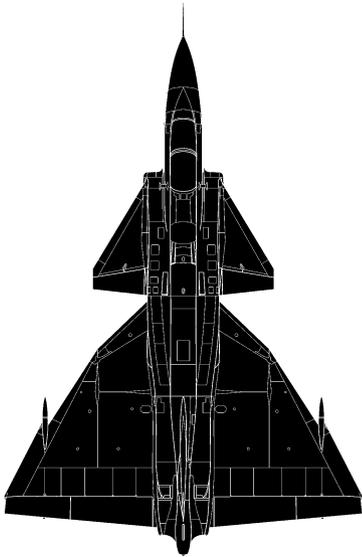


JA37 Viggen



Sweden's Viggen fighter, ultramodern at the time it made its first flight in 1967, proved highly capable in the roles of air superiority, close air support, reconnaissance, and maritime surveillance. The Swedish Air Force continuously modernized the aircraft with sophisticated avionics and advanced ordnance, allowing the Viggen to serve as that nation's first-line fighter for more than 30 years.

Studies leading to the aircraft began in 1952, though it was not introduced for two decades. The Viggen was compelled to meet stringent requirements for supersonic low-altitude flight and Mach 2 high-altitude flight, all combined with a capability to operate from primitive road runways and to be serviced by inexperienced ground crews. One unusual need was for low angle of attack landings to prevent damage to highway surfaces. To meet these demands, Saab chose a delta-wing configuration with two-section elevons, supplemented by a forward fixed canard with

trailing edge flaps. Special agreements with the United States provided advanced technology and allowed for a licensed adaptation of Pratt & Whitney JT8D engine. The Viggen was initially powered by this licensed Volvo RM8A engine.

Early versions of the Viggen were dangerous to fly in low-altitude missions, and losses were high. Improved later versions, especially the JA37 variant, were fitted with a larger engine and were much easier to control. While the Viggen was competitive with most contemporary fighters in the world market, Swedish politics prevented sales to foreign nations, a self-imposed ban that resulted in a short production run, although it remained in service until 2007.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Swedish Air Force JA37 Viggen—#37393—as it appeared in late 1989 when assigned to a unit based at Ostersund-Frosön AB, Sweden.



In Brief

Designed, built by Saab ★ first flight Feb. 8, 1967 ★ number built 329 ★ crew of one or two (trainer) ★ **Specific to JA37:** one Volvo RM8B turbofan engine ★ armament one 30 mm Oerlikon KCA-cannon; either six AIM-9 Sidewinder or two RB71 Skyflash and four AIM-120 AMRAAM or four rockets ★ max speed 1,386 mph ★ cruise speed 600 mph ★ max range 1,200 mi (internal fuel) ★ weight (loaded) 37,348 lb ★ span 34 ft 9 in ★ length 53 ft 9 in ★ height 19 ft 4 in.

Famous Fliers

Notables: Owe Wiktorin, Kent Harrskog, Kurt Johansson, Ulf Johansson, Bertil Kersmark, Ake Lindqvist, Lennart Pettersson, Jerry Pousette. **Test Pilots:** Erik Dahlstrom, Jon Ertzgaard, Arne Lindholm, Per Pellebergs, Gosta Sjostrom.

Interesting Facts

First aircraft to use integrated circuits ★ used pilot seat angled back by 19 degrees to resist G forces ★ suffered losses of more than 40 aircraft over service life ★ could be "turned" in 10 minutes by a five-man ground crew ★ ceased operations in 2007 ★ termed "biplane" by some due to use of fixed canard ★ named either "Thunderbolt" or "Tufted Duck," depending on the interpretation of word "Viggen."



An underside view of a Saab 37 Viggen fighter aircraft during Exercise Baltops '85.