



MEDIA ADVISORY

VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD

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First F-35 Lightning II Fighter Jets Touch Down at Vermont National Guard

South Burlington, Vt. – Today is an historic day for the Vermont National Guard as the first two of 20 F-35 Lightning II fighter jets arrived shortly after 1:00 p.m. The 158th Fighter Wing is the first Air National Guard in the country to receive the aircraft. The event marks the beginning of the next chapter in what is a long and proud history of the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG), which was federally recognized in 1946. The F-35 is the ninth mission airframe assigned to the Green Mountain Boys.

The F-35s replace the F-16 Fighting Falcon, which the 158th Fighter Wing proudly flew for over three decades. The last four F-16s received a bittersweet farewell from Vermont back in April.

“This is among the most incredible days in my 31 years with the Vermont Air National Guard and I could not be more proud of our airmen for their dedication and commitment to our great state and nation,” said Col David Smith, 158th Fighter Wing commander. “I want to thank all of our service men and women past and present for their contributions to get us to this moment. I also want to share my sincere appreciation to the community for their continued and unwavering support.”

The pilots, both Vermont guardsman and former F-16 pilots, flew the jets in from Fort Worth, Texas. This arrival follows six months without flying for the Vermont Air National Guard; however, the base was busy with extensive training, preparations and more than \$60 million in F-35 projects and renovations to prepare the base for F-35 operations.

“The Airmen of the Vermont Air National Guard are the force behind the successful arrival of the F-35 Lightning II,” said 158th Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Darin Mauzy. “The capabilities of the F-35 are eclipsed by the accomplishments of the team who has worked tirelessly to prepare for their safe arrival. The F35 is an advanced platform that will require the best trained, well led, and resilient Air Guard members. We are proud of each of them and their families for the

sacrifices made to make today a reality.”

They aircraft that arrived will be used with the Field Training Team to start and then the Vermont Air National Guard will begin flying operations in October.

“Our Airmen will be the first National Guard unit to receive this aircraft and other National Guards and communities will be looking to us as an example for how to lead with humility and conviction, said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Gregory Knight, adjutant general, Vermont National Guard. “I am so proud of the work they have done and will continue to do to make this a success.”

Images and video will be available at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/F35vermont>

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