

Marine Corps Activates Second F-35B Fleet Replacement Squadron



Lt. Col. Carlton A. Wilson and Sgt. Maj. Gary L. Weller assumed command of Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 502 during an activation and redesignation ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort on June 26. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Nicholas Buss

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps has activated a second fleet replacement squadron to train aviators to fly its F-35B Lightning II strike fighters.

Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 502 (VMFAT-502) was activated on June 26 at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina, and eventually will help carry the load of F-35B training as the Marines increase the number of F-35Bs in the Corps.

Beaufort also is the location of the first F-35B replacement training squadron, VMFAT-501. Sometime in the future, the VMFAT-502 will move to MCAS Miramar, California.

VMFAT-502 actually is a reactivation of Marine Attack Squadron 513 (VMA-513), an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in 2013. Upon reactivation, VMA-513 was redesignated VMFAT-502 the same day of the reactivation ceremony.

VMFAT-502 will be known as the “Nightmares,” carrying on the traditions of VMA-513. The squadron originally was activated in 1944 and in its various iterations over the years has seen combat in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lt. Col. Carlton A. Wilson is the first commanding officer of

VMFAT-502.