



F-35 Lightning II Program

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Airman 1st Class Eric Ruiz-Garcia, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief, performs an inspection on an F-35A Lightning II at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Dec 1, 2017. The unit is the first Luke F-35 AMU to receive a 3F, or full-up, combat aircraft capable of pulling 9G's in the air.

Luke's newest AMU supports F-35 program

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Caleb Worpel, 56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. -- Since the arrival of the first F-35A Lightning II to the 63rd Fighter Squadron earlier this year, maintainers, crew chiefs and other respective maintenance positions have been steadily working to continue developing Airmen toward building the future of Airpower.

The 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit officially opened their doors on October 1 and have since led to the success of 162 sorties and 228.3 flying hours in support of Luke's F-35 program.



(Above) Airman 1st Class Paul Lively, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief, sets up his work station on the flight line at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Dec. 1, 2017. For the past two months, the 63rd AMU has contributed to the success of 162 sorties and 228.3 flying hours in support of the Luke's F-35 program. (Bottom) Airmen assigned the 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit stand in formation for roll call at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Dec. 1, 2017. 146 personnel and seven aircraft are currently assigned to the 63rd.



“The 63rd AMU is contributing to the F-35 program by working out kinks with operations,” said Capt. Cameron Taylor, 63rd AMU officer in charge. “We are getting the aircraft in the air to better the software and ready pilots for the impending arrival of more 3F aircraft.”

The unit is the first Luke F-35 AMU to receive a 3F, or full-up, combat aircraft capable of pulling 9G's in the air.

“Each unit has a significant job within the F-35 program to train pilots and maintainers,” said Tech. Sgt. Derriel Morris, 63rd AMU noncommissioned officer in charge of debrief. “The 63rd is unique because we are just getting started. Our sorties might be lower than other units right now, but we are going to keep ramping up to match, and eventually surpass them.”

Currently, 146 personnel and seven aircraft are assigned to the 63rd, Taylor said. The AMU is scheduled to grow to approximately 200 personnel and 22 aircraft in the near future.



Through technological advances and continuous analysis, the F-35 program at the 63rd AMU and Luke as a whole continues to directly build the future of Airpower from within the 56th Fighter Wing.