

US F-35 Fighter Jet Fizzles, Totalled in Epic Crash Just One Day After Combat Debut

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According to [several reports](#) citing U.S. military sources, the Lockheed Martin-manufactured F-35 jet – the most expensive U.S. fighter jet ever and the most expensive weapon system in the world – crashed spectacularly on Friday, [just one day after](#) its first-ever successful airstrike, resulting in the “total loss” of the aircraft.

The crashed plane, each of which costs U.S. taxpayers more than \$100 million, was a U.S. Marine Corps F-35B and had taken off from a training squadron at the Marine Corps Air Station in Beaufort, South Carolina. The pilot safely ejected from the plane prior to the crash and there were no civilian injuries.

The crash is the [second](#) “Class A mishap” – a military term for an incident resulting in at least \$2 million in damages, the fatality or permanent total disability of the crew, or the total loss of the aircraft – to have occurred with an F-35 jet and marked the first time that a pilot ejected from the aircraft. However, the jets have also been the subject of other less serious incidents including other accidents and fires, such as when an F-35B [burst into flames](#) on a runway in 2016.

The military has [yet to say](#) what caused the crash, give any details about the pilot, or recount what occurred immediately prior to the crash. Despite the lack of details, the incident [has led](#) some to worry that the crash may indicate a wider, systemic problem with the aircraft, which could lead to the potential grounding of the entire F-35 fleet.

Military plane crash in Beaufort near Joe Allen Drive area. Appears to have crashed on a bluff/island owned by Clarendon Plantations. Not usually many people over there. Praying for the safety of all involved!
pic.twitter.com/dM5a8v2lg1

— Sam Richardson (@SamRichardsonAM) [September 28, 2018](#)

Notably, the incident comes after the U.S. military used the plane for the first time in a U.S. airstrike, which was conducted in Afghanistan last Thursday against a “fixed Taliban target.” [A CNN report](#) on the recent F-35 airstrike praised the plane as “the future of military aviation” and called it “a lethal and versatile aircraft that combines stealth capabilities, supersonic speed, extreme agility, and state-of-the-art sensor fusion technology,” citing U.S. weapons giant Lockheed Martin – the plane’s primary manufacturer.

President Donald Trump has [previously praised](#) the plane for being “invisible,” given its

reduced capacity to be detected by enemy radars, though the plane is not actually invisible.

Good money — lots of it — after bad

Yet, the recent crash of the F-35 jet has brought renewed scrutiny to the program, which has long been controversial not only for its high cost but for long-standing concerns about the jet's effectiveness in combat. Indeed, the F-35 jet program has been called one of the [most egregious cases](#) of government waste in regards to defense spending, ever.

Furthermore, despite having been on the workbench for decades (its development began in 1992), the U.S.' F-35 fleet is still not ready, though some [F-35s were deployed abroad](#) in 2015. However, the plane had never been used by the U.S. military for a combat mission until last Thursday.

Worse still, the Pentagon has admitted that the jets [won't have a chance](#) in a real combat situation and a recent test run saw the jets [outperformed](#) by a 40-year-old F-16. Despite the clear failure of the program, the U.S. government [has continued to pour money](#) into the jet's development, making it the most expensive weapons system in U.S. history. In total, the program is on track to cost U.S. taxpayers [over \\$1 trillion](#).

Despite the setbacks of the F-35, the U.S. has continued to not only pour more money into the F-35 program itself but to award Lockheed Martin massive contracts in apparent ignorance of the terrible precedent set by the controversial fighter jet program. For instance, in August, the U.S. government awarded Lockheed Martin over \$3 billion in new contracts [in just two days](#) after concerns were raised regarding missile system advances made by Russia and China.

With the U.S. government continuing to funnel money to Lockheed for the development of weapons and defense systems deemed critical to U.S. "national security," it again appears that the U.S. corporate welfare, which is so characteristic of the country's military-industrial complex, is in fact driving the U.S. military's decline in competitiveness and ironically helping accelerate the U.S.' loss of its former global hegemony.

Top Photo | President Donald Trump talks with Lockheed Martin president and CEO Marilyn Hewson, right, and director and chief test pilot Alan Norman in front of a F-35 as he participates in a "Made in America Product Showcase" at the White House, July 23, 2018, in Washington. Evan Vucci | AP

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