

4 July 2023

High tech transfer: Rheinmetall plans to build state-of-the-art F-35 fuselage factory in Weeze, Germany

Together with its American partners Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin, Rheinmetall has reached another important milestone in a key Bundeswehr project, while simultaneously opening a new chapter in German-American defence technology cooperation. The Düsseldorf-based tech enterprise plans to build an ultramodern factory at Weeze in the Kleve district of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to produce fuselage sections for the F-35A Lightning II, the world's top-performing warplane. The decision on where to place the factory followed a review of possible locations around Germany.



The new plant is due to produce at least 400 F-35A fuselage sections for the air forces of Germany and other friendly nations. An integrated technology group, Rheinmetall will be drawing here on its extensive experience in fabricating sophisticated components as well as in the aviation domain. Production is expected to commence in 2025.

“We’re proud that our longstanding partnership with Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin and our decades long relationship with the Bundeswehr is resulting in a genuine transfer of know-how to Germany”, declares Rheinmetall chief executive Armin Papperger. “And we’re very pleased to be contributing to the future viability of Germany as a technology powerhouse, and especially NRW, our longstanding corporate home. Close to the state capital in Düsseldorf, we’re going to build a factory that sets standards Europewide. We’re very grateful for the political and administrative support we experienced in Weeze during our search for a location.”

“Northrop Grumman will replicate our automated and manufacturing technologies of the Integrated Assembly Line in Weeze,” said Glenn Masukawa, vice president for Northrop Grumman’s F-35 program. “Combined with Rheinmetall’s capabilities, our collaboration with Lockheed Martin to manufacture the center fuselage is critical in bolstering global security. We look forward to the success of this newest F-35 facility.”

“We are pleased with Rheinmetall's swift site selection for the upcoming F-35 center fuselage production facility. This marks an important milestone in the German F-35 program – this increase in capacity helps meet the growing global demand that further enables the F-35 to stay ahead of evolving threats in the 21st century landscape,” said Mike Shoemaker, vice president of F-35 Customer Programs at Lockheed Martin. “Lockheed Martin is committed to fostering

► Key facts

- Rheinmetall plans to build ultramodern factory for fabricating fuselage sections for the F-35A multirole combat aircraft at Weeze in western Germany
- Tried-and-tested partnership with Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin
- At least 400 fuselage sections to be produced starting in 2025
- Plant will employ 400 highly skilled workers

► Contacts

Oliver Hoffmann
Head of Public Relations
Rheinmetall AG
Tel.: +49-(0)211 473 4748
oliver.hoffmann@rheinmetall.com

Dr. phil. Jan-Phillipp Weisswange
Assistant Head of Public Relations
Rheinmetall AG
Tel.: +49-(0)211 473 4287
jan-phillipp.weisswange@rheinmetall.com

► Social Media

 @Rheinmetallag

 @Rheinmetallag

industry partnerships and creating jobs in Germany. We appreciate Rheinmetall's role as an agile and flexible partner and look forward to continued collaboration."

Featuring state-of-the-art technology, the planned factory will be operated through Rheinmetall Aviation Services GmbH. It will have feature 60,000 square metres of floorspace. Over 400 highly skilled men and women will crew the ultramodern assembly line. In addition, the plant will include logistics and warehouse facilities, research and test centres, classrooms and quality control units.