

Test of
General Dynamics F-111 Aardvark

Produced by Virtavia

The F-111 Aardvark is a twin engine, two crew, medium-range interdictor and tactical strike aircraft built by General Dynamics since the early 1960s. It also filled out the roles as strategical bomber, reconnaissance and electronic warfare in its various versions.

Several technologies that we know today were pioneered on the F-111 Aardvark as e.g. the variable-sweep wings and the afterburning turbofans engines. The F-111 remained in active service in the US Air Force until being replaced by the F-15E Strike Eagle and B-1B Lancer in the 1990s, but continued active service in the Australian Air Force until December 2010.

Specs:

- **Produced by** *General Dynamics*
- **First Flight** *December 21st 1964*
- **Introduction** *July 18th 1967*
- **Role** *Fighter/Strategical bomber*
- **Status** *Retired*
- **Built** *563*
- **Unit Costs** *F-111F US\$ 10,3 million (1973)*
- **Primary Users**
 - *United States Air Force (USAF)*
 - *Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)*



I received this aircraft directly from Virtavia. The download and installation went perfectly as usual and it was a delight to use the installation wizard. It is very fast and very user friendly so I had absolutely no problems and the aircraft was installed in no time.

After the installation was completed I opened FSX to check if everything was installed correctly and to check if the aircraft was placed properly in the folder of Virtavia. Of course everything was installed perfectly and I found the aircraft in the Virtavia folder together with 19 liveries which is a lot, and this I like very much. Also the mini pictures are pictures of the corresponding aircrafts and not just a single

picture to cover them all – Super! Included is of course also a manual of 64 pages which describes most of the FAQ's I could think of.

I started viewing the aircraft from the outside and this Virtavia aircraft is as I expected. Very high quality as I now have seen multiple times from Virtavia. The model is very well made with clean surfaces, lots of details and animations, very realistic, high quality textures, a great finish and a superb afterburner effect. This was also what I had expected and Virtavia had really made this aircraft to perfection.

The model has animations such as gear + suspension, wheels turning, canopy, control surfaces, wing sweep, flaps etc and Virtavia have also animated the internal part of the exhaustion that opens / closes depending on thrust levels – very cool detail. The F-111 model also features a great light effect and of course the superb flame effect when applying the afterburner and to this Virtavia has also put in a really nice smoke effect.



After my view around the outside of the Aardvark I jumped into the cockpit. Here Virtavia has made a really realistic virtual cockpit again with high quality textures. The depth is awesome and the finish is super. The cockpit is made to look old which I like a lot because this really is an old aircraft and therefore it should look old and used.

Virtavia has animated extremely many buttons and included multiple systems as e.g. the bombing / targeting system that the navigator uses. Also the controls etc are animated and when I sit in this aircraft I really do feel like being in a real military jet from the days without a glass cockpit. Since this is an old jet the cockpit is mostly equipped with analogue instruments, and it is a delight to see that Virtavia has put so much energy into creating a perfect cockpit atmosphere.

The sound set used in this model is also of high quality. The sound is very clear and clean and works perfectly both in stereo and 7.1 surround sound. The sound is very realistic both outside the aircraft but also inside the cockpit and it really adds to even more realism. The sound for the afterburner is superb – a deep roar as in the B-1B and this gave me a sensational feeling when blasting down the runway. You have a model of perfection, a virtual cockpit so realistic and a sound set that matches everything – this equals a really awesome experience for me.

Taking a look at the flight characteristics I found that the Aardvark was extremely fast on the control surfaces, but still very easy to fly. I tried both low and high level flying at various speeds, and no matter what I tried I always had completely control of the aircraft. The Aardvark is a military jet and therefore it is also built to fly aerobatics – this is also very well made in this model, and you can without any problems do more or less every single maneuver that I know of. Together with these superb flying characteristics the aircraft also has two very powerful engines, so that you easily can reach speeds of Mach 2.



I made 3 test flights with the Aardvark. The first test flight was a flight to check out the ground handling, the take-off, standard ferry flight and landings, all in fair weather. The ground handling of the Aardvark is as I expected – very easy. You can turn the aircraft on a dime and it reacts very quickly on your control inputs of e.g. the nose wheel. You don't have to master e.g. the B737 to be able to taxi with the Aardvark – if you can taxi a Cessna I think you quite quickly could learn to taxi this bird too.

Take-off is a lot of fun in this aircraft. I tried to make a slow take-off without the use of the afterburners and this was easy – I of course used a lot of the runway but I found the aircraft to be very steady and easy to handle during the take-off roll. After this “slow” take-off I decided to also try a take-off with the use of full afterburners, and this is what I find as fun. Applying full throttle, blasting down the runway getting my speed to be a lot higher than minimum, then lifting off by rotating 90 degrees and up I went. The aircraft is equipped with 2 extremely powerful engines, so I just kept on climbing until I reached 50000' where I leveled out.

Flying the aircraft in ferry mode is also easy – as mentioned earlier the aircraft is fast on the control surfaces but still very steady, so you don't have to use much energy to keep the aircraft on route. The maximum airspeed of the Aardvark is very high so you have the possibility to make a rapid descent if needed.

To land this aircraft in fair weather is also quite simple – the Aardvark is an aircraft that is built on the edge of being unstable, but is actually very good natured and therefore quite easy to fly. The approach and final I flew perfectly the first time and found the aircraft to be very steady here also. After touchdown I kept the nose wheel up until my speed reached a minimum and the nose came down slowly by itself. I used a lot of runway to make a perfect landing, but if I had to, then I could easily land this aircraft on half the length of the runway.



On the second test flight I wanted to fly the Aardvark as if I were on a mission. I took off from Karup AFB, Denmark (EKKA) a summer morning at 04:00 with the weather theme set on foggy weather. My mission was to fly from Karup AFB to bomb the “Storebæltbro” (the bridge that stretches between Funen and Zealand). After take-off I set the course towards Tirsstrup Airport (EKAH) and climbed to 15000'. When reaching EKAH I changed the course to be in a straight line from EKAH to the bombing target and descended to 50' above sea level. About 10 nmi before I arrived at the bombing target I climbed into bombing position and blasted over the bridge with Mach 0,7 delivering the bombs. After a confirmed hit I climbed to 40000' and returned to base.

This was an incredible flight for me. Flying in an F-111 so well made, combined with a realistic mission was really a sensational experience and this is absolutely not the last time I will try that!



My third test flight was to test the Aardvark under various weather conditions. I wanted to test the handling and flying characteristic of the aircraft in foul weather and set up different scenarios as e.g. fog, rain, thunderstorm etc and combined that with various winds of 20 knots gusting to 30 knots. I found that the Aardvark still was very easy to fly, but now I of course had to be more in control of the aircrafts, but controlling and landing the aircraft under these conditions was still durable.

This is an aircraft that you can quickly learn to fly and I believe that simmers on various levels will be able to fly this bird. This F-111 applies to all simmers that enjoys flying military jets and I found the aircraft to be much fun.

Overall you here get an add-on of very high quality. The model is perfectly made with many details, animations and effects. The virtual cockpit is simply put outstanding and the sound set is superb. The quality of the textures both in the virtual cockpit and on the model is of a very high quality and the finish is awesome. This is an add-on at the top of the scale and I rate it 5/5-stars.

Thanks to Virtavia for bringing this superb, high quality add-on to the flightsim community. The level of quality you provide in your add-ons are really high and I recommend fellow simmers to buy Virtavia products – you are sure to get very high quality and value for your money.



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