



# F-35 Lightning II Program

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## Stepping stone to F-35 interoperability

By 48th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

### ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, England --

Members of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force visited the 48th Munitions Squadron at RAF Lakenheath, England Dec. 19, to gain a better understanding of one of the weapons their incoming F-35B Lightning II aircraft will use.

The 48th MUNS production flight chief showcased the Guided Bomb Unit-12 Paveway II and answered questions that UK F-35 team had about the munition.

“The GBU-12 is a laser-guided 500-pound bomb that we fly on the F-15 platforms,” the production flight chief said. Though the RAF already uses GBU-12s on other platforms, “our British allies reached out for assistance and information on tactics, techniques, procedures, training, logistics and equipment for this type of bomb.”

During the visit, Airmen from the 48th MUNS disassembled a GBU-12 and also provided them with information about the training program used to ensure Liberty wing munitions Airmen are mission ready.

Chief Petty Officer Taff Moul, from the Royal Navy Lightning Project Team Support Authority, was one of the attendees. He is focused on ensuring the F-35 will have all the support equipment and trained personnel necessary when the UK receives them.

“The issue we found ourselves in was that we will be using GBU-12 munitions for the F-35,” Moul said. “The UK F-35 team has had no exposure to GBU-12, and we have to establish that we can conduct the prep work for the munition on the aircraft carrier before the Lightning IIs arrive.”



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 48th Munitions Squadron disassemble a Guided Bomb Unit-12 Paveway II for members of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force at RAF Lakenheath, England, Dec. 19. The 48th MUNS Airmen helped answer questions their visitors had about the GBU-12 and shared their procedures and best practices. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Emerson Nuñez



Lt. Col. George Watkins, former 34th Fighter Squadron commander, drops a GBU-12 laser-guided bomb from an F-35A Lightning II at the Utah Test and Training Range Feb. 25, 2016. The 34th FS is the Air Force's first combat unit to employ munitions from the F-35A. U.S. Air Force photo by Jim Haseltine

After the munitions disassembly demonstration, the 48th MUNS and the visitors spoke about future training together.

“We think this is something we can build toward, and in the future we can work together and have more joint training opportunities centered around the F-35,” Moulton said. “We are all looking forward to a beneficial working relationship.”

Members of the 48th MUNS were invited to visit RAF facilities that will be used to support the F-35 including Her Majesty’s Ship, the Queen Elizabeth.

This visit is just a stepping stone toward greater interoperability as both UK and U.S. forces begin their preparation to implement fifth-generation airpower into future operations.