

Lockheed Martin flies first production F-35 stealth fighter

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The first production-model F-35 Lightning II banks to the right on its inaugural flight near Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas. The supersonic stealth jet will be delivered to the U.S. Air Force this spring. (Lockheed Martin photo by David Drais)

The first production model of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II made its inaugural flight today in preparation for delivery to the U.S. Air

Force this spring. The jet will head to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., to support developmental testing shortly after the Air Force takes delivery.

“The aircraft was rock-solid from takeoff to landing, and successfully completed all the tests we put it through during the flight,” said [Lockheed Martin](#) Test Pilot Bill Gigliotti. “The [Air Force](#) is getting a great jet that represents a huge leap in capability, and we’re looking forward to getting it into the hands of the service pilots in just a few more weeks.”

During the flight, the conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) F-35A variant, known as AF-6, underwent basic flight maneuvering and engine tests. Test Pilot Gigliotti took off from Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base at 3:05 p.m. CST and landed at 4:05 p.m. The jet will continue [flight](#) tests in Fort Worth for about a month before it is accepted by the Air Force.

The F-35A CTOL variant – designed to meet U.S. Air Force requirements – is also the primary export version of the Lightning II. The air forces of Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Norway and Israel will employ the F-35A.

Deliveries of the F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing variant to the U.S. Marine Corps also begin this year, while deliveries of the F-35C carrier variant to the U.S. Navy start in 2012. Seventeen F-35s have entered testing since December 2006, and have logged more than 650 flights and numerous ground tests.

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. Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop

Grumman and BAE Systems.

Provided by Lockheed Martin

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