

U.S. Navy Secretary Visits Lockheed Martin F-35 Facility

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U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus toured Lockheed Martin's F-35 facility Dec. 18 for a preview of the Department of the Navy's first-ever stealth strike fighter.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20091218/DA28957>)

Secretary Mabus got a firsthand look at BF-2, the second short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) F-35B test aircraft, as it conducted its 15th flight in final preparation for its ferry flight to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. BF-2 will join the first F-35B STOVL variant, BF-1, at Patuxent River as the program prepares for the first hovers and vertical landings.

"The Navy and the Marine Corps are vital F-35 customers, and the F-35 is vital to the future of Naval Aviation," said Robert J. Stevens, chairman, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin Corp. "We were honored to host Secretary Mabus and his staff and confirm our progress on F-35, which is the future of military aviation for the U.S. and its allies."

During the visit, Secretary Mabus also received an F-35 program update and toured the production line, where three F-35C carrier variants, among more than 30 F-35s, are currently being built at the Fort Worth facility.

The Department of the Navy is expected to purchase 680 F-35s for both the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. The STOVL variant will be flown by the U.S. Marine Corps. The carrier variant (CV) will be flown by the U.S. Navy.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th generation fighter, combining advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully-fused sensor information, network-enabled operations, and lower operational and support costs. Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems. Two separate, interchangeable F-35 engines are under development: the Pratt & Whitney F135 and the GE Rolls-Royce Fighter Engine Team F136.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2008 sales of \$42.7 billion.

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