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F-35C completes jet blast deflector testing

LAKEHURST, N.J. – F-35C test aircraft CF-1 with an F/A-18E prepares for two-aircraft jet blast deflector (JBD) testing Aug. 13. The Integrated Test Force collected temperature, pressure, sound level, and velocity environmental data to validate various aircraft models to optimize JBD cooling panel and flight deck configuration. F-35C carrier suitability testing is ongoing with catapult and arrestment test events through the rest of the year, leading up to initial ship trials in 2013. (Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The F-35C is another step closer to initial ship trials on an aircraft carrier at sea.

The F-35 integrated test force completed jet blast deflector (JBD) testing at the NAVAIR facility in Lakehurst, N.J. Aug. 13 with a round of two-aircraft testing. F-35C test aircraft CF-1 along with an F/A-18E tested a combined JBD cooling panel configuration to assess the integration of F-35s in aircraft carrier launch operations.

“We completed all of our JBD test points efficiently,” said Andrew Maack, government chief test engineer. “It was a great collaborative effort by all parties.”

The government and industry team completed tests that measured temperatures, pressures, sound levels, velocities, and other environmental data. The combined JBD model will enable carrier deck crews to operate all air wing aircraft,

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now including the F-35C, as operational tempo requires.

“We came out of testing with no surprises,” said Maack. “The fact that we’ve collected all the data required to validate our requirements is a testament to the talent on the team and all of their pre-testing preparation and simulations.”

Future carrier suitability testing is scheduled throughout this year, including ongoing catapult testing and the start of arrestment testing in preparation for initial ship trials in 2013.

The F-35C carrier variant of the Joint Strike Fighter is distinct from the F-35A and F-35B variants with its larger wing surfaces and reinforced landing gear for catapult launch, slower landing approach speeds, and deck impacts associated with the demanding carrier take-off and landing environment.