

# The Eagle's mountain home

At a base in Idaho, pilots and ground crews from Singapore's air force are training to operate Boeing's most advanced F-15 fighter **By Lorenzo Cortes**



**A**t Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, Boeing and the U.S. Air Force are preparing the Republic of Singapore Air Force to operate the most advanced F-15 in the world—the F-15SG.

Singapore joins F-15 operators such as the U.S. Air Force, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Israel and the Republic of Korea. The F-15SG is the most advanced of the operationally proven line of multi-role fighters that emerged from the original F-15 Eagle, equipped with an advanced active array radar and other improvements.

Boeing is on contract to deliver 24 F-15SGs to Singapore by late 2011.

“The F-15SG represents a new capability that will enhance the [Republic of Singapore Air Force’s] ability to deal decisively with security challenges and contribute to the peace and stability of our region,” said Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean.

Singapore is acquiring the planes and training at the Mountain Home base as part of a program known as Peace Carvin, which allows the Singapore government to buy U.S.-made military jets and receive training at a U.S. Air Force base.

In 2005, Singapore picked the two-seat F-15SG after an exhaustive competition that lasted seven years. The Boeing fighter bested competing types from Europe, including the Dassault Rafale.

The Republic of Singapore Air Force started training with its American counterparts back in 1988 under Peace Carvin I with F-16 fighters. For the fifth and current Peace Carvin program, about 250 Republic of Singapore Air Force pilots, weapons systems officers and their families moved to Mountain Home.

“This is only the latest step of a long, fruitful relationship that the U.S. Air Force and the [Republic of Singapore Air Force] enjoy,” Air Force Secretary Michael Donley said.

Boeing is not only responsible for production and delivery of the aircraft but is providing aircrew and maintenance training. This work includes a cockpit trainer with a high-resolution visual display system and networking technologies for simulated missions, which Boeing delivered in 2009.

“The aircrew can practice training or operational mission procedures



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– Teo Chee Hean, deputy prime minister and defense minister, Republic of Singapore

before they fly the actual aircraft,” said Sharon Vaughn, Boeing’s project manager for F-15SG trainers.

The first Republic of Singapore Air Force maintenance crews wrapped up their training in St. Louis in 2009 before Singapore received its first aircraft, and were able to pair their classroom training with work on the F-15SGs being built for delivery.

“We were able to build up the team, give them confidence, get them trained, and send them out to service the aircraft,” said Jon Blankemeier, Boeing’s manager of F-15 international training.

The F-15, on static display in the U.S. Defense Department “corral” at this month’s Singapore Air Show, represents Boeing’s legacy of designing products that meet both U.S. and international customers’ needs.

The first group of crew is set to return to Singapore in March while training will continue at Mountain Home. Boeing, the U.S. Air Force and the Republic of Singapore Air Force

celebrated in November the inauguration of the Mountain Home detachment, at which time Lt. Col. Lim Chee Meng, the detachment commander for the Republic of Singapore Air Force, spoke about the Mountain Home training.

“The hands-on operation of the F-15SG validates what we’ve learned in the classroom,” he said. “Our crews must undergo a robust training program to ensure they will be able to fully harness the capabilities of the fighter aircraft.” ■

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**PHOTOS: (Left)** The first four F-15SGs are flown to Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, in May 2009. **KEVIN FLYNN/BOEING (Above)** Teo Chee Hean, Singapore deputy prime minister and defense minister, tours the elementary school at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, that children from U.S. and Singapore military families attend. **KEVIN FLYNN/BOEING**