

Royal Thai Air Force Receives Final Delivery Of Lockheed Martin F-16s

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Thailand's Korat Air Base received the final three of 16 refurbished Lockheed Martin F-16s on July 11 as part of the country's ongoing efforts to modernize its air force. The delivery completes the third F-16 squadron for the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF).

The U.S. Air Force refurbished and delivered the aircraft. Lockheed Martin provided the upgrade kits for refurbishment and will provide logistics support and maintenance training. Six F-16s were delivered in August, four more in October and the remainder on July 11.

Air Chief Marshal Kongsak Vantana, commander-in-chief of the RTAF, accepted the aircraft and expressed his appreciation to the U.S. Air Force and F-16 industrial team, led by Lockheed Martin, for the professional completion of the Peace Naresuan IV program.

"These Fighting Falcons are an anticipated addition as we continue to modernize our air force," Kongsak said.

John Bean, Lockheed Martin's vice president for F-16 programs, said he is proud that the company could provide the high-technology aircraft that would fit the RTAF's needs.

Thailand has received 36 new F-16A/Bs in three previous buys delivered between 1988 and 1996. Thailand's F-16s, which have been operating for 15 years, have more than 60,000 flight hours.

The aircraft in the current order came from USAF storage at the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center in Tucson, Ariz. The planes were transferred to Ogden Air Logistics Center for incorporation of the Falcon Up structural upgrade and other modifications. The engines were upgraded to the F100-PW-220E configuration by the Pratt & Whitney San Antonio Engine Center and will match the other RTAF F-16 engines.

This group of aircraft consists of 15 F-16A single-seat models and one F-16B two-seat model. The last six aircraft supported training in the United States before being sent to Asia.

Thailand is one of six countries that have acquired more than 150 F-16A/Bs from USAF storage. This month, the Italian Air Force received the same version selected by Thailand.

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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