



132nd Fighter Wing

Iowa Air National Guard



The Iowa Air National Guard has been a proud resident of the Des Moines International Airport for over 60 years. Officially known as the 132^d Fighter Wing, the unit has long been recognized as one of our country's finest Air National Guard organizations.

Early efforts to locate an Air Guard unit in Des Moines were led by a citizens' committee, which was formed in May 1940, to arrange for construction of an aircraft hangar and armory building at the Des Moines International Airport. This non-profit committee consisted of local business, civic and military leaders.

Through the work of this committee, which included conferences in Washington DC, and design and financing of the project, an Air Corps squadron for Des Moines was authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January 1941.

Recruiting of members for the new unit began the following month. The 124th Observation Squadron was organized on February 25, 1941 with an allotted strength of 31 officers and 116 enlisted personnel. In September of 1941, the Squadron was called to active service during World War II.

After the war, the 124th was combined with the 132nd Fighter Group in an extensive reorganization of the Air National Guard. These units became the 132nd Fighter Wing. The Wing was again called to active service during the Korean conflict and returned to State control in January 1953.

The early 1950's arrival of the "Jet Age" in military aviation had a dramatic impact on the Air Guard and the Des Moines Airport. Due to the pending arrival of F-80 fighter jets at the Air National Guard, over one million dollars of federally funded improvements were added to the airport. The work included the addition of 1,800 feet to the main runway and 3,480 feet of taxiways to accommodate the Guard fighter jets. These improvements facilitated the arrival of commercial jet service in Des Moines. Between 1962 and 1974, additional Airport improvements were made on behalf of the Air National Guard to include runway drains, 1,500 foot runway, 1,859 foot taxiway, 150 foot blast pad, 650 foot overrun, 3,900 foot overlay, runway overrun, and the Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI) system.

As the airport has modernized, so has the Air National Guard. Today the 132^d Fighter Wing flies the F-16 Fighting Falcon, a modern, multi-role, front-line fighter. This is the 23d type of aircraft flown by the unit since it's formation in 1941.



From 1996 to 2004, the 132nd Fighter Wing stepped to center stage on the world scene and

validated the Air Expeditionary Force concept with an unprecedented six overseas contingency deployments to patrol the No-Fly Zone over Iraq in Operations Northern and Southern Watch. Two of the six contingency deployments occurred within a ten-month period attesting to the unit's professionalism and high state of readiness.

The 132nd Fighter Wing is engaged in the Homeland Defense mission. Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, the 132nd Fighter Wing's F-16s, pilots, and maintenance members were placed on alert, poised to defend Iowans and all Americans against any possible attacks. Additionally the Wing has accomplished the Air Sovereignty Alert mission three times since September 11, 2001. During these periods, the unit's F-16s were prepared to launch within minutes in the event of a "scramble" order – 24/7. The unit has also provided continuous Combat Air Patrols during Presidential visits. The 132d Fighter Wing is currently an "alert capable" base fully ready and able to execute this mission.

The Wing was validated as the "Best of the Best" following its Operation Readiness Inspection, in 2004, by Air Combat Command (ACC). Seventy-three percent of 154 rated areas graded as Outstanding or Excellent. The "Excellent" received in each of the four major rated areas of Initial Response, Employment, Mission Support, and Ability to Survive and Operate, was a precedent that had not been accomplished by a fighter wing in recent inspections. The 132nd Fighter Wing's rating was one of the highest achieved by an Active Duty, Air Reserve, or Air National Guard wing in the last several years. In addition, the Logistics Readiness Squadron received the 2005 Air Reserve Component Base Logistics Activity of the Year Award and the Maintenance Group received the 2005 Air National Guard's Maintenance Effectiveness Award. As a result of its outstanding efforts and commitment to excellence, the Wing was awarded its seventh Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

The unit deployed to Al Udeid AB, Qatar in 2005 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Wing performed in an exceptional manner, exhibiting an impressive array of capabilities. Outstanding leadership and superb aircraft maintenance skills produced 456 sorties and 3145 flying hours in austere conditions. Total flying hours during this contingency equaled to over three-fourths of a year's normal flying allocation in only 52 days.



Less than a week after the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, 12 members of the 132nd Medical Group teamed up with 19 members of the Sioux City 185th Air Refueling Wing and headed south bringing aid to those injured or sick because of the storm. The team treated 80 to 100 patients a day with ailments ranging from minor cuts to dehydration and acute skin infections caused by exposure to bacteria laden sewer water.

Ninety six Airmen deployed to enhance US border security with Operation Jump Start (OJS). They built 1.5 miles of fence, a record for a 30 day deployment.

