

Germany, Lockheed Martin Celebrate Rollout Of Germany's First F-35A, Marking New Era Of German Airpower

Lockheed Martin presented Germany's first F-35 to the German government during a ceremony in Fort Worth, Texas, Sept. 18, 2026.

FORT WORTH, Texas, Sept. 18, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) presented Germany's first F-35A Lightning II to the German government during a ceremony at Lockheed Martin's F-35 production facility, strengthening allied interoperability and mission readiness across NATO. Senior government and military leaders from Germany and the United States joined employees and industry partners to mark this significant milestone for Germany and the Alliance.

"This is the beginning of a new era for the German Air Force: the new F-35A fighter jet is the world's most advanced combat aircraft," said Boris Pistorius, German Minister of Defense. "It is characterized by its stealth capabilities, close integration with other platforms, and exceptionally powerful sensor technology. The F-35A can gather vast amounts of data and rapidly synthesize them into a comprehensive operational picture. The first fighter jets will be delivered this year, with full operational capability to be reached by 2029. Consequently, the F-35A provides a decisive key capability – for the German Air Force and for the whole of NATO. Together with 19 other nations, we are putting transatlantic cooperation into practice, with common standards, technology and procedures. It is precisely this interoperability that opens up numerous opportunities for training, exercises, and operations, making us stronger together."

As the fighter aircraft selected by 20 nations, including 13 in Europe, the F-35 will deliver sovereign capability for Germany, strengthen NATO interoperability and enhance allied deterrence well into the future. With stealth technology, advanced sensors, payload and range, the F-35 is a cornerstone of European security, providing the Luftwaffe with the world's most capable fighter aircraft and a platform designed to continuously integrate new technologies and capabilities.

"With the F-35, the German Air and Space Force is receiving a modern, proven and highly capable 5th Generation fighter jet," said Lieutenant General Holger Neumann, Chief of the German Air and Space Force. "It will not only bring significant changes in our Air and Space Force but will also influence how we think, command and fight. The F-35 will allow us to become part of the larger international F-35 community. That strengthens Germany – and, at the same time, NATO."

"The F-35 is more than a fighter aircraft. It is a strategic capability that enables allies to operate together, adapt faster and stay ahead of emerging threats," said OJ Sanchez, president, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. "As Germany prepares to take ownership of its first F-35A, we are proud to build on more than 50 years of partnership and deliver a capability that will strengthen European security and support the Luftwaffe for decades to come."

German industry has contributed to the F-35 program since its inception in 2001 and will continue to play a vital role in the F-35 enterprise meeting its growing worldwide demand while also expanding the significant role European industry has in the global supply chain. Lockheed Martin continues to actively explore additional industrial participation opportunities that will enable partnerships across German industry and create jobs in 5th Generation fighter aircraft manufacturing, sustainment, training, research and development.

Germany's program of record calls for 35 F-35As. The first eight aircraft will be delivered to Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Arkansas for pilot training beginning this fall. The first German F-35s will arrive in-country in late 2027.

About the F-35 Lightning II

More than 1,355 F-35s are currently operational around the globe, and the fleet has surpassed a million flight hours. The combat-proven F-35 operates from 42 bases worldwide, including 12 nations operating on home soil. As adversaries advance and legacy aircraft age, the F-35 is critical to maintaining air dominance into the future.

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