



It has to begin somewhere, Full Scale Development General Dynamics F-16A serial 75-0745, developed out of the Lightweight Fighter (LWF) programme, seen over Texas state during a test flight. The aircraft represents the six flags of the launch customers, USA, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Iran. (General Dynamics)

certain block and mini-block version is identical technically and capability-wise. The changes are driven by the ECP's mentioned before. Those ECP's result from either a question asked by the customers requesting a change, often adding more improved capabilities, or a change proposed by the manufacturer itself. This question is answered by Lockheed by an advanced study with engineering proposals, detailed analyses and cost predictions to see whether the question and corresponding change is viable. When this is done the project gets an ECP number assigned to it. Those ECP's can cover something small as an indivial wire to a complete upgrade involving thousands of parts.

Full-Scale Development/Production Predecessors

Even before these block updates were present a major update of the airframe and its systems needed to be conducted. The YF-16 won the LWF (Light-weight Fighter) contract, but it was a demonstrator, not an operational fighter. The YF-16 prototypes lacked major parts (radar, weapons controls, etc.) which had to be included to make it an operational fighter. The designers didn't want to make too many compromises in order to retain the phenomenal flying characteristics the aircraft had. External changes were kept to an absolute minimum. These included amongst others a front landing gear door in one piece and a larger nosecone. The last one accounted for two-thirds of a thirteen-inch increase in length, but was necessary to fit the Westinghouse AN/APG-66 radar. Since the aircraft was to be used in an air-to-ground role as well heavier loads were expected, the F-16s wings and tail were enlarged to cover these heavier loads. The horizontal tails and ventral fins grew with roughly fifteen percent, while the flaperons

and speedbrakes grew with approximately ten percent. The wing grew to a maximum total of 300 square feet enabling the creation of an extra underwing hard point.

Many other changes brought the pre-production aircraft closer to an operational fighter. These also included a lighter weight ejection seat. A self-contained jet-fuel starter was added. The canopy was strengthened to cope with a four-pound, 350-knot bird strike and the radome was replaced by a hinged type to ease maintenance access.

To keep costs under control a lot of off-the-shelf equipment was also used in the prototypes as mentioned before. The main tires were borrowed from the B-58 Hustler, the EPU came from a Concorde commercial airplane, the ejection seat from the A-4 Skyhawk, the air-data probe from the SR-71 Blackbird and the power drive unit for the leading edge flaps from the F-111 Aardvark. All these things were replaced in the FSD aircraft but still a lot of 'foreign' equipment made it into those. The HUD came from the A-7 Corsair, the nose gear tire from the F-4 Phantom II, the signal data recorder from the A-10 Thunderbolt II, the oxygen quantity indicator from the F-5E Tiger II and the nose wheel steering system from the T-39 Sabreliner. The engine was the Pratt & Whitney F100 which was already in use on the F-15 Eagle.

The FSD aircraft are designated just F-16A and F-16B. They don't have block numbers yet. Over the years they have been subject to different testing configurations meaning they have adjusted their 'looks' as well. They can be identified by their serial number 75-0745 to 75-0752 (often seen on the tails as 50745 to 50752).

The first FSD aircraft was delivered on 13 December 1976. It was used for flutter tests, propulsion tests and overall performance. In 1981 it was also modified to carry the General Electric F-101 engine, which is the forerunner of the later

2 sqn jun 1989
 1 sqn oct 1989
 1 W sep 1994
 1 sqn mar 1995
 10 W apr 1998
 2 W jan 2001

88-0048 6J-22 FB-22

2 sqn jul 1990
 10 W feb 1993
 10 W 2001
 2 W nov 2009

88-0049 6J-23 FB-23
 1 sqn apr 1990
 OCU mar 1996

2 W nov 1999
 10 W may 2002
 31 sqn jun 2014

89-0012 6J-24 FB-24
 2 sqn aug 1990
 10 W feb 1998
 OCU 2001

Chile

In December 2000 Chile decided to purchase 10 F-16 block 50 aircraft (6 Cs and 4 Ds) in a deal called Peace Puma. The letter of agreement was signed on 2 February 2002. Production of the first fighter of this order was started in the course of 2004 with it being completed mid 2005 with the first flight on 23 June 2005.

In November 2004 Chile was also seeking an urgent replacement for its ageing Mirage 50/5M fighters. In October 2005 Chilean decided to purchase a total of 18 Dutch F-16s (11 As and 7 Bs). These aircraft were already upgraded with the MLU conversion package and were delivered between August 2006 and September 2007 in a programme called Peace Amstel I.

In May 2009 another order was placed for again 18 Dutch F-16s (18 As). Deliveries occurred between November 2010 and August 2011 in this Peace Amstel II contract.

Los Condores AB (SCDA)

I BA
 Grupo n°3 F-16C/D-50

Cerro Moreno AB (SCFA)

V BA
 Grupo n°7 F-16AM
 Grupo n°8 F-16AM/BM



An exclusive F-16 of the Fuerza Aerea de Chile (Chilean Air Force). These Chilean owned Fighting Falcons are never seen in Europe, but... this 747 was delivered to the Royal Netherlands Air Force as J-864 in July 1984 and after a long career with the RNLAF delivered to Chile in partly Chilean colours in November 2010. (2 April 2018, Leonard van Teeffelen)

F-16A

80-3633 721
 Grupo 8 08 sep 2006
 83-1194 722
 Grupo 8 08 sep 2006
 84-1360 723
 Grupo 8 07 jun 2007
 81-0878 724
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2007
 85-0143 725

Grupo 8 07 jun 2007
 85-0137 726
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2007
 80-3622 727
 Grupo 8 07 jun 2007
 80-3619 728
 Grupo 8 07 jun 2007
 83-1205 729
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2007
 85-0141 730
 Grupo 8 08 sep 2006

85-0139 731
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2007
 80-3617 741
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2011
 80-3620 742
 Grupo 8 30 aug 2011
 80-3627 743
 Grupo 8 31 aug 2011
 80-3636 744
 Grupo 8 08 apr 2011
 83-1203 745