



## F-35B Makes History as it Lands on USS Wasp for First Operational Deployment

A detachment of F-35Bs with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), landed on the USS Wasp (LHD-1) March 5, marking the beginning of the F-35B's first operational deployment with a MEU.

"This is a historic deployment," said Col. Tye R. Wallace, 31st MEU Commanding Officer. "The F-35B is the most capable aircraft ever to support a Marine rifleman on the ground. It brings a range of new capabilities to the MEU that make us a more lethal and effective Marine Air-Ground Task Force."

Well-suited for the Marine Corps' amphibious and expeditionary focus, the F-35B can carry more firepower into more uncertain environments for longer periods of time, with better survivability than any other aircraft in history. This is a landmark event for the entire F-35 program as our customer continues to deploy the F-35 to enhance regional stability and global security.



Read more, see photos and watch videos about this historic milestone, [here](#).

## F-35A at Eglin Air Force Base Surpasses 1,000 Flight Hours



Nearly five years ago, AF-29 took off from Fort Worth, Texas on its maiden voyage with F-35 Chief Test Pilot, Al Norman at the controls.

Just last week, AF-29 became the first F-35 outside the testing community to reach the 1,000-flight hour mark. The F-35A is an LRIP 4 aircraft stationed at Eglin AFB, Florida.

Congratulations to the entire team at Eglin AFB for ensuring AF-29 is ready to support our customers' mission, day in and day out. I look forward to seeing many more F-35s reach this milestone as the fleet continues to grow.

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## BF-1 Completes its Final SDD Flight Test

After nearly a decade of flight test, BF-1 completed its final SDD test flight earlier this week. BF-1 flew 725 flights accomplishing many firsts for F-35B STOVL operations throughout its service life. I am extremely impressed with the body of work this aircraft achieved but even more impressive is the team behind each and every flight. The Integrated Test Force and many other members supported BF-1 through 782 vertical landings, 1,412 short takeoffs, 945 slow landings, 71 ski jump takeoffs and many more test flights.

Thanks to the team who supported this aircraft throughout the years and made these milestones possible. Your hard work and dedication is directly related to the confidence the customer has in the F-35B's capabilities.

With about 20 test flights remaining, we're on a path to complete SDD flight testing this spring.



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## Team Ideas Continue to Improve Efficiencies

One of our team members in Wing Mate, Cleto Escobar, recently raised an idea to improve our process for applying sealant, also known as Blue Goo, on each side of the wing. His ideas to improve materials, tooling and methods could reduce the time it takes to apply sealant and the number of hours it takes to cure, while also potentially improving quality and required rework.

I want to thank Cleto for bringing his creative ideas forward – it's feedback like this that will help us achieve our goals to reduce costs, improve quality and enhance efficiency across our operations.

As always, I encourage the entire team to submit any new ideas to help us improve to our [f35.communications@lmco.com](mailto:f35.communications@lmco.com) mailbox. Keep up the great work!

