

Articles taken from Flight International magazine

F-35B in-flight STOVL operations begin

The Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning II short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) stealth fighter engaged its STOVL propulsion system in flight for the first time January 7th near Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, and again on January 9th. The aircraft slowed to 150 knots, entering semi-jet borne flight with both the propulsion system and the wings providing lift. Pilot Graham Tomlinson of BAE Systems reported that the aircraft flew smoothly during STOVL-system engagement. The aircraft is powered by a single Pratt & Whitney F135 engine driving a Rolls-Royce LiftFan®.

Second F-35B lands at Maryland test site

Piloted by U.S Marine Corps Maj. Joseph T. "O.D" Bachmann, the second Lockheed Martin F35-B arrived December 29th 2009 at NAS Patuxent River. The aircraft successfully completed aerial refuelling en route from the Lockheed Martin aeronautics Fort Worth, Texas plant. Patuxent River has begun the extensive four –year flight test campaign to field U.S Navy and Marine Corps future fighters.

Sustainment system supporting F-35s at Patuxent River.

The system that will keep the worldwide fleet of Lightning II fighters combat-ready is already supporting F-35 operations at the NAS Patuxent River test site. The F-35 Autonomic Logistics Global Sustainment (ALGS) system anticipates support requirements of the aircraft, tracking performance, scheduled maintenance and component health management. ALGS uses flight test to validate the key elements of the support infrastructure such as information architecture, fleet health management system, joint training, predictive diagnostics, the global supply chain and support equipment. Operational since the first F-35 flight, ALGS provides military customers with a common support system and single integrator team responsible for increased fleet readiness and lower overall operational costs.