



F-35 Lightning II Program

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A U S T R A L I A ' S F I R S T F - 3 5 A P I L O T T A K E S F L I G H T

On Tuesday, 17 March, Australia's first F-35A pilot, Squadron Leader Andrew Jackson, took his first flight in an F-35A aircraft at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, United States.

The flight was in a United States Air Force F-35A aircraft, as the Australian F-35A aircraft are currently located at Luke Air Force Base, in anticipation of the opening of the international pilot training centre in mid 2015. SQNLDR Jackson will continue his intensive training program over the coming months.

The F-35A will meet Australia's future air combat and strike needs, providing a networked force-multiplier effect in terms of situational awareness and combat effectiveness.

The F-35A's combination of stealth, advanced sensors, networking and data fusion capabilities, when integrated with other defence systems, will enable the RAAF to maintain an air combat edge.

The first F-35A aircraft will arrive in Australia at the end of 2018 with the first operational squadron to be established by 2020. The F-35A will replace the aging F/A-18A/B Hornets at RAAF Bases Williamtown (NSW) and Tindal (NT).