



F-35 Lightning II Program

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MESSAGE TO F-35 ITF: "YOUR WORK IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT"

by Laura Mowry
Staff writer

Team Edwards welcomed Air Force Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan to the F-35 Integrated Test Force Jan. 22 for the first time since he assumed the role of program executive officer for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office in December.

The F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office is the Department of Defense's agency responsible for developing and acquiring the F-35A/B/C, the next-generation strike aircraft weapon system for the Navy, Air Force, Marines, and many allied nations.

The visit gave the ITF an opportunity to showcase their talent and accomplishments that continue moving the program forward in developmental test. Bogdan also met with base leadership, toured facilities and gained valuable program insights.

"This was an opportunity for General Bogdan to see the testing done at Edwards and it allowed us to showcase the great work done here," said Lt. Col. George Schwartz, F-35 ITF government director.

"It was a chance to show all that we accomplished last year and what's ahead. There have been a lot of challenges, but the hard work by this team has produced improvements in every aspect of the weapon system. We were able to show him that we're making steady progress."

Major progress was made testing clean-wing flutter the day of Bogdan's visit, giving the program executive officer the chance to watch the final test mission from a control room, which certified the F-35 is clear of flutter at speeds up to 1.6 Mach and 700 knots with weapon bay doors open or closed.

"General Bogdan was able to watch the final mission for all clean-wing flutter, which certified the whole flight envelope with weapon bay doors open or closed. This testing has taken years to accomplish and we were very fortunate he was here to see it. This is an important milestone from a capabilities standpoint and what we will deliver to the warfighter," said Schwartz.

During his visit, Bogdan took the time to thank the men and women of the ITF for their hard work and dedication to the program and also reminded personnel that their commitment to develop and test the fifth-generation stealth fighter remains of the highest importance.



Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan talks with members of the F-35 Integrated Test Force Jan.22 during his first visit to Edwards since he assumed the role of program executive officer for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office in December.(U.S. Air Force Photo by Paul Weatherman/Lockheed Martin)



Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan, F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office program executive officer, tours the F-35 Integrated Test Force compound with Lt. Col. George Schwartz, F-35 Integrated Test Force government director, during his visit to Edwards Jan. 22. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Paul Weatherman/Lockheed Martin)



Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan, F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office program executive officer, addressed the men and women of the F-35 Integrated Test Force, thanking them for their hard work and commitment to the program Jan. 22. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Paul Weatherman/Lockheed Martin)

"We are gathering an awful lot of momentum in this flight test program; it is one of the highlights and one of the good things I stand up in front of Congress and the senior leaders and I tell them about all the time. So I want to thank you for that. Your work here is critically important," said Bogdan.

While detailing current and future challenges of the program, Bogdan emphasized the Joint Strike Fighter's incredible complexity associated with the multi-service, multi-national program.

"This program [includes] three services, eight partners and currently two Foreign Military Sales customers and at one level or another, they all get a say in what we do. That makes things hard moving forward," said Bogdan.

He also addressed the challenge of concurrency, given that F-35 is still being designed while flight test and aircraft production are ongoing. At the same time, Eglin AFB, Fla. and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., are operationally flying and maintaining the aircraft.

"At the same time we're producing these airplanes, testing and designing them; we are now operationally flying them. Granted it's a very small operational window we have given Eglin and at Yuma, but they are out there flying airplanes and we have to support those airplanes. You wrap all that together and what you have is a program, that when you push on any one part of the program, it causes big effects on other parts," said Bogdan.

Despite budgetary and concurrency challenges facing the program, Bogdan emphasized his confidence in the men and women of the F-35 ITF to continue their great work and urged them to find ways to maximize efficiency.

He also stressed the importance of accountability and learning from the past.

"There's a lot of negativity looking in the rearview mirror of this program. Let's not forget this program had problems, but hold this team and me accountable for what happens now and in the future. I want everyone to think about how to make you and your job more productive. Ask how we can do this in a better way. We need to become more efficient and more effective so we do not let the warfighter down," said Bogdan.

Always looking to capitalize on opportunities for improvement, the F-35 ITF has implemented sensible changes to the developmental test program, which cut costs and maximizes flexibility, while remaining fully committed to delivering the war-winning capabilities of the F-35 as efficiently as possible.

"We have reached a level of maturity in the aircraft where it is safe to not chase low risk test missions. This is a natural evolution in a developmental program and we are always looking for ways like this to operate smarter," said Schwartz.

"In 2013, there will be approximately 100 missions, which include mostly mission systems testing and some flight sciences that will no longer require us to fly chase. It gives us more flexibility with our flying and saves approximately \$3.5 million locally. The F-35 ITF is and has always been committed to maximizing efficiency and we will continue to look for ways to do so."