Lockheed Martin Ceremony Commemorates First F-16 Produced For Oman

Lockheed Martin held ceremonies at its Fort Worth, Tex., facility today to celebrate the delivery of the first F-16 aircraft to the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO).

Air Vice Marshal Yahya Al-Juma, commander of the RAFO, accepted the aircraft on behalf of his nation. Also present were Mohammed Al-Khusaiby, ambassador of Oman to the United States, and other senior officials from the Oman Ministry of Defense and Royal Air Force.

"The state-of-the-art capabilities of the F-16 will contribute significantly to the modernization of our armed forces and the protection of our nation, and will improve our interoperability with other F-16 operators in the region," said Air Vice Marshal Al-Juma.

In May 2002, the Sultanate of Oman signed an agreement with the U.S. government to purchase 12 Advanced Block 50 F-16s in the Peace A'sama A'safiya (Clear Skies) Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. The agreement includes eight single-seat F-16Cs and four two-seat F-16Ds, powered by the General Electric F110-GE-129 engine.

United States government officials participating in today's ceremonies included Gen. T. Michael Moseley, vice chief of staff, United States Air Force; Lt. Gen. Jeffrey B. Kohler, director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency; Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan, commander of the 9th Air Force and U.S. Central Command Air Forces; and Bruce S. Lemkin, deputy undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs.

"Oman is the fifth Arab nation and the third member of the Gulf Cooperation Council to acquire the F-16," said Lt. Gen. Buchanan. "With Oman now flying one of the same aircraft as the U.S., it not only promotes interoperability within the region, but it also develops closer ties between the airmen of different nations."

"The team effort involved in Oman's F-16 procurement is a great testimony to the strong friendship between our two countries," Lemkin said. "To have such close friends in the Gulf region with capable and complementary air power opens the door to a bright future and an even stronger relationship."

Lockheed Martin was represented by Ralph D. Heath, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin Corporation and president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, and June Shrewsbury, vice president of F-16 programs.

"We're proud to have Oman as the 23rd member of the worldwide F-16 family and we're fully committed to ensure that their air force achieves and maintains its highest levels of capability and readiness while flying the F-16," said Heath.

"In celebrating this milestone, we recognize all the accomplishments the Oman F-16 team has made in keeping this program on track," said Shrewsbury. "We have been on or ahead of schedule in all key events in this highly successful program."

The first Oman F-16 is a two-seat F-16D model and was accepted by the U.S. government (as agent for Oman in the FMS process) on July 19, one month ahead of schedule. The first single-seat F-16C version will fly in August and be accepted in September. These two aircraft will be ferried to Oman in mid- October to support the 35th National Day celebrations on Nov. 18. The remainder of the aircraft will be ferried to Oman during 2006.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The F-16 is the choice of 24 countries. More than 4,000 aircraft have been delivered worldwide from assembly lines in five countries. The F-16 program has been characterized by unprecedented international cooperation among governments, air forces and aerospace industries. Major upgrades to 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, research and 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, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2. The company produces major components for the F-2 fighter, and is a co-developer of the C-27J tactical transport and T-50 advanced jet trainer.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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