

# McDonnell Douglas F-15A Eagle

1977

## General History

### The Dogfighter

Designed from lessons learned in Vietnam, the F-15 *Eagle* is a true modern dogfighter. In combat over Southeast Asia, America's big and heavy "missiles and rockets" fighters of the 1950s found themselves head-to-head with much smaller, more nimble Soviet designed fighters. The hefty and complex U.S. planes became vulnerable when long-range encounters degenerated into classic "furballs," a fighter pilot's term for a violent, close-in, turning dogfight.

The F-15 was created in the early 1970s heavy on thrust and light on weight. One *Eagle* climbed from the runway to a record 98,425 feet in less than three and a half minutes! At its introduction, the F-15 could out climb, out turn, and out accelerate any fighter in the sky.

It was fifteen years before U.S. F-15s proved their ability in real combat in the Gulf War. Today, the *Eagle* remains a front-line Air Force fighter and can still hold its own against aircraft 25 years newer.

### Fighting Eagles

While Israeli *Eagles* were engaged in combat in the late 1970s, it was January 17, 1991 when America's F-15s first flew in battle. *Eagles* shot down 31 Iraqi aircraft while suffering no losses to enemy fighters. The aircraft destroyed in these encounters included five MiG-29s, the Soviet's premier fighter. While *Eagles* swept the skies, F-15E *Strike Eagles* took on ground targets. Jokingly called "Mud Hens," these F-15s are a fighter and attack aircraft combined. One Mud Hen pilot even got an air-to-air victory by blasting an enemy helicopter while on his way to his assigned bombing mission.

*At its introduction, the F-15 could out climb, out turn, and out accelerate any fighter in the sky.*



Captain Michael King Smith, Museum Founder

## About This Aircraft

The Museum's *Eagle* was manufactured by McDonnell Douglas Aircraft in St. Louis, Missouri. It was delivered to the U.S. Air Force on April 12, 1977, and was first based at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia with the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing. The plane was transferred to Bitburg Air Base in West Germany later that year. In 1982, the F-15 was transferred back to the U.S., operating from Eglin Air Force Base near Niceville, Florida.

In March of 1985, the F-15 moved to Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. In 1988, the *Eagle* was transferred to National Guard service and was based at Otis Air Force Base near Falmouth, Massachusetts. It was transferred to storage in Arizona in April of 1994. The Air Force Museum loaned the plane to Evergreen in May of 1996.

Today the F-15 wears the squadron insignia of the Oregon Air National Guard, and stands as a memorial to two F-15 pilots, Captain Michael King Smith and Major Rhory Roger Draeger, who died of injuries sustained in an automobile accident in March of 1995.

## Specifications

Type:	Fighter Aircraft
First Flight:	July 27, 1972
Wingspan:	42 feet 10 inches
Length:	63 feet 9 inches
Height:	18 feet 8 inches
Wing Area:	608 square feet
Weight, Interceptor:	41,500 pounds
Weight, Maximum:	68,000 pounds
Power:	Two Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-100 25,000 pound static thrust (with afterburning) engines
Normal Crew:	One
Typical Armament:	two AIM-9L Sidewinder missiles; two AIM-7F Sparrow missiles; four AIM-120 radar guided missiles, one M61A-1 20 mm gun

## Performance

Top Speed:	1,875 miles an hour, equaling more than Mach 2.5 (Two and one-half times the speed of sound)
Range:	3,450 miles, ferry range
Absolute Ceiling:	65,000 feet