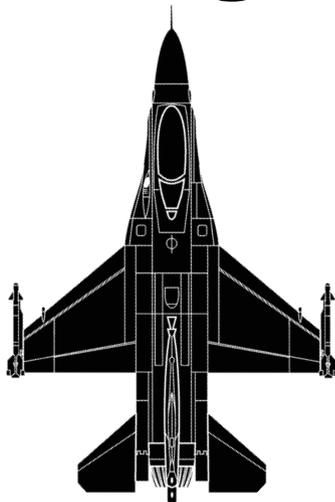


F-16 Fighting Falcon



The F-16 Fighting Falcon rates as one of the world's premier military aircraft. The lightweight, single-engine, supersonic, and highly maneuverable fighter, with its cropped-delta planform, became a multirole workhorse of the US Air Force in the 1980s and of some two dozen other air arms since. General Dynamics designed it to be low cost, easy to maintain, and adaptable to many missions and technologies. It has compiled a sturdy combat record.

The F-16 emerged from the Lightweight Fighter program of the 1970s, promoted by air-combat iconoclast Col. John Boyd. The fighter had electronic "fly-by-wire" flight controls. Light weight and a powerful engine produced exceptional quickness and agility. Designers provided a frameless bubble canopy, giving unobstructed forward and upward views. Its relatively low sticker price and operational costs made it attractive to world air forces. Many F-16s have been built jointly by the US and four

NATO members: Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway.

Israel was the first to use the F-16 in both air-to-air combat (April 28, 1981, over Lebanon) and in air-to-ground combat (June 7, 1981, raid on Iraq's Osirak nuclear site). In the Gulf War, USAF F-16s flew the lion's share of attack sorties, striking Iraqi airfields, army facilities, Scud sites, and more. F-16s followed up in Northern and Southern Watch and Allied Force in 1999, suppressing enemy air defenses and flying both counterair and close air support missions. In Afghanistan and Iraq, plus interventions in Libya and Syria, the F-16 contribution was extensive.

—Robert S. Dudley with Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: USAF F-16C Fighting Falcon—#87-0243—as it looked in August 2015 when assigned to the 121st Fighter Squadron, District of Columbia ANG, JB Andrews, Md.



In Brief

Designed, built by General Dynamics (now Lockheed Martin) ★ first flight Jan. 20, 1974 ★ number built 4,540+ ★ crew of one or two ★ one F110-GE-100 turbofan engine or Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-200/220/229 turbofan engine. **Specific to F-16C:** defensive armament, one 20 mm Vulcan cannon; up to six AIM-9 Sidewinder, AIM-120 AMRAAM, or combination ★ external load, up to 12,000 lb of bombs and munitions, including Maverick, HARM, JASSM, JDAM, nuclear weapons ★ max speed 1,320+ mph ★ cruise speed approx 550 mph ★ max combat radius 575 mi ★ weight (loaded) 37,500 lb ★ span 32 ft 10 in ★ length 49 ft 4 in ★ height 16 ft 8 in ★ service ceiling 50,000+ ft.

Famous Fliers

Air Force Cross: William Andrews. **Silver Star:** Burt Bartley, Sonny Blinkinsop, Carl Bradshaw, Julian Chesnutt, Cary Culbertson, Guy Dahlbeck, Steve Giovenella, Adam Kavlick, Jay Lindell, William Thomas Jr. **Mackay Trophy:** Charles Moore, Stephen Williams, Lawrence Sullivan, Kristopher Struve. **USAF Notables:** Gary North (first USAF kill), Robert Wright (three kills, one mission), Nicole Malachowski (first woman Thunderbirds pilot), Dan Hampton (four DFCs), Mike Brill (6,000 hours). **Other USAF Notables:** Chuck Wald, Chuck Yeager. **Israeli Notables:** Amir Nachumi (F-16 ace), "Lieutenant Rafi" first F-16 kill, Zeev Raz, Amos Yadlin, Dobby Yaffe, Hagai Katz, Iftach Spector, Relik Shafir, Ilan Ramon (Osirak raid). **Other Foreign Notables:** Peter Tankink (first post-WWII Royal Netherlands AF kill). **Test pilots:** Phil Oestricher, Neil Anderson.

Interesting Facts

Nicknamed "Viper" ★ won 1975 Collier Trophy ★ succeeded the F-4 "Wild Weasel" as a SEAD platform ★ in hands of Israeli pilots, downed 44 Syrian fighters (no losses) in 1982 Bekaa Valley War ★ featured in films "Iron Eagle" (1986) and "The Sum of All Fears" (2002) ★ can perform 9G turn with full fuel load ★ flown by Thunderbirds ★ equips 25 foreign air arms ★ built to be aerodynamically unstable, and thus agile ★ used by Navy in aggressor role ★ has thrust-to-weight ratio greater than one, meaning it can accelerate vertically.



USAF's air demonstration team, the Thunderbirds, flies F-16s.

USAF photo by SSgt. Larry E. Reid Jr.