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# WEEKLY UPDATE

*A Message From Jeff Babione*

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BF-1 and BF-5 landed aboard USS America (LHA-6) for the final SDD ship trials on Friday, beginning Developmental Test (DT) III. The team and aircraft went straight to work, swiftly completing all of the pilot carrier qualifications over the weekend as well as welcoming five other F-35Bs that joined the party. Three F-35Bs from the Operational Test (OT) squadron, VMX-1, and two F-35Bs from VMFA-211 were added to the flight deck to accomplish a variety of operational test and simulation objectives. With seven F-35Bs operating aboard USS America, this



deployment represents the most to ever operate from an amphibious assault ship, topping the Marine Corps deployment of six during OT-1 in May of 2015.



"During the next three weeks, we will be completing critical flight test for both Developmental Test and Operational Test," said Lt. Col. Tom "Sally" Fields, F-35 Pax River ITF Government Flight Test director assigned to VX-23. "The ITF and VX-23 will be conducting DT work that will establish the boundaries of safe operation for the F-35B in the 3F configuration. VMX-1 will be conducting OT operations focused on preparing maintenance crews and pilots for the first deployment of the F-35B aboard USS Wasp, scheduled to start in just over a year."

USS America is currently home to more than 200 F-35 team members from all around the program. They are performing great work and accomplishing significant testing each day. I will continue to bring you the latest news from the team at sea as they continue to show the world how amazing this aircraft is.

## Turkey F-35 Block Buy

Also Friday, the Turkish Defense Industry Executive Committee (DIEC) approved an F-35 Block Buy for 24 F-35As for fiscal years 2018-2020. Turkey's announcement strengthens the longstanding partnership between Turkey, the U.S. government and Lockheed Martin, who've worked side by side on many programs including the F-16.

Turkey's program of record is 100 F-35As. Having purchased two aircraft in LRIP 10 and four in LRIP 11, the approval for 24 more F-35As brings their total to 30 jets. The 24 F-35s will be purchased at a rate of eight per year.

Turkey's decision is a testament to our customers' confidence in the advance capabilities the F-35 provides. We are honored by Turkey's continued commitment to the F-35 program and stand ready to support their needs.



## PAO Modifications



It is often said, how you handle adversity is more important than the adversity itself. The F-35 team's handling of the PAO tube adversity has been nothing but inspirational. AF-87 and AF-97 both took to the Utah skies last week after the on-site team, pictured here, completed all of the PAO modifications necessary.

Additionally, AS-1 and AS-2 recently took off from the Fort Worth runway for the first time after completing these modifications. This is exciting news as Israel plans to officially receive these two jets in country next month. A special thanks to everyone across the

enterprise who sacrificed so much time, energy and effort to make these results possible.

I hope everyone had a fun and safe Halloween this year. One thing I love about our leadership is they like to get out and have some fun with the employees. Janet Nash and her leadership team have a tradition to hand out candy to the team in appreciation of all they do for the program. I have to say, if I had to vote for the scariest Halloween costumes this year, Mike and Janet would win hands down!

Have a great weekend. It's hard to believe Thanksgiving isn't far away!

