

## Lockheed Martin facility in Greenville 'ideal' for F-16 shift

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
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Comprehension	Comments
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Greenville County fit all the factors Lockheed Martin had in mind when the air defense giant looked to shift production of its F-16 fighter jet program from Fort Worth, Texas, to another facility. “It’s the ideal location for us and it allows us to move in quickly. It has the space we need,” said Ken Ross, a spokesman for Lockheed’s **Aeronautics** in Fort Worth.

Last week, Leslie Farmer, spokesperson for Lockheed’s Greenville facility, confirmed the company plans to shift production of its F-16 fighter jets from Fort Worth to the South Carolina Aviation and Technology Center, or SCTAC, in Greenville County.

In Greenville, Ross said, is an existing 38,000-square-foot hangar at SCTAC, built in the late 1950s as part of then Donaldson Air Force Base. The spacious accommodations and a built-in workforce made the Greenville facility “fit the best mold,” he said. [...]

Particularly for economic reasons, the move to Greenville is set to expand the company’s F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program in Fort Worth. Farmer said the last F-16 in Fort Worth will be delivered in September, taking the company about two years to fully move into an existing empty hangar at Lockheed’s facility in Greenville.

The little more than 1-mile Fort Worth facility employs 13,500 people. The facility was built in 1941 and opened in 1942 to support World War II missions. Since the F-16 program’s **inception** in the 1960s with production in the late 1970s, the Fort Worth facility produced about 3,800 F-16 fighter jets, in addition to 700 built on other production lines in Belgium, Netherlands, Turkey and South Korea. Ross said the facility could pump out one F-16 jet per day, and in the last year produced between 18 and 24.

Now, the company has no future orders for F-16s after the last jet is produced in Fort Worth. Ross said Lockheed is pursuing other customers, possibly **Bahrain** for 19 jets – a deal the company is hoping to close soon. “It’s in government to government talks. The expectation is we’re very optimistic in that order and possibly some other orders,” he said.

Lockheed representatives wouldn’t discuss the market cost of one F-16. The planes aren’t sold anymore to U.S. forces, but U.S. allies that include Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Chile and Thailand.

“I look at it, it’s an opportunity right now where we’re gearing up F-

35 production and we're winding down F-16 with the last contract," said Ross, adding once the last F-16 is shipped out, the F-35 expanded production will quickly swoop in its place. "... There's potential to build more F-16s. There were a number of facilities we looked at around the country, one being Greenville."

South Carolina and Greenville County representatives are continuing to keep quiet on details of the production shift to the Upstate in the next two years.

Bob Mihalic, spokesman for Greenville County, said last week the county had not taken any action related to possible **incentives** to lure the company in. He did not offer further details. And on Thursday, a spokesperson with the S.C. Commerce Department declined any details at all, only stating the state agency does not comment on projects that the state may or may not be working on.

Ross said the company is not expecting to shift any jobs from Fort Worth to Greenville. Once F-16 production **ceases** in the Lone Star State, the jobs in the F-16 program will be absorbed for the F-35.

The expansion is expected to bring an additional 1,800 jobs to the Fort Worth production line over the near couple of years, Ross said. In Greenville, an additional 250 employees may be added onto the already 500 employees the company has at the facility. [...]

If all goes as hoped for Lockheed, the empty hangar to be used for F-16 production could see an expanded use if the company wins the high stakes **bid** to build a new training jet for the U.S. Air Force.

Lockheed is up against three other companies in the Air Force's Advanced Pilot Training competition, expected to bring newer planes online that can train pilots to fly the world's only "5th Generation" fighters, the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II, as reported by The News. Announced early last year, winning the contract would mean \$8 billion to \$10 billion in business for the company and an additional 180 to 200 competitive-wage jobs.

#### Questions

1. Where will the F-16s be built in Greenville County?
2. What will happen to the factory in Fort Worth that is currently building F-16s?
3. Approximately how many years passed from the time the F-16 was thought up to the time it was first produced?
4. Why do you think the U.S. government is not placing orders for more F-16s?
5. Why do you think Bob Mihalic and the spokesperson with the S.C. Commerce Department refuse to make any comments at all?
6. What is ironic about the job situation at the Fort Worth factory considering the fact that they are losing production of the F-16?