First South Korean F-35A Makes Public Debut

This week I had the privilege to participate alongside our Republic of Korea and U.S. government partners to celebrate the public debut or ‘roll out’ of the first Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) F-35A at the Lockheed Martin Fort Worth production facility. The event marks a major F-35 program milestone, strengthening national defense and global partnerships.

I want to thank the entire team involved in delivering this first aircraft, as well as those who led the planning and execution of the exceptional celebration ceremony, attended by more than 450 guests. It is a privilege to work for such an outstanding team!

During the event, the Republic of Korea’s Minister of Defense Song Young-moo said in a video, “The deployment of the F-35 will serve as momentum to enhance the combined operations of the ROK-U.S. Air Forces, and advance ROKAF’s support capabilities for ground operations.”

Lockheed Martin Chairman, President and CEO Marillyn Hewson, spoke during the event and highlighted the global partnerships the F-35 delivers. “We are proud to support the Republic of Korea with the unrivalled 5th Generation F-35,” she said. “We know that it will be a symbol of strength reminding us all that when we partner together, our nations are safer, our people are more secure, and our future is brighter.”

I encourage you to watch highlights from the ceremony here – and photos from the event are available here. This was my first roll out as the Vice President and General Manager of the F-35 program and I can’t tell you how proud I was to be part of such a momentous event. Your hard work and dedication to the program was on full display and it was recognized by our customers, senior government officials and Lockheed Martin executives who attended. Thanks for delivering such an exceptional event to celebrate this historic milestone.
F-35C Completes Carrier Qualifications

Four F-35C aircraft from VFA-101 and VFA-125 recently embarked on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) conducting carrier qualifications (CQ). Instructors from both squadrons accomplished day and night qualifications with 140 traps in anticipation of F-35C operational testing later this year.

The F-35C complements the tactical fighter fleet with a dominant, multirole, next-generation aircraft capable of projecting U.S. power and deterring potential adversaries. The continued integration of the F-35C into the carrier air wing will enable the carrier strike group of the future to be more lethal and survivable in high-end threat environments.

Lt. Nick Rezendes, a pilot attached to VFA 101, who qualified on the F-35C during this CQ said, “I wanted to switch to flying the Navy’s newest aircraft, and now that I have, I wouldn’t mind sticking with it for the rest of my career.”

Our sustainment team also played a critical role in this CQ, providing round-the-clock support to ensure each aircraft was mission ready for the Naval aviators. Congratulations to these two squadrons on a successful CQ!


This past weekend, hundreds of thousands of spectators passed through Luke Air Force Base’s gates for Luke Days 2018. Team Luke’s government/industry partnership was represented by the joint USAF-Lockheed Martin static display team who interacted with the community by telling the F-35 story.

Pictured here, are many of the 56th Fighter Wing’s joint USAF/Lockheed Martin airshow team from the 62d Aircraft Maintenance Unit representing U.S., Norway, Japan and Italian F-35 pilot and maintenance training operations. This team engaged with attendees at the airshow highlighting the international partnerships and interoperability of the F-35. This unit embodies one of the 56th Fighter Wing’s core tenants, “We are all leaders and we work best in teams.”

Thank you to Team Luke for representing the entire F-35 enterprise to your community.

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