COMING SOON

F-35 Lightning II

Boston, United States



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LOT	AUCTION	BRAND	CATEGORY
#209	#180	Lockheed Martin	Aircraft

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DESCRIPTION

Collector's note: This fighter jet has been featured on CollectAirs as a special showcase piece to spark interest and c elebrate the fascination of aviation history. It is not presented as a standard active sales listing. For verified aircraft o pportunities, please browse our available listings or contact the CollectAirs team. The F-35 Lightning II is the f ighter that made sensor fusion, low observability and commonality across three services the central proposition r ather than an optional upgrade. It is remembered less for raw top-speed theatrics than for bringing a pilot a fused t actical picture from radar, electro-optical sensors and offboard networks in a single-seat, single-engine airframe. I n its conventional F-35A form it replaced the familiar idea of a lightweight multirole fighter with something closer t o a flying mission system.

Built from the Joint Strike Fighter programme, the Lightning II had to satisfy three distinctly awkward customers: conventional-runway air forces, short-takeoff and vertical-landing forces, and carrier aviation. The result was the F-35A, F-35B and F-35C family. Sharing a common avionics architecture while differing in basing and airframe details was the programme's great ambition; making that shared architecture work across all three was the hard p art. The A became the conventional-runway version, the B incorporated shaft-driven lift-fan STOVL machinery, a nd the C gained the larger wing and carrier-oriented configuration.

Quick facts

What makes the F-35 Lightning II different to fly and employ?

The defining feature is not simply stealth shaping; it is the way the aircraft gathers and presents information. The Distributed Aperture System gives all-round infrared coverage for warning and day/night viewing, while the internally mounted Electro-Optical Targeting System supports detection and targeting. Rather than asking the pilot to manage a collection of separate displays and sensors, the F-35's design philosophy is to combine them into o ne tactical picture. The helmet-mounted display is central to that approach, placing flight, targeting and sensor i nformation on the visor rather than relying on a conventional head-up display.

That changes the cockpit workload. The Lightning II is still a supersonic fighter with a large, hot afterburning turbofan behind the pilot, but its value lies in reducing the need to look down, cross-check several instruments or mentally reconcile competing sensor returns. It is an aircraft designed for pilot decision-making and networked employment, not simply for making a dramatic pass at an airshow. The trade-off is a profoundly software-dependent machine whose capability, support and configuration are inseparable from the wider programme.

Powerplant, systems and technical highlights

- A single Pratt & Whitney F135 afterburning turbofan powers every member of the family; the F-35B uses the F135-PW-600 installation with its shaft-driven LiftFan system.
- All three variants are rated at Mach 1.6 with a full internal weapons load, although their fuel capacity, structural limits and basing roles differ.
- The F-35A and F-35B use a 35 ft wing; the carrier F-35C has a 43 ft wing and greater wing area.
- The airframe combines aluminium, titanium and carbon composites, with low-observable surface treatment and tight manufacturing tolerances forming part of the design.
- Typical mission systems include the Distributed Aperture System, Electro-Optical Targeting System, helmet-mounted display and secure tactical data links.
- The F-35A is conventional takeoff and landing, the F-35B is short takeoff/vertical landing, and the F-35C is the carrier variant.

How it compares

The rival shown is the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor. Figures and capabilities vary by F-35 variant, production standard, operating authority and engine installation.

Honest ownership note: This is not a conventional second-hand civilian aircraft proposition. Any legitimate transfer, operation, technical-data access, support arrangement or cross-border movement would be subject to government approval, export-control obligations and programme-level security restrictions. Even within authorised military use, sustainment depends on specialist facilities, controlled software and data systems, trained F-35 maintainers, approved supply channels and engine support. A serious technical review would need authorised access to the propulsion installation, low-observable surfaces, thermal-management and cooling systems, canopy, landing gear, mission-system interfaces and corrosion-control condition. Parts availability and depot capacity have been persistent programme concerns, so an ordinary warbird mechanic, however talented, is not an adequate answer.

Exterior and cabin

Exterior

- Blended fuselage with trapezoidal wings, widely spaced canted twin vertical tails and all-moving horizontal stabilators.
- Single circular exhaust nozzle at the rear; the F-35B adds lift-fan doors behind the cockpit and a swivelling rear nozzle.
- Retractable nosewheel and main gear, with no fixed gear or wheel fairings.
- Flush panel treatment, sawtooth door edges and internal bays dominate the airframe rather than external stores.

Cabin and cockpit

- One-seat cockpit beneath a broad, single-piece tinted bubble canopy.
- Wide forward view, a large central panoramic display and side-stick/HOTAS controls.
- Helmet-mounted display replaces the conventional fixed head-up display as the principal flight and targeting presentation.
- No aft passenger accommodation, baggage cabin or conventional civilian cabin fittings.

Who is this aircraft for?

- Government operators needing a common fighter family across land bases, amphibious ships and aircraft carriers.
- Air forces prioritising low-observable multirole capability and information-sharing with allied forces.
- Organisations able to fund the secure infrastructure, specialist training and supply support the type requires.
- Collectors or institutions interested in modern combat-aircraft history, subject to lawful demilitarisation and government permissions.

The F-35 Lightning II is best understood as a combat-aircraft system rather than merely an airframe: a single-seat fighter whose most consequential features sit in its sensors, software, support ecosystem and three-variant design. For the properly authorised operator, that integration is the point. For anyone seeking uncomplicated ownership, it is also the answer.

SPECIFICATIONS

General Information

Model	F-35 Lightning II family: F-35A, F-35B and F-35C

Engine & Power Systems

Engine Type	Pratt & Whitney F135 afterburning turbofan
Propeller Type	None — jet propulsion

Avionics & Equipment

Avionics	Integrated sensor-fusion suite with Distributed Aperture System, Electro-Optical Targeting System, helmet-mounted display and secure tactical data links

PHOTOGRAPHS

5 of 6 photographs reproduced here. The complete gallery is on the listing page.

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