Innovative Thinking Translates to Big Savings

The F-35 enterprise is constantly looking for ways to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. This week, I’d like to highlight an idea from David Turner, Lockheed Martin Materials and Processes Engineering Manager and his team, who identified a way to cut the cure time for sealant used around the F-35 engine nacelle from seven days to just 16 hours. This 90 percent decrease in the time to complete this task will generate significant time and cost savings for our program overtime.

After reviewing Thermal Analysis data, the team was able to determine and verify that a different temperature sealant, with significantly shorter cure times, would be suitable for use, rather than a more challenging sealant used previously.

“This helps us deliver product more quickly, and it will be a huge time savings in the field, as well,” said Lyle Garton, Lockheed Martin Materials and Processes Engineer.

I’d like to thank David and his team for their great idea and commitment to continuous improvement. Your ideas to improve our operations are critical to our success – and, as always, I encourage you to submit any opportunities to reduce costs, improve efficiency and enhance quality to our f35.communications@lmco.com mailbox.

F-35 Makes Its German Debut

This week marked another historic first for the F-35 program when two F-35As landed in Berlin, Germany as part of the United States delegation for the 2018 Berlin Air and Trade Show.

The aircraft were the first F-35s to ever land in Germany, and their direct route from Luke Air Force Base set a new F-35 record for the longest non-stop flight to-date, lasting more than 11 hours.

The aircraft are on public display this week with members of the U.S. Air Force F-35 Heritage Team, and their participation in this show is a tremendous demonstration of the capability and partnership that the F-35 offers for Germany as they continue to analyze their future fighter competition. Thanks to all of our F-35 team members who are supporting the events this week!
**Historic New Commander for Fighter Wing at Hill AFB**

The 419th Fighter Wing welcomed its first female commander during a change of command ceremony at Hill AFB last week. Col. Regina “Torch” Sabric assumed command from Col. David “Shooter” Smith, who has served as commander since November 2015.

Sabric is the wing’s first female F-35 pilot upon completing flight training in the F-35 last July. She comes to the 419th with diverse flying experience including combat missions and combat support missions in Operations Allied Force and Enduring Freedom, and has served multiple times in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Noble Eagle.

“That airplane (F-35) standing to my left is built to be the premier fifth-generation fighter of the Air Force – it's built for lethality, survivability, and adaptability,” Sabric said. “But we too, as Airmen, must hold those same traits. We must be lethal by being ready, survivable by being resilient, and adaptable by ensuring we have balance as Reserve Citizen Airmen.”

Congratulations to Col. Sabric on her historic command; the F-35 enterprise is all in to support the entire 419th Fighter Wing.

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**Dambusters Reform as F-35B Squadron**

The United Kingdom reformed their famous “Dambusters” squadron to be the first F-35B squadron for the UK. Gavin Williamson, UK Defence Secretary, announced the squadron’s transition in a special ceremony last week in Washington DC marking the Royal Air Force’s 100th anniversary.

“The 617 Squadron name was made famous by “The Dambusters”, who played such a vital role in the Second World War,” said Williamson. “So it is fitting that by flying the world’s most advanced fighter jets, our new squadron will be ensuring that the legend of world-leading air power lives on. The F-35B Lightning will defend our nation and ensure that Britain remains a pioneer in innovation, with a unique ability to adapt to this increasingly dangerous world.”

The first F-35Bs stationed in the U.K. are scheduled to arrive early this summer and kick off an exciting summer celebrating the F-35B in the U.K. Congratulations to the United Kingdom on the formation of this legendary fighter squadron – I know it has a bright future ahead!