



F-35 Lightning II Program

Public Release – 2018 10 19

New Tech To Ease F-35A Flight Line Maintenance

By 388th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah -- Maintainers on Hill's flight line are beginning to utilize new high-tech, hand-held tablets to work on the F-35A, America's most advanced multi-role fighter aircraft.

"I am passionate about my job and I want to do it well. These tablets are going to help me do that," said Staff Sgt. Rio Torres, a low observable technician in the 388th Maintenance Squadron.

The handheld tablets will augment laptops, called Portable Maintenance Aids, currently used by Airmen to connect to the F-35A's Autonomic Logistics Information System on the flight line. ALIS is the one stop shop for the "health" of every aircraft – used for tracking everything from flight data to aircraft status and supply information.



Aircraft maintainers Staff Sgt. Rio Torres, 388th Maintenance Squadron, and Airman 1st Class Jacob Dean, 419th Maintenance Squadron, use a new tablet while working on an F-35A fighter jet at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Oct. 4, 2018.

The "beefed-up laptops" maintainers now use are not always the fastest or most efficient, said Torres. They are not WIFI enabled, and don't allow for real-time information sharing.

The units are also bulky and heavy and must be manually updated with tech data and other information. Any changes to a jet's status also required maintainers to leave the flight line to log into ALIS. Now, maintainers and their tablets will be networked together to update work orders and other information immediately, moving from jet to jet much more quickly.

"If we have an issue with a jet and need to ground abort, a pilot will be able to sign out a spare right on the line and step to that jet. We can do that right on the flight line without having to call the flight ops desk for a backup," said 1st Lt. Eric Dolan, 388th Maintenance Squadron Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight commander.

Eventually the 388th Maintenance Group will have nearly 200 of the handheld tablets which will help maintainers generate sorties quicker and more efficiently.

Hill AFB is slated to be home to three operational F-35A fighter squadrons with a total of 78 aircraft by the end of 2019. The first operational F-35As arrived at Hill in September 2015. The active duty 388th FW and Air Force Reserve 419th FW will fly and maintain the jet in a Total Force partnership, which capitalizes on the strength of both components.