Air Force Chief of Staff Visits Fort Worth

Last week, we had the honor to host Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force; along with Dr. William Roper, Assistant Secretary for the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; and F-35 Program Executive Office Vice Admiral Mat Winter at our F-35 facility in Fort Worth. During their time, they flew the F-35 cockpit simulator, walked the production floor to speak with employees and received specific briefings about F-35 sustainment and the actions we’re taking to reduce costs and enhance mission readiness.

We were honored to host the event and appreciate the U.S. Air Force’s continued commitment to the F-35 program. The session was highly productive, and we were grateful for the opportunity to discuss ways we’re collaborating to significantly reduce costs as we deliver and sustain transformational F-35 capabilities to the men and women of the U.S. Air Force.

Gen. Goldfein, Secretary Roper and Vice Admiral Winter also had the opportunity to sign the bulkhead of AF-159. With signatures from these three great leaders, AF-159 will always be a unique jet as it enters service for our nation for years to come. Thanks to our entire team who continues to deliver for the U.S. Air Force and all of our F-35 customers.

New Manufacturing Facility Opens in Pinellas Park, Florida

Congratulations to our team at Pinellas Park, Florida on the formal opening of a new manufacturing facility that will help our enterprise ramp to full rate production and sustainment. The facility will create more than 80 new jobs by mid-2019, where the team will assemble F-35 canopies and bulkheads.

The plant is expected to be operational by mid-May and will begin delivering parts to our main F-35 production facility in Fort Worth by mid-summer. In 2018 alone, the Pinellas team will deliver more than 200 F-35 components to support production and sustainment of the growing F-35 fleet.

“Keeping America safe and growing Florida’s economy are intertwined,” said U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist at the formal ribbon cutting. “The Lockheed Martin Pinellas facility exemplifies that dynamic, a center of excellence for manufacturing in our own backyard. We’re proud of the men and women who work here, producing key components for the most powerful fighter jet the world has ever seen. The F-35 protects U.S interests abroad while returning our pilots home safely.”

We thank the Pinellas team for the critical role they play in helping the F-35 enterprise meet our commitments, and I look forward to hearing about more great milestones to come!
F-35A Training Equipment Arrives in Australia

Last week, one of the world’s largest aircraft, the Antonov An-124, landed at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Williamtown carrying the first delivery of key F-35 training equipment for the Australian F-35A Integrated Training Centre (ITC).

Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Marise Payne celebrated the delivery, which included an Ejection Systems Maintenance trainer and a Weapons Load Trainer.

"Importantly this equipment will enable our pilots and crews to train without having to remove aircraft from flight schedules," Minister Payne said in the announcement. "This is an important milestone with two of Australia’s F-35A aircraft to be based at RAAF Base Williamtown from December 2018 and pilot training expected to commence at Williamtown from mid next year."

Congratulations to the team on this program milestone - we look forward to supporting the RAAF as Williamtown prepares for the arrival of the first Australian F-35As later this year.

Airmen Return Home from Historic F-35A Deployment

Families gathered on the flight line earlier this week to welcome pilots, maintainers and support personnel home from their six-month deployment to Kadena Air base, Japan. The 388th Fighter Wing and Reserve 419th Fighter Wing from Hill AFB, Utah have been operating F-35s in the area as a routine theater security package, where the F-35As flew more than 1,000 sorties and deployed eight times from Kadena to other locations in the region, the USAF reported.

"F-35 pilots gained valuable training with their joint and coalition partners, and maintainers were able to get the jets back in the air quickly," said Col. Lee Kloos, 388th Fighter Wing commander. "This is the first [F-35] deployment of this magnitude and this duration. The jets performed great, it was an amazing performance."

We thank all Airmen for their service to our country - welcome home and congratulations to the entire fighter wing on a successful deployment!