

F-35: Combat Ready

Why is IOC important?

Initial operational capability (IOC) means that the Air Force has enough operational F-35A aircraft (12), trained pilots, maintainers and support equipment to conduct operational missions using program of record weapons and missions systems. Specifically, it means the aircraft are capable of flying interdiction, basic close air support, and limited suppression/destruction of enemy air defenses missions.

Who decides when the F-35 is IOC?

Gen. Hawk Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command in direct consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force is responsible for this determination. It is a capabilities-based decision, informed by extensive operational test and evaluation.

What role does software play in declaring IOC?

IOC aircraft will have the latest Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS) software that provides the ability to plan, maintain, and sustain the aircraft's systems. When version 2.0.2 is delivered it will increase efficiency and decrease workload but it will not increase combat capability.

Is the F-35 capable of deploying into combat after IOC?

After IOC, the F-35A will be available to deploy into a combat theater when our Nation needs it. In addition, there are plans for a variety of exercises for our operational squadron at Hill AFB, Utah over the coming months that will continue the road to eventual full operational capability (FOC).

What are the next steps after IOC?

ACC and the Air Force will work hand-in-hand with sister services and international partners to continue maturing the capabilities of the F-35. We are actively engaged in activities to field the F-35, including future basing location decisions, system upgrades, and exercises that will continue the F-35 on its path to FOC. This will include the first F-35 Air National Guard aircraft in Burlington, Vermont, and the first F-35 Weapons School class at Nellis Air Force Base, NV. Most important, modernization will ensure the F35 continues to have the lethality and survivability needed to meet full spectrum of joint warfighter requirements today and in the years to come.



*Air Combat Command Public Affairs
(757) 764-5007, ACCPA.operations@us.af.mil*