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**301st Fighter Wing Welcomes First F-35s**

 NAVAL AIR STATION JOINT RESERVE BASE FORT WORTH, Texas — The 301st Fighter Wing welcomed its first F-35A Lightning II on August 8 at the base flight line.

 The arrival of these initial aircraft signaled the beginning of a 12 to 15-month transition period as the wing integrates a total of 26 F-35 fighter jets. These advanced fifth-generation aircraft will replace the older F-16 Fighting Falcons.

 “The arrival of the F-35 marks a new chapter for the 301st. It replaces our aging fleet of F-16s and introduces the most technologically advanced fighter into the Wing,” said Col. Benjamin Harrison, the wing commander. “We are excited to usher in a new era of combat capability for the wing, for Air Force Reserve Command and for the Air Force.”

 The mission of the F-35 is to replace the U.S. Air Force’s aging fleet of F-16 and A-10 Thunderbolt II’s, which have been the primary fighter aircraft for more than 20 years. With its aerodynamic performance and advanced integrated avionics, the F-35 will provide next-generation stealth, enhanced situational awareness and reduced vulnerability for the United States and allied nations.

 The 301st Fighter Wing, based at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, mission is to train and deploy combat-ready Airmen. The wings vision is to be the leading provider of agile airpower and innovative empowered Airmen…Anytime, anywhere!

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