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WEEKLY UPDATE

A Message From Jeff Babione

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The F-35 Integrated Test Force (ITF) at Edwards Air Force Base, California, recently completed 25 missions comprising of 12 weapons delivery accuracy (WDA) and 13 weapon separation tests as part of a month-long weapons firing test surge. These events require a vast amount of coordination and the highest number previously accomplished in a month was three in November of 2014.

During this unprecedented surge period, a total of 30 weapons were dropped or fired from the F-35 and showcased the accuracy of the F-35 with as many as five different weapons.

“The WDAs rely on the full capability of the F-35 — multiple sensors, navigation, weapons envelope, mission planning, data links and inter-agency range scheduling — all working in sequence to put steel on target,” said Lt. Gen. Chris Bogdan, F-35 Program Executive Officer.

“This was a tremendous effort by the F-35 test team. They surged and worked seven days a week for more than a month to expend 30 ordnance and advance weapons testing. This testing has moved us that much closer to delivering the full F-35 capability to warfighters within the next two years.”

Support from the entire F-35 team made this WDA surge effort possible. Everyone involved rose to the challenge and executed these missions in a highly effective manner. I echo Gen. Bogdan’s comments and thank everyone who was involved with this effort.



F-35C DT-III



As the Edwards test team continues to knock it out of the park, the F-35C is wearing out the three wire on USS George Washington (CVN 73) for DT-III. Now finishing up their second week of action out at sea, the team is literally blowing through test points, surpassing minimum wind over deck and high wind over deck points up to 45 knots.

Those are very difficult points to meet and the team is doing an outstanding job of completing these crucial test points. The aircraft and team continue their impressive streak of 114 arrestments and zero bolters. If you add the 120 arrestments the pilots from VFA-101 completed last week during pilot carrier qualifications, the F-35C has accomplished an astonishing 234 arrestments without a single miss during this deployment.

The team is on track to finish this round of testing earlier than originally planned, rounding out the system development and demonstration (SDD) ship trial testing with another impressive at-sea period. It’s exciting to see the culmination of the hard work and dedication from everyone involved since the very first catapult shot more than five years ago. To everyone aboard USS George Washington, thank you for your expertise, dedication, and for sacrificing time away from your family and friends. Stay safe out there; we’ll see you when you get home.

Two F-35s Complete SDD Flights

In other flight test news, CF-1 and AF-4 recently completed their SDD flight test requirements. For years, these two F-35s have been workhorses for the test teams, and have expanded the F-35A and C flight envelopes to never-before-seen places. These two jets aren't through supporting the program and will now transition into supporting various test items required to complete SDD by the end of next year.



Northern Lightning

This year, the F-35 has been on the go and the trend continues. Fourteen F-35As from the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, are in the middle of a two-week long event at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, Wisconsin, providing service members a tactical level, joint training environment customized to meet the full-spectrum training needs of each unit.



According to Col. Chad Milne, Wisconsin Air National Guard director of operations, Volk Field provides realistic and challenging training scenarios unparalleled in the Air National Guard.

"The emphasis this year will be placed on joint integration of 4th and 5th Generation aircraft from the Air National Guard, Air Force and Navy," Milne said. "Participating units will be tasked to execute multiple high-end training missions that are designed to prepare pilots for real-world conflict."

The 14 F-35As constitute the largest number of F-35s on one deployment to date. The team will have the opportunity to conduct offensive counter air, suppression and destruction of enemy air

defense and close air support scenarios involving actual employment of laser- and GPS-guided munitions from various 4th Generation aircraft. I have no doubt the F-35 will flex its muscles and show why they call it the most advanced fighter jet in the world.

AX-1 First Flight



In F-35 international news, Japan's first F-35A, AX-1, launched off the runway for its first airborne experience on Aug. 24. This flight is the first of a handful of flights every aircraft go through before completing the delivery process. AX-1 performed well and the flight was uneventful as planned. The Japan Ministry of Defense announced its selection of the F-35 as their next generation fighter aircraft in 2011 and take delivery of AX-1 next month. Japan plans to purchase 42 F-35As and assemble all but the first four at the Japan FACO in Nagoya, Japan. On Sept. 23 we are hosting a rollout ceremony to commemorate this historic event and the beginning of an exciting future where F-35As command the Japanese skies for many years to come.

Hill 1,000th Sortie

To end this week, I want to say congratulations to Team Hill on completing their 1,000th sortie. AF-83 took to the skies on Aug. 18 with Maj. Shad Stromberg at the controls for this milestone. Less than one year ago the Rude Rams received their first F-35A and they haven't looked back. What is even more impressive is they missed less than 40 sorties on their way to 1,000. Amazing work by Team Hill, keep up the great work.

Have a good weekend.

