Articles taken from Flight International magazine:

8th July: Ninth F-35 joins flight test fleet

Nine of the original 14 F-35 flight test aircraft have flown after the debut on 6 July of the fourth conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) variant, known as AF-3.

The 42min sortie began at 18:20, local time, outside Lockheed Martin's final assembly plant in Fort Worth, Texas, with company test pilot Bill Gigliotti at the controls. Area storms stopped the flight short, Lockheed says.

After first flight of the fourth short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) variant BF-4 in April, AF-3's entry into the flight test programme means two aircraft are now dedicated to mission systems testing.

11th July: Lockheed eyes strong customer base for Joint Strike Fighter

The US armed services will acquire more than 75% of all F-35s built, under current plans, with their requirements covering a "programme of record" for a combined 2,443 aircraft across the design's three variants.

The exact numbers to be bought will doubtless change over the next few years, but Lockheed Martin cites long-used totals of 1,763 conventional take-off and landing F-35A Lightning IIs for the US Air Force, and 680 aircraft for the US Navy and Marine Corps. These will be split between the F-35C carrier variant and short take-off and vertical landing F-35B, respectively.

Lockheed's eight international partners for the JSF programme's system development and demonstration phase - Australia, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and the UK - have identified shared requirements for another 738.

17th July: Canada formally commits to buy 65 F-35s

The Canadian government formally committed today to buy 65 Lockheed Martin F-35s six years ahead of first delivery in order to qualify national industry to bid for more work in the multi-national programme.

20th July: Rolls-Royce opens new production cell for F-35 LiftSystem

Rolls-Royce has opened a new manufacturing cell to produce a key component of the propulsion system for Lockheed Martin's short take-off and vertical landing variant Joint Strike Fighter.

Worth £11 million ($16.7 million), the investment at the company's Bristol site will deliver the innovative three-bearing swivel module for the F-35B's LiftSystem.

R-R says the module, which diverts 18,000lb (80kN) of thrust from the aircraft's engine during the hover, must be capable of handling high temperatures and pressures.

21st July: GKN scoops $960 million of new contracts

GKN Aerospace hit Farnborough running with a clutch of new contract announcements worth $960 million over 10 years that take the UK-based tier 1's new business tally to $1.5 billion for the first half of 2010.

A 10-year, $360 million contract with Pratt & Whitney extends GKN's Lockheed Martin F-35 exposure to include titanium engine ducts for the fighter's F135 engine, for production at El Cajon, California. GKN already supplies several million dollars worth of components per F-35 ship set, including the cockpit canopy system, all-composite engine fan inlet case and other composite and exotic metal components.

22nd July: Fokker Landing Gear and Goodrich to produce F-35 landing gear braces

Fokker Landing Gear and Goodrich have agreed to work together to design and manufacture the landing gear drag braces for the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II under a three-year deal.

23rd July: STOVL F-35s face pressure on new flight-test delays

Lockheed Martin is ahead on the overall schedule for F-35 flight test, but the short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) variant risks falling behind due to lingering problems affecting a single aircraft.

The aircraft named BF-1 famously completed the first vertical landing on 18 March, the most vivid display of a resurgent flight-test programme that is now running ahead of schedule by about 10%, according to programme officials.

Since that milestone event, however, BF-1 has landed vertically only once more. The aircraft required an extended period of maintenance to fix mechanical problems unrelated to the STOVL propulsion capability, says Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin vice-president.

29th July: Lockheed explains F-35B flight test delays

Lockheed Martin has released new details about the reliability problems slowing flight tests on the short take-off and vertical landing F-35B.

The four STOVL aircraft in flight test have completed 74 flights so far this year, or 21 fewer than planned, chief executive Robert Stevens told stock analysts during the company's second quarter earnings teleconference on 27 July.

Stevens released the numbers one week after Flightglobal reported that the first STOVL aircraft, called BF-1, has fallen behind schedule as a result of reliability issues.

The delays have been caused by high failure rates on components that "you would probably not view as major systems", Stevens says. He identifies the thermal cooling fans, door actuators and certain components in the power system, such as valves or switches.