Four hundred and seventy five Airmen deployed for a total of 34,541 days in 2008 for AEF/ECS operations at USAFCENT and USAFE bases in support of the Global War on Terror. This included the first ever AEF deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq. These Airmen filled key leadership roles, maintained combat aircraft, provided integrated base defense, conducted essential base services, and flew operational sorties in direct support of coalition forces. At home, during the AEF, the 132d Fighter Wing participated in a full scale state mobilization to assist in the response and recovery operations from killer tornadoes and record floods. It was the largest Iowa mobilization since the Civil War.



The 132d Fighter Wing again demonstrated its commitment to excellence by its incredible performance in the February 2009 Air Combat Command Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI). Of the 543 areas inspected, 380 areas were validated as fully in compliance with standards. This report with 70% “complies” far exceeds most Air Force and Air National Guard reports. Additionally, only nine areas, or 1.6%, were found to be non-compliant. This remarkably low number is far below the number in most Air Force and Air National Guard reports.

The 132d Fighter Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 2009. It was the eighth time the unit was the recipient of this prestigious award.

With budgets shrinking, military leaders are looking for new, innovative and cost-effective ways to keep our airmen trained. One such innovation is occurring right here in Iowa. The 132nd Fighter Wing, Detachment 1, Distributed Training Operations Center (DTOC) is electronically connecting pilots from across the country. This one-of-a-kind operation provides realistic simulation training opportunities all over the world. This is accomplished by establishing and maintaining a network that connects simulators across the country, thus the term “distributed”. The staff at the center is able to create enhanced virtual battlefields that challenge pilots with realistic and demanding scenarios. The end result is that pilots and command and control

operators from all over the United States can participate and collaborate in high fidelity mission training events in the virtual environment without ever leaving their home bases.

The unit is capable of employing Precision Guided Munitions and Inertially Aided Munitions day and night using Night Vision Goggles. A number of the unit's pilots are also trained to accomplish the challenging Combat Search and Rescue Mission. Through the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closing) process, the Department of Defense recommended that the 132nd Fighter Wing exchange its 15 Block 42 F-16s for 18 Block 30 F-16s. This transition, which began in January 2007 and involved the retraining of one-third of the Maintenance Group personnel, was ongoing during the AEF deployment to Iraq.

Today, serving our country as a member of the Air National Guard involves much more than simply attending "drill" two days a month and training two weeks a year. Serving often involves missions around the globe as part of Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) deployments. Whether deployed as individuals or as groups, members from all squadrons of the 132nd have accepted the challenge to support the Global War on Terrorism as well as participating in various humanitarian missions. Unit members have participated in missions to the following countries: Antarctica, Belize, England, France, Guatemala, Germany, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Peru, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.

The Wing's involvement in the local community ranges from programs mentoring youth to support of employers of our airmen.

The school-to-work internship program with Des Moines Central Campus' Aviation Technology program began in 1998. The program is one of four such programs in the United States and the only one with an internship component at an Air National Guard base. The internship rotation occurs during the student's senior year in high school. For 16 weeks, students work with Air Guard personnel on actual F-16 aircraft.



The 132nd Fighter Wing entered the Des Moines Public School District's "Partners for Progress" program in 1985. This program links every school in the Des Moines school system with a business partner. The 132d Fighter Wing has a partnership with Jackson Elementary School. Since the partnership began members have assisted with and supported various events to include a fall bike ride, track and field day, flag presentations, reading days, Santa fly-ins and Citizenship award presentations.





The Wing's "Distinguished Visitor Orientation Flight" program provides opportunities for civic leaders, employers and spouses to learn first hand about the mission and role of the Iowa Air National Guard. Since 2004, over 400 members of our community have been afforded an opportunity to fly aboard a military aircraft and view an F-16 mid-air refueling demonstration. The 132nd teams with the 185th Air Refueling Wing (Sioux City) to provide our visitors with an experience they will not forget.

The economic impact on Iowa is huge, with 1000+ personnel, 18 F-16C aircraft, numerous facilities, a leasehold (165 acres) capable of supporting two squadrons of F-16 or F/A-22/F-35 aircraft or 16 KC-135 aircraft, and an annual budget in excess of \$54 million. In the last few years the Wing's Civil Engineers have completed over 77 key construction projects with a net worth of \$8.8+ million. Much of the work for these projects has been provided by local contractors. Additionally, unit members receive technical training in over 90 different occupational areas. This, plus the leadership development training/experience they receive, make Air Guard members invaluable members of their civilian communities.

The 132d Fighter Wing continues to be in integral part of the Air force; by maintaining an unrelenting focus on winning the Global War on Terror to ensure the safety and security of our Nation and it's citizens; and a integral part of State emergency operations, by maintaining a strong, ready, and reliable force for protecting lives and vital public services during natural and man made disasters

The actions and patriotism of past Airmen give us a lasting heritage, while the commitment and continued innovative spirit of today's Airmen bring us to new horizons. Airmen of the 132nd Fighter Wing have always been and will continue to be warfighters in support of all local, state and federal missions.

The 132nd Fighter Wing and the Air National Guard, proud to be.....
"Guarding America, Defending Freedom."

