

173 FIGHTER WING



MISSION

173 Fighter Wing provides training for new pilots and pilot instructors on air to air combat tactics and basic flight instruction on the F-15. Also, flight surgeons, dentists, and optometrists receive specialized training on treating the unique physiological problems of pilots.

LINEAGE

173 Fighter Wing designated and allotted to Oregon ANG, 1996
Extended federal recognition and activated, 1 Apr 1996

STATIONS

Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base, Klamath Falls, OR

ASSIGNMENTS

Oregon Air National Guard

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-16

F-15, 1998

COMMANDERS

Col Billy Cox, August 1996

LTC Ronald C. Brown, 13 Dec 1998

Col John T. Adkisson 15 Jun 2001

Col Thomas Schiess, Mar 2005

Col James Miller, #2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Official redesignation for the 173rd Fighter Wing came on June 27, 1996. As a result of proposed changes in Air Force restructure structure announced in March 2000, the 173rd Fighter Wing was scheduled to gain seven F-15A/Bs while incurring no manpower changes. The Air Force recently announced that they would merge its active-duty F-15C training with the Oregon Air National Guard. This merger comes as the Air Education and Training Command adjusts to the drawdown of F-15 from 405 F-15s to 293 F-15s. This could make Kingsley Field the sole F-15C training site. The 173rd Fighter Wing currently flies between 4,800 and 5,200 hours a year and are postured to fly more. The 173rd Fighter Wing has also recently partnered with the Australian RAAF 2nd Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) located at RAAF Williamtown, New South Wales, Australia that flies and trains new pilots and pilot instructors on Air to Air combat tactics and basic flight instruction on the F/A-18.

The 173rd Fighter Wing converted from the air defense version of the F-16 to the F-15 in 1998 and received its F-15C and F-15D aircraft in 1999. The 173rd FW has operated a fleet of 10 F-15Cs, two F-15Ds, and six F-15Bs since 1999. The 173rd FW is the premier ANG formal training unit, training both ANG and active duty pilots to be the best air superiority pilots in the world. The 1998 change from F-16 to F-15 helped assure a more secure future for the base in a time of many military installation closures. With the build-up of the new Air Traffic Control Squadron and additional positions added to the Wing, numerous traditional guard positions became available to local area residents. The base currently employs approximately 400 full-time and 325 part-time members and contributes approximately \$47 million per year to the local economy.

An Aircraft Maintenance Hanger began an extensive facelift of the base in 1986. Other buildings include Base Operations and Fuel Cell Maintenance Shop in 1987, Flight Simulator Facility in 1989, Base Supply in 1994, Fire Station in 1995, Command and Services Facility and Fuel Management Facility in 1997, Hazardous Materials Storage and Vehicle Washrack in 1998, and Refueler Maintenance/Paint Bay and Air Traffic Control Tower in 1999. Other renovations

or replacements include the Fuel Tank with a steel dome top and an F-4 aircraft Static Display in 1994, an F-16 aircraft Static Display in 1998, Base Gymnasium in 1999, and Billeting in 2000. The total of major construction projects was expected to run over \$30 million.

The Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field is slated to become the Air Force's sole F-15 training base," Army Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, adjutant general of the Oregon National Guard, has confirmed. "We are very pleased with that and looking forward to that added responsibility," Rees said in an interview. Under a proposal in the Air Force's Fiscal 2010 budget plan, F-15 training operations would be phased out at Tyndall AFB, Fla., and consolidated at Kingsley Field.

If Congress approves this proposal, F-15 training activities would cease at Tyndall by the end of Fiscal 2010, 1st Lt. Cody Chiles, spokesman for Tyndall's 325th Fighter Wing, told the Daily Report yesterday. Earlier this year, we reported that the Oregon legislature was considering closing Kingsley Field as a cost-saving measure. But upon closer examination, Rees said, it became clear that "it was kind of like cutting off your nose to spite your face to talk about reducing state fiscal responsibilities to Kingsley Field." As a result, he continued, "I think the legislature is going to come away here with a much-renewed appreciation for the 173rd and what its role is and why it should continue to support activities there."

