



F-35 Lightning II Program

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Gunfighter completes first F-35 transport

By Senior Airman Malissa Armstrong, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho

Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho -- An F-35A Lightning II belonging to Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. was moved for repairs after being grounded here for the past year.

The aircraft was moved to the F-35 Depot at Hill AFB, Utah, with the help of the 366th Equipment Maintenance Squadron crash and recovery team.

“Our role as crash recovery started as first responders when the aircraft had an emergency last September,” said Master Sgt. Shane Mitchell, 366th EMS crash and recovery repair and reclamation section chief. “We have since been involved in the various stages of planning to get it from here to Hill AFB.”

The organization for the move started in April of this year, where delegated tasks ranged from assisting with route and site surveys, to the actual lifting of the aircraft on to the specialized trailer used for transport.

“The coordination took several months due to the multitude of agencies involved, the distance and terrain in which this asset would have to travel,” said Dale Fox, 366th Logistics Readiness distribution manager.

Previously, a lift like this was only performed by the engineers at Lockheed Martin.

“366th Crash Recovery (an F-15 unit) was the first to do an actual lift on an F-35,” said Daniel Santos, 809th Depot manager at Hill



Airmen from the 366th Equipment Maintenance Squadron hold an F-35A Lightning II in place Nov. 2, 2017, at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. The aircraft was transported from Mountain Home to the F-35 depot at Hill AFB, Utah, for repairs. (Photos by Airman 1st Class Jeremy D. Wolff)



AFB. “What’s even more remarkable is Mitchell and his crew have no F-35 experience (or) training and using F-35 tech data, they performed a flawless lift.”

The main concern was getting the aircraft to Hill’s F-35 depot with no more damage than it already sustained. According to Fox, the ultimate goal is to get it back to mission ready or use its parts in other aircrafts.

“Personnel at Mountain Home AFB have been extraordinarily supportive in this endeavor,” Santos said. “From the first day I started working this project everyone has bent over backwards to help out. Not once have I heard anyone say ‘we can’t do this’, it’s always been ‘let’s see how we make it happen.’”