



F-35 Lightning II Program

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OGDEN ALC COMPLETES ORGANIC MODS ON FIRST F-35

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah -- The Ogden Air Logistics Complex completed the Air Force's first-ever organic depot modifications on an F-35 Lightning II.

The F-35A variant aircraft, arrived at Hill Air Force Base in mid-September 2013, and received four structural modifications intended to strengthen areas of the aircraft and extend its service life.

Maj. Gen. H. Brent Baker Sr., the Ogden ALC commander, credited the phenomenal teamwork that occurred between the Ogden ALC, Lockheed Martin and F-35 Joint Program Office for successfully completing the modifications.

"It was a team effort with the Ogden ALC providing the touch labor and Lockheed Martin providing engineering support," Baker said.

The aircraft departed today for Nellis AFB, Nev., where it will undergo continued operational testing.

Baker said this first F-35 aircraft was what's called a prototype modification aircraft because in the process of outfitting the modifications, the depot was also able to solidify its technical processes.

This was the first time the Ogden ALC accomplished depot work on the aircraft, and new and improved ways of doing the modifications were discovered. In the end, each of the findings will formally be rolled into improving the existing technical guidance, Baker said, which will be used for subsequent F-35 repairs.

More than 30 Ogden ALC maintainers and 17 Lockheed Martin engineers and production staff accomplished the modifications under the umbrella of a public-private partnership.

"When it comes to Air Force depot maintenance on the F-35, the vast majority of the learning and experience is happening right here at the Ogden ALC," Baker said.

The first of the four structural modifications made to the aircraft included a root rib modification, which replaces a section of the aircraft's wing root rib with a titanium splice. The other modifications, also structural, involved a station 3/9 modification, a mid-fairing fitting, and a forward engine mount modification, all of which are intended to extend the life of the aircraft.

The process concluded with a series of functional check flights to ensure the modifications were performed correctly and that other systems on the aircraft unrelated to the changes were not disturbed.

The Ogden ALC received its second Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, a Dutch F-35, on Feb. 14. A third U.S.-owned jet arrived on March 15.

The Dutch aircraft is expected to undergo three of the four modifications performed on the first aircraft before it returns to Eglin AFB, Fla., for more operational testing this summer. It will not get the engine mount modification, but is receiving a major modification to the fuel boost pumps.

This second aircraft is more of a validation/verification aircraft, Baker said, which means that while it's getting the planned modifications, the skilled artisans who work on the aircraft will continue to validate and verify that the formalized technical guidance is 100 percent accurate.

The Ogden ALC is expected to perform the series of modifications on a total of six aircraft this fiscal year. Eight F-35s are expected to be inducted into the depot in FY15.

Baker said it took more than two years to prepare the Ogden ALC for this new F-35 depot work and as workload increases, manning is also expected to increase.

The F-35 is important for the Air Force and Hill AFB, Baker said, because the F-35 will eventually be the heir to the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the A-10 Thunderbolt II. The Ogden ALC already performs depot maintenance, repair, overhaul and modification on the F-16 and A-10.

"It is exciting to see this entire plan come to fruition and work on the aircraft." Baker said. "It has been incredibly rewarding for the team."