

Portuguese Air Force takes delivery of F-16 DART pilot training centre.



15th June 2023, the Portuguese Air Force (PRTAF) took possession of their new F-16 simulator training system DART (Deployable Affordable Readiness Trainer). The delivery is a complete training centre with a tactical F-16 pilot training system, which includes training modules for Fighter Controllers (GCI) and JTACs.

In an open competition, IFAD TS A/S (IFAD) together with subcontractor Arenalogic ApS (AL) was selected as supplier of the training centre to PRTAF (DART-PT). A similar version (DART-DK) has, for several years, been in successful operation at the Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF). The DART systems have been jointly developed by IFAD and AL.

The hand over of the training centre to the PRTAF took place after a thorough final test period at the Monte Real Air Base in Portugal. The DART-PT was delivered after only 15 months of development time, which is impressive as the contract award took place in January 2022.

A Combined F-16, GCI and JTAC Training Centre

DART-PT is a new combined F-16 and JTAC/GCI tactical training centre, which will support the Portuguese defence in educating and training their F-16 pilots in tactical Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground operations, their Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) in Close Air Support (CAS) operations, and GCI personnel.



Distributed training

The use of proven gateways, with standard protocols for data exchange, such as DIS, HLA and Link16, assures interoperability with other sites, enabling joint distributed exercises, e.g., in Multi-Domain operations.

Successful collaboration

PRTAF, IFAD and AL have collaborated in the efforts to finalize the advanced DART-PT training centre. For PRTAF, delivery of the new F-16 simulator capacity means that the pilots can train in a simulator that reflects systems and capabilities of the current PRTAF F-16 Mid-Life-Update (MLU) configuration. PRTAF can train with the latest weapons and sensor systems made available for the PRTAF F-16 aircraft, both for Air-to-Air (A/A) and Air-to-Ground (A/G) mission sets, including possibility of live integration of real-life JTACs and real-life Fighter Controllers (FC) for added realism and training value. This provides a very comprehensive training capability to the PRTAF.



Some of the latest developments in this respect are the possibilities to conduct simulated sorties during night conditions utilizing Night Vision Goggles (NVG). The Electronic Flight Bag (EFB), which is a tablet to be carried in flight, has also been integrated into the system.

Enhancing F-16 Tactical Training: The Role of DART System

“The integration of the DART-PT training centre has significantly enhanced the operationalization of F-16 Tactical Training. Through its advanced capabilities, DART-PT has enabled the execution of swift and meticulously precise training exercises. This technological integration has not only optimized training efficiency but also bolstered the overall readiness of our F-16 crews. We acknowledge DART’s pivotal role in elevating our training methodologies and strengthening our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of aerial combat proficiency.” – PrtAF DART-PT Program Manager Deputy.

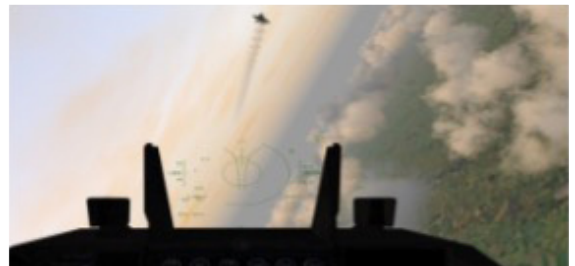


Live Aircraft in the Loop (LVC)

Last but not least, it is now possible to connect the DART-PT with live aircraft in the air via the Link-16 network. This enables the pilots to see each other on screens, communicate and observe when weapons release, all in real time. These capabilities provide completely new opportunities for the pilots during training, i.e., collaborative mission training between simulated and live aircraft.

Support to the DART system

The DART-PT system was purchased by PRTAF as a Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) solution with additions based on specific Portuguese Air Force needs (the DART-PT version). A Support and Development phase is in place for 2023/2024.



DART - a competitive F-16 training centre

DART is a fully developed COTS F-16 training solution, with the possibility of national adaptations. DART is currently in operation at four air bases in 3 European countries: RDAF in Denmark, PRTAF in Portugal and BAF in Belgium.



The DART solution is available on the international market for current and future F-16 user nations. The system is extremely competitive in terms of training value, functionality, price, and delivery time.



DART Fact box

DART-PT System

The DART-PT system consists of the following components:

- 4 x F-16 Air Combat Trainer Simulators (ACT)
- 2 x F-16 Instructor & CGF stations (F-INSTR, IoS)
- 2 x JTAC training systems (IFACTS)
- 1 x Air & Air Defence CGF
- 1 x Debriefing station
- Radio & Intercom simulator solutions (IRAS)
- Simulator gateways (ISIM Bridge)
- STANAG 5602 Simple gateway

DART-PT is delivered with

- 4 Cave visual systems
- 4 specially designed cockpits
- 4 Hands-on-throttle-and-stick (HOTAS) systems
- 4 head tracking systems for simulating the Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing and Sighting System (JHMCS)
- Various PCs, monitors, headsets, etc.

DART-PT Key Features

- F-16 pilot training (basic and advanced, as well as A/A and A/G)
- Simulation of all Portuguese F-16 weapon systems (A/A and A/G)
- Simulation of Litening G4 ATGP targeting POD

Feel free to contact us for further information if you find this solution interesting or to discuss a solution that suits your needs.

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