

# Budget Funds 37 F-35s for U.S. Naval Aviation in 2022



An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, prepares to land on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael Singley*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The fiscal 2022 budget, finally signed into law almost halfway through the fiscal year, provides for 37 F-35 Lightning II strike fighters for the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as 12 FA-18 Super Hornet strike fighters.

Of the overall 85 F-35s funded in the budget, the 37 for naval aviation include 17 F-35B short-takeoff/vertical-landing versions and five carrier-capable F-35Cs for the Marine Corps and 15 F-35Cs for the Navy, according to the F-35 Joint Program Office. The rest of the 2022 lot is comprised of 48 F-35As for the Air Force.

The Marine Corps currently fields five F-35B and one F-35C fleet squadrons, while the Navy fields two F-35C fleet squadrons.

Still in low-rate initial production after more than 15 years, the F-35 has not yet completed its initial operational test and evaluation.

The Navy’s program of record for the F-35 totals 353 F-35Bs for the Marine Corps, 67 F-35Cs for the Marine Corps and 273 F-35Cs for the Navy.

Congress, concerned about a continuing strike fighter shortage, also funded 12 more F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters for the Navy, continuing production for yet another year even though the service has been trying to stop the

program for a few years. The Navy's program of record for the Super Hornet through fiscal 2021 totaled 678 F/A-18E/Fs (379 F/A-18Es and 299 F/A-18Fs). The model breakdown of the 12 fiscal 2022 Super Hornets is not yet available.