New Opportunity on the Horizon

Many of you may have seen yesterday’s news that I will be transitioning to a new role leading Lockheed Martin’s Advanced Development Programs business, also known as the renowned Skunk Works®. Greg Ulmer, who has most recently been leading the F-35 Aircraft Production Business Unit, will succeed me as vice president and general manager of the F-35 program.

While I will have more to share before I officially transition, I did want to take a moment to say what an honor and privilege it has been to work on the F-35 program for the past five years. The dedication and commitment of this team is unparalleled and it’s been my honor to work alongside our customers, partners and employees to deliver this transformational capability.

Greg Ulmer has been an important member of the F-35 team for the past two years and I know that he will continue to lead this organization into greater heights. I look forward to hearing about the continued success of the F-35 program well into the future.

First F-35A Delivered to Misawa Air Base, Japan

Last week the Japan Air Self Defense Force (JASDF) celebrated the arrival of the first F-35A to its first operational F-35A base at Misawa Air Base, Japan. The aircraft, designated AX-6, is the second F-35A assembled at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries’ F-35 Final Assembly & Check-Out (FACO) facility in Nagoya, Japan and is the first to be assigned to the JASDF’s 3rd Air Wing.

“The F-35 represents a transformational leap in capability for the Japan Air Self Defense Force and the first aircraft’s arrival in Misawa will significantly enhance Japan’s defense and strengthen the US-Japan security alliance,” said Gary North, Lockheed Martin Vice President for Customer Requirements in a company release. “We congratulate the JASDF and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries on this critical milestone and we look forward to continuing our strong partnership with Japanese government and industry as they strengthen their defense forces with the F-35.”

Japan’s program of record calls for 42 F-35A aircraft. The first four aircraft were assembled at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas, and delivered to Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, where JASDF pilots and maintenance crews are undergoing training.

Congratulations to the JASDF on this significant milestone for the countries future air defense!
Airman for Life Podcast

The Air Force Association (AFA) recently launched its new “Airman for Life” podcast series with an inaugural episode on Airpower Superiority.

“AFA is the professional development association for Airmen, and podcasts offer a unique opportunity for AFA to reach our members throughout the country to provide unique insights on Air Force topics,” said Bridget Dongu, AFA's Director of Communications.

The podcast series will feature interviews with aerospace experts and thought leaders on professional development, primarily focusing on Air Force and AFA top issues. Vago Muradian, founder and editor of Defense and Aerospace Report, moderated the podcast's first episode, including a panel with Lt Gen Bruce “Orville” Wright, USAF (Ret.), former Commander 5th Air Force and US Air Force Japan; Dr. Rebecca Grant, President of IRIS Independent Research; and Lt Col David Berke, USMC (Ret).

I commend AFA for this excellent new way to share their message, and I encourage you to enjoy the first episode and put the podcast on your list for the future. Learn more or listen at the AFA Podcast Website.

F-35 Participates in Orange Flag Exercise

The U.S. military just wrapped up one of its largest exercises in California, involving dozens of aircraft -- old and new. 5th generation and legacy fighters from three branches of the U.S. armed forces took to the skies over the Mojave Desert for one of the largest testing exercises of its kind.

Orange Flag, a mock battle in the sky designed to push more than two dozen fighter jets to their technical limits was the latest exercise for the F-35 to show how it revolutionizes the battlespace making everything around it better.

CBS posted a video highlighting the F-35 and F-22 involvement, including some great footage from a KC-135 tanker. Thanks to the team at Edwards AFB who supported these missions!