



F-35 Lightning II Program

Public Affairs Release – 2013 10 30

F-35B LIGHTNING II COMPLETES FIRST GUIDED WEAPON DELIVERY AGAINST GROUND TARGET

Edwards AFB, Calif., - The F-35 Lightning II advanced its combat capability by delivering - on target - its first guided weapons release.

An F-35B short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) fighter aircraft piloted by Marine Corps Maj. Richard Rusnok, successfully employed a Guided Bomb Unit-12 (GBU-12) Paveway II laser-guided weapon from the F-35's internal weapons bay against a fixed ground tank test target yesterday. The GBU-12 is a 500-pound, Mk-82 general purpose bomb mated with a nose-mounted laser seeker and flight guidance fins for precision strike. The GBU-12 used in this test did not contain explosives.

The F-35B released its weapon from 25,000 feet and the bomb fell for 35 seconds before hitting a stationary target (a tank) on the Edwards Air Force Base Precision Impact Range Area.

The F-35 used its Electro-Optical Targeting System (EOTS) to enable the pilot to identify, track, designate and accurately deliver the GBU-12 on target. EOTS is the world's first sensor to combine forward-looking infrared, infrared search and track, and laser designator to maximize capability for F-35 pilots.

"This guided weapons delivery test of a GBU-12 marks the first time the F-35 truly became a weapon system", said Rusnok. "It represents another step forward in the development of this vital program."

Last week two other advancements were made in F-35 weapons testing. On October 21, at Patuxent River, Md, the Navy variant released its first weapons separation test from an F-35C and on October 23 at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. the Air Force variant conducted the first ground release pit testing of a GBU-39 (250-pound) small diameter bomb.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th generation fighter, combining advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations and advanced sustainment. Three distinct variants of the F-35 will replace the A-10 and F-16 for the U.S. Air Force, the F/A-18 for the U.S. Navy, the F/A-18 and AV-8B Harrier for the U.S. Marine Corps, and a variety of fighters for at least 10 other countries.

