Lockheed Martin, Portuguese Air Force Roll Out First Modernized F-16 Aircraft

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FORT WORTH, Texas

Lockheed Martin and the Portuguese Air Force (PoAF) rolled out the first Portuguese F-16 aircraft to undergo a Mid-Life Update (MLU) during ceremonies today in Lisbon, marking the start of the PoAF's fighter fleet modernization program.

The ceremony took place at the OGMA facility (Industria Aeronautica de Portugal S.A.), where extensive work on the F-16s is being conducted.

This was the first aircraft of 20 F-16s (16 single-seat A models and four two-seat B models) to be retrofitted. The aircraft originally were transferred from U.S. Air Force inventory in 1999 before being placed into work at OGMA.

"The MLU upgrade is a significant step toward modernizing our forces' capabilities to meet the challenges of today's changing world," said General Vaz Afonso, chief of staff of the PoAF.

The new program is designated Peace Atlantis II, following 1994's Peace Atlantis I in which Portugal acquired 20 new F-16A/Bs. With those fighters also entering MLU improvements, the new and older F-16 groups will have congruent capabilities. Total value of the Peace Atlantis II program is approximately $268 million, which includes aircraft shipment, modification kits, logistics support and training.

"Today's rollout not only symbolizes our long-term partnership with Portugal but with the entire group of European Participating Air Forces involved with the F-16," said Dain M. Hancock, president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. "This is essentially a triumph of trans-Atlantic cooperation, which began with F-16 co-production in the late 1970s with Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States. The MLU partnership continues as a vehicle to strengthen existing government-industry relationships and helps establish new ones."

The refurbished Peace Atlantis II F-16s received three major modifications: the Falcon UP/Falcon STAR structural upgrades, the F100-PW-220E engine upgrade and the F-16A/B MLU avionics and cockpit upgrade. The MLU changes include Block 50 F-16C/D-style cockpit with color multifunction displays, modular mission computer, APG-66(V)2 radar update, digital terrain system, global positioning system, advanced identification friend or foe, improved data modem data link, electronic warfare management system, plus provisions for a reconnaissance pod and a helmet-mounted display.

These highly advanced modifications will result in the PoAF having a configuration common with the other western European NATO F-16A/B users that participate in the MLU program -- Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway. These F-16s will also enhance the PoAF's air combat fleet interoperability with other European Participating Air Forces, of which it is a member, and also with F-16s operated by the U.S. Air Force and all the nations acquiring the newest F-16s off the production line.

Other upgrades to the Portuguese aircraft include a night identification light, dedicated electronic warfare MUX bus, additional chaff/flare dispensers, plus provisions for an internal missile warning system and a flight analyzer/air combat evaluation/voice and data recorder.

Lockheed Martin performed training and set-up functions for the program, but all modifications are being performed in Portugal at OGMA.

Portugal is the fifth country to incorporate the F-16A/B MLU modification. It is the 15th country to make follow-on purchases of F-16 aircraft and is one of six countries to operate former U.S. Air Force F-16A/B aircraft.

Lockheed Martin has enjoyed a close relationship with the Portuguese armed forces for many years. In addition to its F-16s, Portugal operates C-130H Hercules transports, which have made important contributions to international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. For maritime patrol, search and rescue, and antisubmarine warfare, the PoAF has relied on six P-3P Orions since 1988.

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 Corp. 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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