard Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz. March 21, 2013.

"The F-35B will enable the Marine Corps to preserve its expeditionary nature and bring the next generation of warfighting capabilities to the Joint Force," said Lt. Gen. Robert Schmidle, Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Aviation. As the threat environment becomes more sophisticated, the STOVL F-35B will enable the Marine Air Ground Task Force to project power from amphibious ships as well as austere expeditionary airfields across the entire range of military operations. The first nighttime vertical landing represents the continued success of the program as well as the completion of yet another milestone towards realizing the full capabilities of the F-35B."

The F-35B is undergoing flight test and evaluation at NAS Patuxent River, Md., and Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., as aircraft are delivered to the fleet.

