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## **F-35 squadrons still on schedule for Cherry Point**

**MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. (March 21, 2022)** — The realization of Cherry Point being home to six F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), or F-35 Lightning II, squadrons is nearing as transformation continues to shift away from the legacy AV-8B Harrier to the fifth generation joint strike fighter.

More than \$1 billion in military construction projects are underway to enable the air station to support the next generation fighter aircraft. Military construction (MILCON) projects in progress or planned include three dual-module hangars, which will house two squadrons each, a training and simulator facility, and various support upgrades along the airfield that will enable maintenance and training, and security requirements for the F-35.

The first dual-module hangar and simulator facility are approximately 75% complete, and are on track to be finished by the end of 2022.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 542 will be the first F-35 JSF squadron to be activated on MCAS Cherry Point and is expected to be operational by June 2023.

Wednesday, the F-35 Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) returned for its third semi-annual meeting. The two-day SATAF conference allowed key players and stakeholders from the air station, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, Lockheed Martin, Pratt and Whitney, Headquarters Marine Corps and the JSF Joint Program Office to assemble and identify site-specific activation requirements that would allow the F-35 to become operational at the air station.

The next SATAF conference is expected to meet in the fall of 2022. The air station projects that all MILCON efforts related to the F-35 transformation will be complete by 2027.

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