



F-35 LIGHTNING II PAX RIVER INTEGRATED TEST FORCE

Thomas Briggs

Air Vehicle Engineering Dept Head | NAVAIR 5.1.6 W

Mr. Briggs hails from Orefield, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering and from Florida Tech University in 1997 with a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management. Briggs is also a graduate of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School's Fixed Wing Project Engineer Course. He graduated in 1998 as a member of Class 113.

Briggs began his Navy career in 1990 when he joined the Carrier Suitability Department of the Strike Aircraft Test Directorate (now known as the Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23). He specialized in the test and evaluation of aircraft performing precision approaches and recoveries aboard air capable ships. He has conducted shipboard testing aboard 11 different U.S. Navy conventional and nuclear aircraft carriers, three L-Class ships, supported rotary wing testing aboard a guided missile destroyer (DDG), and also Harrier testing aboard the U.K. HMS Invincible.

He served as an engineer on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet Integrated Test Team and on the X-35 Concept Demonstrator Joint Test Force. He also conducted flight testing of coupled instrument landing system (ILS) capabilities on an F/A-18 in Finland and differential GPS-based auto land testing with the NASA Langley Research Center Transport Systems Research Vehicle.

Briggs began his tenure with the Joint Strike Fighter program in 2000 when he supported X-35 flight testing in Palmdale, California and at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) in California, working with both the X-35C Carrier Variant and the X-35B Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft. Briggs then established the Air Vehicle (AV) Engineering Department as part of the F-35 Lightning II Integrated Test Force (ITF) aboard NAS Patuxent River in Patuxent River, Maryland. The AV Department now features 275 engineers and Briggs has been in the midst of every flight test effort of the Patuxent River ITF F-35 fleet since the first flight of aircraft BF-01 in 2008. In addition, he has led test detachments ashore at Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) - Lakehurst located aboard Joint Base McGuire - Dix - Lakehurst in New Jersey and at Edwards AFB. Briggs has also led test detachments afloat, first serving as the Chief Test Engineer for the initial sea trials of the F-35B aboard USS Wasp (LHD 1) in 2011 and the first phase of developmental test (DT-I) of the F-35C aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68) in 2014.

