

F-35C test aircraft exceed test and evaluation goals



NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. - Lockheed Martin test pilot Dan Canin takes off with afterburners May 5 for a test flight in CF-1, an F-35C test aircraft. Since January, CF-1 has flown nearly half of its target flights for the year, including six flights in six days the week of May 2. CF-1 is the first F-35C carrier variant to undergo test and evaluation at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, and its primary mission is to expand the speed envelope. CF-1 went supersonic for the first time March 4. The F-35C has larger wing surfaces and reinforced landing gear to operate in the demanding carrier environment. (Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Test aircraft for the carrier variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter have exceeded test and evaluation program goals this year.

As of May 11, F-35C test aircraft CF-1 currently at Naval Air Station Patuxent River has completed 36 test flights, nearly half of the program's goal for the year of 85.

"CF-1's been flying well, even with a number of planned and unplanned maintenance periods," said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Roger Cordell, military site director. "It's a great sign for the fleet that the aircraft is doing well so early in the test program."

In April, CF-1 completed 13 flights, tying a record for the number of test flights for any aircraft at Naval Air Station

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Patuxent River. And so far this month, the integrated test team has completed seven CF-1 test flights.

“The team has been doing a great job staying on top of maintenance requirements,” said Jim McClendon, Lockheed Martin site director vice president. “Just last week, CF-1 flew six flights in six days, which is a great accomplishment in any test program, let alone test and evaluation for a brand new aircraft.”

Coupled with this week’s arrival of the second carrier variant, CF-2, and arrival of CF-3 later this year, the F-35C test program is making rapid progress toward initial carrier suitability testing this year at Joint Base Lakehurst-McGuire-Dix in New Jersey.

First carrier suitability testing this summer is scheduled to include the first catapult launches, and the F-35C is scheduled to commence shipboard testing in 2013.

The F-35C is the carrier variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, with larger wing control surfaces and reinforced landing gear to operate in the maritime environment. The F-35C is undergoing test and evaluation to evaluate flutter, loads and mission systems at NAS Patuxent River prior to eventual delivery to the fleet.



NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – U.S. Marine Corps test pilot Lt. Col. Matt “Opie” Taylor pilots the second F-35C test aircraft (CF-2) during its arrival at Naval Air Station Patuxent River May 16, where it will begin test and evaluation. CF-2 is the designated loads test aircraft, which will expand the flight envelope for maneuvering. The F-35C is the carrier variant of the Joint Strike Fighter undergoing test and evaluation in preparation for delivery to the fleet. (Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin)