

Lockheed Martin's Evolving F-16 Maintains Warfighter's Edge In Modern Combat

PRNewswire-FirstCall
PARIS

Lockheed Martin's F-16 Fighting Falcon continues its historic evolution, honing its edge in meeting new operational requirements both in the defense marketplace and in combat, according to John Bean, Vice President for Lockheed Martin F-16 programs.

Bean said at the Paris Air Show today the F-16 is still the most modern, capable and sought-after international production fighter today. It has been proven in combat time after time, including recent operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and both wars in Iraq.

"Our F-16s respond to modern conflict by employing the latest precision munitions and providing effective air defense suppression," Bean said. "As a multi-role fighter, the F-16 provides battle commanders with dependability and excellent mission flexibility."

In Operation Desert Storm, the F-16 was known as "the workhorse of the war," and its combat-proven tradition continued in Operation Iraqi Freedom, as F-16s flew some 4,000 sorties in continuous, all-weather operations that accomplished precision-strike, time-critical mission objectives.

In addition to its unmatched battlefield capabilities, the F-16 stays on the cutting edge of ever-changing operational requirements. The Advanced Block 50/52 and Block 60 F-16 fighters incorporate the latest technologies and capabilities, most notably advanced radars and additional precision weapons, which, in combination, provide true, autonomous, adverse-weather strike capability. Other features include higher thrust engines, upgraded avionics, advanced internal Electronic Warfare suites and conformal fuel tanks, which provide the F-16 with a mission radius and loiter time equivalent to or better than any other fighter available.

In addition to the F-16 production programs, Lockheed Martin continues to develop and integrate upgrade programs for existing F-16 aircraft. Upgrades such as the Mid-Life Update (MLU) and the Common Configuration Implementation Program (CCIP) join older models with new production aircraft, forming Lockheed Martin's Roadmap of Convergence, merging into a common path and plan that result in maximum commonality throughout the fleet.

"This convergence in roadmaps for fielded aircraft and new aircraft provides an opportunity for F-16 operators to benefit from the latest developments in technology and capabilities for fighter aircraft," Bean said. "This synergy will parallel technology and provide a transition into the F/A-22 and F-35 programs."

In the immediate future, the F-16 will still be in demand as the world's most advanced and dependable multi-mission fighter today. Firm orders will provide production line work until at least 2008, with anticipated new orders and deliveries lasting through 2011. Since 1999, nine new countries have joined the F-16 family, giving Lockheed Martin the largest firm backlog of fighter aircraft in the world, with the potential for 200-400 new or follow-on aircraft.

"The F-16 international family marks its 25th anniversary this year," Bean said. "Since 1979, partnerships with our allies and coalition countries have grown to 24, including the United States. And we have every reason to believe that our international family will continue to grow. With a win rate of 100 percent in competitions for authorized programs, the F-16 proves time and again it is the world's most sought-after fighter jet."

The F-16 is the choice of 24 countries. More than 4,000 aircraft have been delivered, hundreds more are on order, 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.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, 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/A-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 employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2002 sales of \$26.6 billion.

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