



F-35 Lightning II Program

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F - 35 A C O M P L E T E S F I R S T I N - F L I G H T A I M - 1 2 0 W E A P O N S R E L E A S E

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. – An F-35A conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) aircraft completed the first in-flight weapons release of an instrumented AIM-120 from a 5th Generation fighter, Oct. 19. The flight was conducted by U.S. Air Force Maj. Matt "Fuze" Phillips. The aircraft, known as AF-1, jettisoned an AIM-120 over the China Lake test range from the left internal weapons bay.



“This is an exciting milestone and the result of intense preparation of our integrated team. It is a significant first step in delivering this capability to the U.S. Military and our international partners. The Edwards Integrated Test Force accomplished the first safe separation of an AMRAAM from the F-35 only three days after the first separation of a GBU-31 and demonstrates the high pace we need to maintain throughout the weapons program over the next two years. The incredible support we enjoy at Edwards Air Force Base enabled this accomplishment on our first two releases.” said Lt. Col. George “Boxer” Schwartz, the 461st Flight Test Squadron Commander and Government Director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force at Edwards Air Force Base, CA.

“This first safe separation of the AIM-120 missile from JSF represents the culmination of many years of careful planning by the combined government and contractor teams both inside and outside the ITF,” said Gary Arnold and Eli Jones, both of whom are members of Integrated Test Force’s Weapons Integration team. “It is a major milestone for the Weapons Integration team and the program as a whole. The folks that played a part in the successful execution of this mission should be proud of today’s accomplishment.”

This weapons separation test verified the proper release from the launcher and its release characteristics from the aircraft. This event wraps up thousands of hours from dedicated test teams to ensure its success. Details of the test were recorded by monitoring systems and the data is currently in review at the Integrated Test Force as Edwards Air Force Base, CA.

The F-35A 5th generation fighter is designed to carry a payload of up to 18,000 pounds using 10 weapon stations. The F-35A features four internal weapon stations located in two weapon bays to maximum stealth capability. The CTOL aircraft can also utilize an additional three weapon stations per wing if required.