P.Se to the NEWS

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Dec. 1, 1976

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ST. LOUIS AIR CAPITAL

When Charles Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis, financed by St. Louisans, to New York and then to Paris in 1927, he made St. Louis the temporary air capital of the world.

Now St. Louis has again become the world's air capital. The McDonnell-Douglas F-15 fighter plane, designed and built in st. Louis for the Air Force, has broken the climb records set by the Soviet MIG-25. The F-15, with its two 25,000-pound thrust engines, is considered the world's best fighter plane.

The Japanese Air Force has recommended purchase of 170 of the F-15s costing about $3.5 billion. McDonnell-Douglas is also building the F-18, a new land-based fighter, for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

General Dynamics, designer and producer of the F-16, a develop ment model of a new, single engine, air combat fighter, also has its headquarters in St. Louis. The F-16 has been ordered by Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway, and the United States.

The spectacular demonstrations this plane gave at the Paris Air Show in 1975, including 7g turns within the radius of the airfield, persuaded our NATO partners to order it. Some 4,000 F-16s will be built during the next decade.

The recent landing in Japan of a Soviet MIG-25 by its defecting pilot, Lt. Viktor Belenko, aroused much curiosity as to how our fighter planes compare with it. Japanese and American experts

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carefully studied the plane for weeks before it waR retuzned to Hussia.

1ᵗhe MIG-25 is about five metric tons heavier than compan ld0 American fighters because it uses nickel steel construction rather than lightweight titanium. It was the :first :fighter to climb to 80,000/ **feet.** Its twin engines ere very powerful, each having a 211,000-pound thrust., For some years, it held. the world elim11 records. It has tbe most powerful radar ever put in a fighter aircraft and a most sophisticated defense against electronic counter-measures.

Yet in the opin:i.m1 of experts, the Soviet Htl-2:} cmmot dogfight with the Mcnon:nell-nouglns P-··•l:i, or with the Genera] D;ynamics ll'-16, or with the McDo:nnell-Dou.glas P-18. 'rhe MIG-2 3 cei:r.mot cl im.b as fast or maneuVffiC ns quickly, and tt hn s a m.uch shorter range. Its electronic equipment uses obsolete vacuum tubAB.

So, almost holf R century after Lindbergh's **flight** to Paris, St. Louis has regained its stature es the aviation capital of the world. **Tlie** designeIS and e:nglneers/ha.ve produced the tl:n:-eie best **of these St. Louis companies** fighter planes in the world, plue mony other important aircraft. All those who live in the metropolitan st. Louis area can take pride in their area rs leadership in mil:i.ta:ry aviat:Lon..

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