



F-35 Lightning II Program

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F-35A LIGHTNING II CONDUCTS FIRST LIVE FIRE WEAPONS TEST WITH AIM-120 AMRAAM

The F-35 Lightning II executed its first live-fire launch of a guided air-to-air missile over a military test range off the California coast on Oct. 30.

The AIM-120 advanced medium range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) was fired from an F-35A (AF-6) conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) variant fighter operating from the F-35 Integrated Test Facility at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

The test pilot, Air Force Captain Capt. Logan Lamping employed the AIM-120 radar-seeking missile from the F-35's internal weapons bay against an aerial drone target in restricted military sea test range airspace. Test data and observers confirmed the F-35 identified and targeted the drone with its mission systems sensors, passed the target "track" information to the missile, and launched the AIM-120 from the aircraft to engage the target drone. After launch, the missile successfully acquired the target and followed an intercept flight profile. Moments before the missile was about to destroy the target, a self-destruct signal was sent to the AIM-120 in order to preserve the aerial drone for use in future tests.



"This successful missile launch marks the first live-fire weapons test and is an initial demonstration of the air-to-air combat capability the F-35 will bring to the U.S. Military and our International Partners" said Charlie Wagner, weapons team lead for the F-35 Joint Program Office. "This test represents the culmination of many years of careful planning by combined government and contractor teams. It is one test, with many more to come, to ensure operators will receive the combat capability they need to execute their mission and return home safely."

The AIM-120 AMRAAM (Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile) is a radar-guided air-to-air missile and is the U.S. military's standard air intercept missile carried on tactical fighter aircraft. The AIM-120 is a beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) capable of all-weather, day-and-night operations, and is powered by a solid-propellant rocket motor. The F-35's fire control system programs the missile's internal guidance unit and provides mid-course updates from the aircraft via a data link to guide the AMRAAM toward its target. The AMRAAM's control section controls the missile in flight using four movable tail fins. As soon as the target is within range, the AMRAAM activates its active radar seeker for autonomous terminal homing.

The F-35A air-to-air missile test occurred the day after an F-35B variant demonstrated a successful air-to-ground weapons test of a 500-pound Guided Bomb Unit-12 (GBU-12) Paveway II laser-guided bomb over a test range at Edwards Air Force Base on Oct 29.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th generation fighter, combining advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations and advanced sustainment. Three distinct variants of the F-35 will replace the A-10 and F-16 for the U.S. Air Force, the F/A-18 for the U.S. Navy, the F/A-18 and AV-8B Harrier for the U.S. Marine Corps, and a variety of fighters for at least 10 other countries.