Lockheed Delivers 500th F-35 Aircraft; Strike Fighter Surpasses 250,000 Flight Hours



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Enrico Rabina directs an F-35B Lightning II fighter to take off from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS America. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Vance Hand

FORT WORTH, Texas – Lockheed Martin and the F-35 Joint Program Office have delivered the 500th F-35 Lightning II strike fighter, the company said March 3. The F-35 surpassed 250,000 flight hours last month.

The 500th production aircraft is a U.S. Air Force F-35A, to be delivered to the Burlington Air National Guard Base in Vermont. The 500 F-35s include 354 F-35A conventional takeoff and landing variants, 108 F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing variants for the U.S. Marine Corps and 38 F-35C carrier variants for the Navy and international customers. The 250,000 flight hours include developmental test jets and training, operational, U.S. and international F-35s.

"These milestones are a testament to the talent and dedication of the joint government, military and industry teams," said Greg Ulmer, Lockheed's vice president and general manager of the F-35 program. "The F-35 is delivering an unprecedented fifth-generation combat capability to the warfighter at the cost of a fourth-generation legacy aircraft."

The F-35 operates from 23 bases worldwide. More than 985 pilots and over 8,890 maintainers are trained. Nine nations use the F-35 from their home soil, eight services have

declared initial operating capability and four services have employed F-35s in combat operations.