

Northrop Grumman begins centre fuselage for first international F-35

Northrop Grumman Corporation has started the centre fuselage for the first international F-35 Lightning II, and F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) variant for the United Kingdom. The centre fuselage is one of the core structures around which the F-35 aircraft is built. The assembly process began at the company's Palmdale, California, manufacturing centre with the loading of an all-composite air inlet duct into special tooling structure.

Lockheed Martin flies optimised conventional F-35

On Nov. 14th, the first optimised conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) F-35 made its inaugural flight, the fourth F-35 to begin flight operations. Piloted by Lockheed Martin test pilot David "Doc" Nelson, the Lockheed Martin F-35A, called AF-1, climbed to 20,000 feet, performed 360-degree rolls and flew at angles of attack up to 20 degrees during the 89-minute flight. AF-1 features a production-representative structure and was built on the same assembly line as the 31 Low-Rate Initial Production aircraft now in assembly.

F-35B flies to Maryland test site, supported by Automated Sustainment System

The first Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning II short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) stealth fighter, BF-1, arrived November 15th at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, where its first hovers and vertical landings will be conducted. The F-35 Autonomics Logistics Information System (ALIS), the aircraft's computerised maintenance management system is currently monitoring BF-1 from its sustainment operations centre in Fort Worth, Texas. BF-1 is the first test aircraft to be supported solely by the fleet's Autonomic Logistics Global Sustainment (ALGS) System. ALGS was developed in parallel with the F-35 and is a key driver of the financial affordability equation of the F-35 compared to the legacy aircraft it is replacing.

Based on paid-for updates in Flight International magazine.