



UTAH AIR NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS
765 N. 2200 W., Salt Lake City, UT 84116-2999
P: (801) 245-2446 - F: (801) 245-2535 - www.151arw.ang.af.mil

Press Release 11-031, 6 August 2011

Contact: Maj. Krista DeAngelis, (801) 505-3213

For Immediate Release

Utah Air National Guard Helps Deliver First F-16s to Morocco

BANGOR, Maine – Airmen from the Utah, Arizona and South Carolina Air National Guards recently participated in the historic delivery of the first four F-16s to their new home in the Kingdom of Morocco. Morocco purchased 24 F-16s (Block 52) in 2008 from the United States at an estimated cost of \$2.1 billion. The aircraft are scheduled to be delivered over the course of the next two years.

As part of the first ferry of aircraft to be delivered to Morocco, Airmen from the Utah Air Guard's 151st Air Refueling Wing provided KC-135 air refueling support for the historic mission, while F-16 pilots from the Arizona and South Carolina ANG helped fly the desert camouflaged-painted planes to their final destination.

"Our mission took off out of Little Rock Air Force Base moving the four F-16s – two two 'C' Models and two 'D' Models – to Bangor, Maine," explained Capt. Jake Johnson, Utah ANG KC-135 aircraft commander. "We refueled them three times en route to Bangor and then passed them forward to a KC-10 that dragged them the rest of the way to Morocco."

The mission required a significant amount of fuel to prepare for the overseas journey. "We started off with 150,000 pounds of fuel and offloaded about 62,000 pounds to the F-16s," said Master Sgt. Dave Hudson, one of two boom operators supporting the KC-135 mission. "Our first air refueling was in the dark about a half hour out of Little Rock and each event was spaced 45 minutes apart."

In addition to the American aircrews that assisted with the initial delivery, two Moroccan observer pilots flew in the back seats of the two 'D'-model aircraft.

"The two Moroccan pilots were recent graduates of the international F-16 training program in Tucson," said Maj. Damian Panajia, SAF/IA. "There are 10 Moroccan pilots graduating in the F-16 training pipeline in Tucson who will serve as the foundation for Morocco's F-16 Fighter Group."

-more-

The Moroccan Air Force purchased the advanced U.S. aircraft to integrate into their current fighter fleet and to assist with their national defense.

The delivery of the first fighters is especially significant to Utah due to its State Partnership Program with Morocco, which originated in 2003. The SPP is one of 63 programs throughout the globe, and is one of only eight in Africa. Utah's partnership with Morocco has been one of the most active partnerships on the continent, and has conducted more than 100 significant events since its inception.

"It is very exciting to have our Utah tankers participate in this historic event," said Maj. Karen Nuccitelli, Utah SPP director. "It has a special significance to us because of our close relationship to Morocco. In addition to our relationship with the country, we are also focusing on strengthening the partnership between Morocco and South Carolina, which will now have a common aircraft, the Block 52 F-16."

A ceremony was held Aug. 4 in Marrakech, Morocco, to celebrate the arrival of the first four F-16s.

The F-16 is used by 25 nations, and more than 4,400 have been delivered worldwide.

For more information on the Utah Air National Guard, visit www.151arw.ang.af.mil or check out the "Utah Air National Guard" group on Facebook.