# Marine Corps F-35Bs Conduct First Landing Aboard JS Izumo



A U.S. Sailor directs a Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 aboard the Japanese Ship Izumo off the coast of Japan, Oct. 3, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Tyler Harmon*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan – At the request of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 successfully conducted the first landing of two F-35B Lightning II aircraft aboard the Japanese Ship Izumo on Oct. 3, Marine Aircraft Group 12 said in a release.

Following a series of modifications to the JS Izumo to enable short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) operations, a capability that the "B" variant of the F-35 specializes in, U.S. Marines embarked aboard the JS Izumo and worked directly with JMSDF personnel as part of a bilateral effort to ensure the capability test was both effective and safe.

"This trial has proved that the JS Izumo has the capability to support takeoffs and landings of STOVL aircraft at sea, which will allow us to provide an additional option for air defense in the Pacific Ocean in the near future," said JMSDF Rear Adm. Komuta Shukaku, commander of Escort Flotilla One.

Japan is one of 14 nations that participate in the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program and announced in August 2019 it would purchase 42 F-35B aircraft from the United States.

"We have work to do until the day the JSDF can regularly employ STOVL aircraft at sea, but I am confident that the strong partnership and mutual trust between our two counties will result in its realization," said Komuta.

The F-35 includes the latest stealth technology and has an advanced suite of sensors that enables it to create a dynamic awareness of the battlespace. The F-35 is then able to rapidly share this information with other aircraft platforms and command centers, including those operated by multinational allies and partners, creating greater situational awareness for commanders.

“We have the utmost confidence in the Joint Strike Fighter and are eager for our Japanese allies to have the same capabilities in their hands, which ultimately contributes to our shared goal of maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific,” said Maj. Gen. Brian W. Cavanaugh, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general.

VMFA-242 is one of two F-35B squadrons permanently stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, and is one of the many forward-stationed units that routinely train with Japan Self-Defense Forces. The F-35B represents the United States’ rebalance to the Indo-Pacific and its commitment to the defense of Japan and regional security with the most capable and modern equipment in the U.S. inventory.