



F-35 Lightning II Program

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F-35 Program Starts Formal Operational Testing

By F-35 Joint Program Office

The F-35 Lightning II program reached another major program milestone with the official start of formal F-35 Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) this week.

Starting this week and continuing through late summer 2019 all three F-35 Air System variants (A/B/C) will be field tested, under realistic combat conditions, for the purposes of determining the weapons systems' operational effectiveness and operational suitability for combat.

IOT&E is designed to fully evaluate the complete air system as well as identify technical and operational areas for improvement. The independent Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) and Joint Strike Fighter Operational Test Team (JOTT) will execute IOT&E with our U.S. Services, United Kingdom, Dutch and Australian partners participating. All test events will be conducted at U.S. Military testing ranges and installations. Following the evaluation, the Department will have the required data to share with our Partners and to inform our "Milestone C" acquisition decision, leading to formal entry into full rate production at the end of 2019.

"The start of formal operational testing is a significant milestone for our entire F-35 Enterprise," said Vice Adm. Mat Winter, F-35 Program Executive Officer. "It is the culmination of years of technical, programmatic and operational work and dedication from our joint government and industry team. I am extremely proud of our team's commitment to testing excellence and dedication to providing our warfighter affordable, effective capabilities for mission success."

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