

New F-35 Facility Focuses On Naval Operations, Draws On Navy Experience

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A newly dedicated work space at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. in Fort Worth will play a major role in ensuring that the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter meets the needs of United States and allied naval air forces.

The F-35 Basing and Ship Suitability Integration Center, or BASSIC, features scale models of U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and U.K. Royal Navy aircraft carriers and aircraft, as well as real ship-board hardware such as tie-down chains, cables, tow-bars and helmets. The center also has multi-media equipment to supplement ongoing education programs such as "Design for Air- Ship Integration", a course that teaches engineers about the unique design requirements of ship-based aircraft, and the issues posed by a maritime environment.

Three F-35 variants are planned. The F-35C is designed for catapult launches and arrested landings on large carriers. The F-35B offers short takeoff and vertical landing capability, and will operate from smaller carriers as well as austere bases, roads and forward-deployed areas. The U.S. Navy will operate the F-35C, while the U.S. Marine Corps, U.K. Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, and Italian Air Force intend to employ the F-35B. The U.S. Air Force and many international customers are expected to fly the F-35A, a conventional takeoff and landing variant.

"This facility will help us make sure that we're designing a carrier suitable airplane the way it needs to be done," said Tom Burbage, a former naval aviator and test pilot who serves as executive vice president and general manager of the Lockheed Martin F-35 JSF program. "It is a symbol of our commitment to making whatever investments are necessary to support our Navy customers."

Additionally, BASSIC provides insight into shore, austere and expeditionary land basing for the F-35.

BASSIC also incorporates an advisory panel comprising 50 experts with more than 1,000 years of cumulative naval aviation experience. Among the panelists are six retired admirals, former nuclear- and conventional-carrier commanding officers, representatives from the ship-building industry and the U.S. Navy ship acquisition community, test pilots and veteran carrier pilots.

Many members of the advisory panel attended a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the BASSIC facility on Aug. 27. "Most of the people I know who represent the aircraft carrier environment are sitting in this room right now," Burbage said to the group. "BASSIC will be a great resource for training. The best access to knowledge management is to find someone who's been there and done that -- and talk to them."

Retired Vice Adm. Jack Ready, a veteran Navy test pilot, carrier commanding officer and former Commander of Atlantic Fleet Naval Air Forces, told the group, "My only regret is that I won't get to fly this airplane." Ready, who has flown 78 different aircraft and spent 30 years in carrier aviation, noted that his grandson, also named Jack Ready, is in the right age bracket to fly the F-35. "I already have a call sign for him: 'Stinger'," he said. The moniker was the admiral's call sign.

The F-35 is a stealthy, supersonic multirole fighter designed to replace a wide range of aging fighter and strike aircraft. Three variants derived from a common design will ensure F-35 meets the performance needs of the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy and allied defense forces worldwide, while staying within strict affordability targets.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 in conjunction with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE SYSTEMS. Companies worldwide are participating in the F-35's development.

Among the aircraft F-35 will replace are the AV-8B Harrier, A-10, F-16, F/A-18 and United Kingdom's Harrier GR.7 and Sea Harrier.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-27J, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2002 sales of \$26.6 billion.

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