



F-35 Lightning II Program

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FIRST MARINE GRADUATES AIR FORCE'S ONLY F-35 INTELLIGENCE COURSE

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EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - The first U.S. Marine Corps officer graduated the Air Force's only F-35 Lightning II Intelligence Formal Training Unit course, June 24, on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The formal course combines fifth-generation fighter-specific and general intelligence academics applicable to the F-35 and the low observable global strike mission. Completion of the F-35 IFTU curriculum fulfills all initial qualification training requirements, and students are assigned basic qualification status. U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Samuel Winsted, F-35B Lightning II intelligence officer, started his training at Eglin, May 18, 2015, learning the unique aspects of F-35 employment and intelligence support to the F-35 mission. "It's our job to help students understand what the F-35 can do and what it brings to the fight," said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Miskin, 33rd Operations Group F-35 IFTU instructor. "We have to change and modify our lessons so we can incorporate those changes program-wide as the F-35 program approaches initial operational capability." The Marine Corps will declare IOC with the F-35B, short take-off and vertical landing variant, this summer. "Having Lt. Winsted here is significant because the Marine Corps doesn't have a course equivalent to our F-35 IFTU course," said Lt. Col. Bradley Turner, 33rd Operations Support Squadron commander. "It will absolutely increase their capability." Winsted will serve in a critical role assisting the Marine Corps' F-35 program at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, as it becomes the first operational F-35B base. "Now that I have my basic qualification status, I can provide the right information, scenario development and mission integration to the F-35B to the Marine aircrews at MCAS Yuma," said Winsted.

The F-35 IFTU at Eglin provides reach-back support regarding intelligence support to other services' F-35 squadrons. "Hopefully, we will be able to teach more Navy and Marine intelligence analysts," said Miskin. "That way, as a whole, we can all be on the same page as to what intelligence to provide and how they will support F-35 aircrew to complete the mission."