



F-35 Lightning II Program

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An F35A Lightning II stealth fighter from the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., skims the mountain tops of the National Training Center's central corridor during Decisive Action rotation 18-02 in support of 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, Nov. 20, 2017. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Nikayla Shodeen, Operations Group, National Training Center)

USAF F35's train at the National Training Center

Story by Capt. Albert Jernegan, Fort Irwin Operations Group

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, FORT IRWIN, Calif. -- The National Training Center welcomed the F35A Lightning II stealth fighter from the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., supporting the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, Nov. 18th through Dec. 1st. The joint operations training between the two units served to develop the ability to mass complimentary and reinforcing fires, further complementing the Army and Air Force relationship.

The NTC has long been the destination for units from all branches, including foreign nation militaries, to hone their skills in a tough, realistic and competitive environment. The ability to develop adaptive leaders and highly-trained units falls directly in line with the Army's goal of fostering readiness along with modernizing and structuring the force to win the first fight.

Recognizing that reputation, Edward's Air Force Base sent a section of F35's to provide enhanced, joint air-to-ground integration and close air support during Rotation 18-02.

"The NTC is the perfect crucible to hone joint and coalition combat firepower skills," said Air Force Lt. Col. Wesley Bradford, commander, 12th Combat Training Squadron, and Raven 07, the senior USAF observer-controller/trainer here.

The section of F35's are validating the latest aircraft software, including the Combat Operational Flight Program, directly contributing to the tactical efforts of the Lightning II aircraft.

The interoperability of the F35A is unparalleled in combat aircraft with regards to its ability to assume a leadership role in the air. The information provided for a joint coalition strike force is designed in a way that allows the aircraft to share everything it can see with other aircraft and tactical operations centers on the ground.

These capabilities provide an unmatched capability for the rotational unit and allowed for the full integration of the squadron into the brigade operations.

"The endstate is ready Brigade Combat Teams, Air Force Squadrons, and Tactical Air Control Parties, able to execute decisive, world-wide multi-spectrum combat operations," said Bradford.

Bradford quoted Gen. George S. Patton, "to get the harmony in music, each instrument must support the others, and to get harmony in battle, each weapon must support the other. Team play wins."

To achieve success, the Army and Air Force must apply all of the lessons learned, utilize the joint training conducted here, and apply them towards future warfare in order to improve synergy across the gamut of systems needed to complete the joint mission.



The logo of the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron, based out of Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.