

Air National Guard Re-Engining Block 42 F-16s; Lockheed Martin Expedites Kits To Meet Deployment Schedule

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The Air National Guard (ANG) recently began modifying its combat-coded Block 42 F-16C/Ds with the Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-229 Increased Performance Engine.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business unit of Lockheed Martin Corp. , is the manufacturer of the F-16 and is providing expedited aircraft modification kits and logistics support for the re-engining program.

The F100-PW-229 engine is in the 29,000-pound thrust class and provides approximately 20 percent more thrust than the original F100-PW-220 engine in these aircraft.

"With the bigger engines, we can fly higher and faster, turn/climb/accelerate faster, take off in shorter distances with heavy payloads, and, with less use of afterburner, have more time on station," said Lt. Col. Steven R. Kopp, commander of the 125th Fighter Squadron, Oklahoma ANG, based at Tulsa. "These performance improvements are very important to our pilots flying peacekeeping missions over Iraq. Another benefit of the -229 over the -220 is its enhanced reliability."

Four-man maintenance teams are able to modify the aircraft, swap out engines and do the necessary systems checks in a four-day, single-shift operation.

"This is the first time that inventory F-16s have been re-engined with a higher-thrust engine," said William J. Lake, director of U.S. Air Force and European Participating Air Forces F-16 Programs at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. "This further demonstrates the versatility and growth potential of the F-16."

The ANG wanted to have enough aircraft modified to support an upcoming "rainbow" deployment to the Middle East. This is part of the scheduled 90-day Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation commitment for the three ANG units operating the Block 42 version.

"To satisfy this operational need, Lockheed Martin cut the delivery time for aircraft modification kits and documentation by 60 percent," Lake said. "The whole program from authorization through kit delivery and software fielding occurred in just 17 months. We also expedited fielding of a new software tape to provide compatibility with the new engine. This tape also provides improvements to mechanizations for the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile and the Joint Stand-Off Weapon."

Lake added, "Since the Block 52s also have the -229 engine, the re-engining will also provide more commonality within the U.S. Air Force Block 40/42/50/52 fleet. We are increasing the avionics, cockpit and weapons commonality of this fleet through the F-16 Common Configuration Implementation Program."

Three ANG squadrons operate approximately 50 Block 42 F-16s. There are no current plans to re-engine the active USAF's Block 42s, which are used in a training role at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

Kopp said, "This will be our fifth trip to Operations Northern or Southern Watch in the last six years as a rainbow with the Des Moines and Toledo units, and we are all excited about taking our -229-powered F-16s."

The new-built -229 engines replace the existing F100-PW-220 engines, which, in turn, will be used to re-engine some of the ANG's F-15 aircraft, which have the older F100-PW-100 engines.

The F-16, the choice of 23 countries, is the world's most sought-after fighter. More than 4,000 aircraft have been delivered, hundreds more are on order for the United States and seven other countries, and production is expected to continue beyond 2010. Major upgrades for all F-16 versions are being incorporated to keep the fleet modern and fully supportable over the aircraft's long service

life.

The F-16 is playing a major role as the durable and versatile "workhorse" in allied peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and Iraq. The F-16 is a key player in Operation Noble Eagle, homeland air defense of the United States, and is frequently participating in Operation Enduring Freedom in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, is a leader in the design, development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. Employing about 125,000 people worldwide, Lockheed Martin had 2001 sales of \$24 billion.

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