



# F-35 Lightning II Program

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## U.S. NAVY ANNOUNCES IOC

**WASHINGTON (NNS)** -- The Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps delivered a joint report to congressional defense committees May 31 to establish the date and details of the initial operational capability (IOC) of each service's variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, as directed by the National Defense Authorization Act.

Congress directed the Secretary of the Air Force and Secretary of the Navy to provide a report that details the IOC dates, requirements, and capabilities for each of the F-35 variants by June 1, 2013. The Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy will achieve IOC once they acquire enough aircraft to establish one operational squadron with enough trained and equipped personnel to support the various missions prescribed by each service.

Based on the current F-35 Joint Program Office schedule, the Air Force F-35A will reach the IOC milestone by December 2016, while the Marine Corps F-35B will reach the IOC milestone by December 2015. F-35C, attached to Navy carrier air wings, will reach the IOC milestone by February 2019.

"The F-35C represents a critical capability, really a revolutionary capability, that will significantly enhance the ability of our carrier air wings to continue to operate in contested battlespace," said Rear Admiral Bill Moran, Chief of Naval Operations' Director of Air Warfare. "We look forward to introducing and fully integrating this important capability into our air wings."

Navy leadership believes the F-35 will revolutionize capability and operating concepts of naval aviation using advanced technologies to find, fix, and assess threats, and, if necessary track, target, and engage them with lethal results in all contested environments.

The F-35C carrier variant of the Lightning II is distinct from the F-35A and F-35B variants with its larger wing surfaces and reinforced landing gear; features used to withstand catapult launches and deck landing impacts associated with the demanding aircraft carrier environment. The F-35C is undergoing flight testing and evaluation at NAS Patuxent River prior to fleet delivery.

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program is a joint, multi-national program. In addition to U.S. armed forces, the F-35 increases operational flexibility and interoperability with the eight other international partners participating in the development of the aircraft. They are the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Denmark, and Norway.



PATUXENT RIVER, Md. (June 27, 2012) The carrier variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter flies for the first time with external weapons. Navy test pilot Lt. Christopher Tabert flew CF-1 with inert AIM-9X Sidewinder air-to-air missiles on port and starboard pylons to measure flying qualities and aircraft vibrations. The F-35C is distinct from the F-35A and F-35B variants with larger wing surfaces and reinforced landing gear for greater control when operating in the demanding carrier take-off and landing environment. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy Lockheed Martin/Released)