9/27/2010 Tyndall Closes Door on F-15 Training Operations: Officials at Tyndall AFB, Fla., last week inactivated the 95th Fighter Squadron, marking the formal end of F-15 training at the base after 27 years. Tyndall's parent 325th Fighter Wing lost its 48 F-15s as part of the Air Force's divestiture of approximately 250 legacy fighters in Fiscal 2010. Tyndall's F-15s began departing for good in April. Herman Bell, 325th FW public affairs chief, told the Daily Report that the 95th FS inactivation took place Sept 21. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the squadron's three remaining F-15s took off for their new home at Edwards AFB, Calif., where NASA will use them as test assets, he said. With the drawdown at Tyndall, the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field is assuming the F-15 training mission. Monday September 27, 2010

The Air Force is injecting Active Duty personnel into the Oregon Air National Guard-run F-15C schoolhouse at Kingsley Field starting this fall to increase Eagle pilot production, announced officials. With the standup of the new active association, the ANG's 173rd Fighter Wing is getting seven additional F-15Cs and a total of 84 Active Duty personnel, according to a unit release. "In order to meet the nation's need for increased pilot production, additional resources and personnel are an absolute necessity," said 173rd FW Commander Col. Jeremy Baenen. "This Total Force integration will create operational efficiencies, saving money and resources, and, above all, increasing Air Force combat capabilities," he added. Kingsley Field, located in Klamath Falls in southern Oregon, is the Air Force's sole F-15C conversation training site. It will soon be home to 32 F-15Cs. The Active Duty personnel, including eight pilots, 68 maintainers, and eight support airmen, will begin arriving in October. The wing will phase them in over a six-month period, states the release. 2014

Kingsley Field Ramps Up for Expanded Mission Renovation of the main maintenance hangar at Kingsley Field for the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing is now underway, according to a base release. This activity is part of the broader improvement of facilities at the base to accommodate the expansion of the wing's F-15C training mission. Hangar 219 is the largest building on the installation and is slated to receive more energy-efficient heating, cooling, and ventilation systems as well as new carpet and fresh paint, states the Sept. 21 release. This project is scheduled for completion in summer 2015. These changes "will breathe some renewed energy into the heavily used facility which has not gone through any major renovation in nearly two decades," said MSgt. Mike Shirar of the wing's maintenance training arm. The wing hosts the Air Force's sole F-15C schoolhouse. Earlier this year, the Air Force announced it would add Active Duty personnel and more F-15s to Kingsley Field to increase pilot production. "With the additional aircraft already on base and new Active Duty personnel arriving soon, we have to be creative in ensuring that our facilities can accommodate the expansion as it is happening," said 2nd Lt. Oscar Ayala, the deputy base civil engineer.

Air Force officials recently stood up the F-15C active associate unit that will support the F-15C/D schoolhouse that the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing runs at Klamath Falls, according to the wing's January newsletter. "It's very invigorating; this is the first active association for the F-15C in the Air Force," said Lt. Col. Chris Clark who last month took command of the newly minted Active Duty 56th Operations Group, Det. 2. The Air Force is injecting 84 Active Duty airmen to increase pilot production at the service's sole F-15C/D schoolhouse. The first of them arrived late last year and the detachment will swell to eight pilots, 68 maintenance personnel, and eight support airmen by spring.

Oregon Air National Guard F-15C/D Eagles will deploy to Rissala AB, Finland, for two weeks of bi-lateral training this spring, the Finnish air force announced Feb. 11. Six to eight fighters from the 173rd Fighter Wing based at Kingsley Field, Ore., will train with Finnish air force F-18 Hornets from May 9-20, according to the release. "Cooperation with the US is close and our cooperation on a practical level has been and will continue to remain tight," Finnish defense department spokesman Mika Varvikko said, quoted by Finland's Yle Uutiset news. Though not a NATO member, Finland is an official Alliance partner and has upped recent training with the US and NATO states. Sweden and Finland jointly hosted Air Force F-16s for last year's Arctic Challenge in Sweden, and trained with F-16s and A-10s during last year's Baltic deployments. Sweden and Norway have been invited to join the exercise in May to add cross-border training opportunities. 2016

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 29 Sep 2010
Updated: 21 Jan 2021

Sources

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