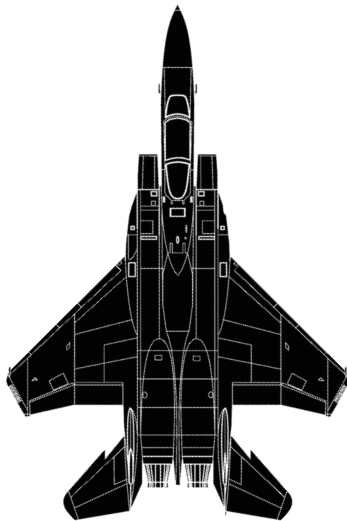


F-15 Eagle/Strike Eagle



The F-15—a twin-engine, all-weather tactical aircraft—was, without doubt, the world's top air superiority fighter between 1974 (when it entered service) and 2005 (when the F-22 achieved IOC). The McDonnell Douglas fighter scored 104 aerial victories with zero losses. A later E-variant, optimized for ground attack, dominated in that mission. It was exported to Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Singapore.

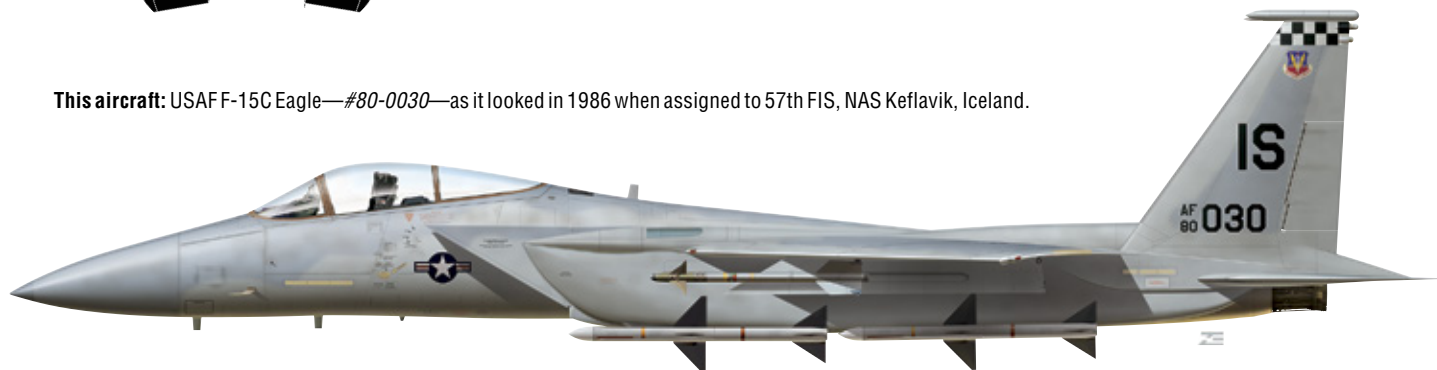
McDonnell Douglas gave the Eagle an all-metal fuselage with large, shoulder-mounted wings, thin tailplanes, and two potent turbofan engines. The F-15's dominance stemmed from an unprecedented mix of acceleration, maneuverability, versatile weapons load, and advanced avionics. A high

thrust-to-weight ratio let the F-15 turn tightly without losing airspeed. Its "look-down/shoot-down" radar distinguished moving targets from ground clutter. The airplane was constantly upgraded.

First kills were recorded by Israeli F-15s against Syria in 1979-82. The first major combat by USAF F-15s came in the 1991 Gulf War, when the Eagle scored 34 kills against Iraqi warplanes and struck key ground targets. F-15s have flown in every major US operation since, from the Balkans to Iraq, from Afghanistan to Libya. New models are being produced for export; plans call for keeping the production line open until 2019—47 years after first flight.

—Robert S. Dudley with Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: USAF F-15C Eagle—#80-0030—as it looked in 1986 when assigned to 57th FIS, NAS Keflavik, Iceland.



In Brief

Designed by McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing), built by MD and Mitsubishi ★ first flight July 27, 1972 ★ number built 1,724 ★ crew of one or two ★ armament one 20 mm cannon; up to eight AA missiles ★ span 42 ft 10 in ★ length 63 ft 9 in ★ height 18 ft 6 in ★ service ceiling 60,000+ ft ★ **Specific to F-15C:** function air superiority ★ two Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-100 or -220 engines ★ max speed 1,650 mph ★ cruise speed 570 mph ★ combat radius 1,061 mi ★ weight (max T/O) 68,000 lb ★ **Specific to F-15E:** function strike ★ two P&W F100-PW-220 or 229 engines ★ load 23,000 lb ordnance ★ max speed 1,875 mph ★ cruise speed 575 mph ★ combat radius 790 mi ★ weight (max T/O) 81,000 lb.

Famous Fliers

Silver Star: Thomas Dietz, Robert Hehemann, Kirk Rieckhoff, Christopher Russell. **Distinguished Flying Cross:** Jamie Damsker, Eric Das, John Easton, Mike Caudle, Daren Sorenson, Kevin Flood, Christopher Anthony, Jon Kelk, William Watkins. **Mackay Trophy:** 1974—Roger Smith, Willard MacFarlane, David Peterson; 1999—Jeffrey Hwang; 2010—Donald Cornwell, Dylan Wells, Leigh Larkin, Nicholas Tsougas. **Multiple US Victories:** Three—Robert Hehemann, Cesar Rodriguez, Thomas Dietz; two—Rhory Draeger, Jeffrey Hwang, Robert Graeter, Ben Powell, Jay Denney, Anthony Murphy. **KIA:** Peter Hook, James Poulet; Thomas Koritz, Donnie Holland; Eric Das, William Watkins; Mark McDowell, Tom Gramith. **CSAFs:** Tony McPeak, Ronald Fogleman, John Jumper, Buzz Moseley. **Notables:** Jeanne Leavitt (USAF's first female fighter pilot), Wilbert Pearson (only pilot to destroy a satellite). **Israeli Notables:** Moshe Melnik (first F-15 kill), Zivi Nedivi (landed after loss of wing). **Saudi Notable:** Ayedh Al-Shamrani (two kills). **Test Pilots:** Irv Burrows, Gary Jennings.

Interesting Facts

Has never been shot down in air-to-air combat ★ was first US fighter with thrust sufficient to accelerate vertically ★ destroyed satellite with ASM-135 missile ★ set eight time-to-climb records in 1975 ★ reached 98,425 ft altitude in 3 min, 28 sec ★ downed 41 Syrian fighters (zero losses) in 1982 Lebanon War ★ destroyed 18 Iraqi jets on ground at Tallil in Gulf War ★ downed Iraqi Mi-24 helo in flight with a 2,000-lb bomb ★ flew longest-ever fighter mission (15.5 hours, Afghanistan) ★ escorted Israeli strike against Iraq's Osirak nuclear plant in 1981.



An F-15E Strike Eagle from the 333rd Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., flies on Aug. 25, 2000.

USAF photo by MSgt. Thomas Meneguin