

A-10 Thunderbolt Modernization

Air National Guard



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Fiscal Year 2025 Requirements for the Air National Guard



The Issue

Air National Guard A-10 aircraft make up a significant percentage of the Total Air Force fighter fleet. The A-10 Thunderbolt, a close air support aircraft, deploys in support of overseas contingency operations and performs domestic emergency response missions. To meet evolving battlespace challenges, the A-10 requires investment in sustainment requirements to provide combatant commanders viable options for employment while maintaining readiness and lethality against America's adversaries.

◀ An A-10C Thunderbolt II assigned to the 104th Fighter Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, performs a show of force during the Swift Response 22 exercise at the Krivolak Military Training Center in North Macedonia, May 11, 2022.

Background

The A-10C Thunderbolt II is the U.S. Air Force's premiere ground attack platform. Having a near continuous deployment presence for over two decades, the A-10 was designed to provide close air support (CAS) to friendly ground forces in a contested environment. While the A-10 continues to excel at CAS, its missions have evolved to keep pace with the nation's warfighting priorities—the aircraft performs lead roles in combat search and rescue, forward air control, strike coordination and reconnaissance, air interdiction, and air operations in maritime surface warfare. The A-10 has a proven ability to bring massive firepower to the battlespace with scalable weapons effects while executing from close-in and standoff distances.

The ANG operates 63 A-10s in three fighter squadrons. The unique capabilities of ANG A-10s allow the aircraft to operate in a contested environment from austere airfields using its conversion fuel tank and jam-resistant GPS with a minimal logistics footprint. Threat situational awareness and communications clarity is enhanced through a three-dimensional audio system.

The A-10 fleet will continue contributing to contingency operations with efforts that focus on reducing risk to fifth and sixth generation assets and supporting the joint force. Current sustainment priorities

Recommendation

Defense Appropriations



- Continue to provide funding for A-10 wing replacements within defense appropriations legislation
- Continue funding A-10 cockpit and communications system modernization within defense appropriations legislation

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include a Link 16 solution, the carriage and integration of advanced weapons, communication systems to sustain operational viability, a digital electronic warfare suite, and a high-definition interface, display, and recording system.

A Link 16 solution provides a sustainment path to allow the A-10 continued digital interoperability with other platforms. Communication mandates, lack of fielded support, and frequency band constraints require the A-10 to keep pace with the modern standard in datalink communications.

Voice communication system sustainment enables the A-10 to maintain the modern standard of frequency-hopping and secure-voice radio, allowing effective voice communications while operating in a degraded environment.

Carrying and integrating advanced weapons on the A-10 is projected to:

- Provide combatant commanders flexibility to use standoff weapons from the A-10, bringing additional firepower mass to the battlespace while reducing risk for 5th and 6th generation assets
- Give combat planners unrealized options for weapons ferry enabling more efficient transfers among distributed bases in an agile combat employment scenario

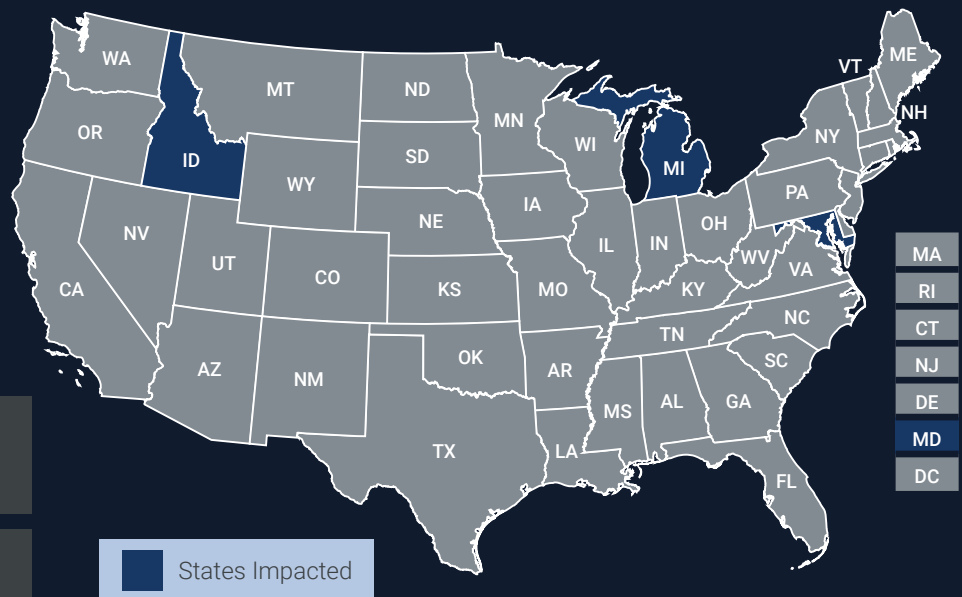
The automated digital electronic warfare suite is a critical hardware sustainment priority projected to keep pace with modern surface-to-air threat proliferation. The hardware includes an updated radar warning receiver, an improved missile warning system, and modern electronic attack capability. These upgrades give the pilot a greater understanding of the battlespace increasing both the lethality and survivability of the platform.

The digital high-definition interface, display, and recording sustains the ability of the A-10 to operate within cybersecurity mandates. High-resolution displays tied to a color targeting pod enable enhanced hit assessment and friendly/enemy tracking at increased standoff ranges.

Continued funding for the Air National Guard A-10 fleet will ensure its dual mission of deploying in support of contingency operations and providing rapid domestic emergency response will continue to be met. The A-10 remains ready and able to execute its mission set today. With additional modernization, the A-10 will continue to evolve to meet combatant commander requirements.

Air National Guard A-10 States & Units

ID: 124th FW, Boise
MD: 175th W, Baltimore
MI: 127th W, Selfridge



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