

## 148 FIGHTER WING



### MISSION

The current mission of the 148 Fighter Wing, flying the F-16 is two-fold -- a federal mission and a state mission. The unit's federal mission is a general purpose one that involves air-to-ground combat and delivering guided and unguided bombs. In times of peace, the state mission is to respond to state and local emergencies at the request of the governor.

### LINEAGE

148 Fighter Group (Air Defense) constituted, 24 Jun 1960  
Activated, 1 Jul 1960  
Redesignated 148 Fighter Interceptor Group, 1 Jan 1972  
Redesignated 148 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 10 Jan 1976  
Redesignated 148 Fighter Interceptor Group, 15 Nov 1983  
Redesignated 148 Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1992  
Redesignated 148 Fighter Wing, 16 Oct 1995

### STATIONS

Duluth Municipal Airport (later Duluth International Airport, Duluth Air National Guard Base),  
MN

### ASSIGNMENTS

133 Air Defense Wing, 1 Jul 1960  
128 Air Defense Wing, 1 Apr 1961  
132 Air Defense Wing, 1 Jan 1969  
Minnesota Air National Guard, 1 Aug 1969

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

### **Mission Aircraft**

F-89, 1960  
F-102, 1966  
F-101 1971  
RF-4, 1976  
F-4, 1983  
F-16, 1990

### **Support Aircraft**

C-47  
C-54, 1969  
C-26

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Ralph Jerome  
Col Wayne C. Gatlin, #1971  
Col William H. Carr Aug. 9, 1978  
LTC John H. Spencer, 7 Jun 1981  
LTC John D. Broman 7 Dec 1985  
Col Raymond T. Klosowski, 26 Aug 1989  
Col Kenneth Stromquist, 10 Feb 1997  
Col Tim Cossalter, 8 Feb 1998  
Col. Frank H. Stokes

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**



Per bend or and azure, throughout in bend between in chief a Phoenix bird, wings disclosed, eye voided of the field, beak open to dexter emitting a flame gules, of the second and charged pilewise by in dexter a bomb argent encircled by two orbits of the third and in sinister two double-ended lightning flashes of the last debruised by a cloud of the fourth and in base seven mullets having eight points, in the constellation Ursa Minor with Polaris at the Zenith in dexter flank, of the last, a winged arrowhead ascending of the like fimbriated gray, all within a diminished bordure of the fourth. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the group and its mission. Polaris at the Zenith in the Ursa Minor constellation refers to Minnesota, "The North Star State", where the unit was activated in 1960. The winged arrowhead represents the airborne might capability of the group. The Phoenix bird bearing the bomb with nuclear symbol and the lightning flashes with the cloud in pile, a heraldic device denoting the wedge, depicts

the units mission "Deter the Aggressor but Prevail in War". The emblem bears the Air Force colors, golden yellow and ultramarine blue. designed by Lt. Col. Wayne Gatlin.

## **MOTTO**

A PROUD TRADITION

## **OPERATIONS**

The 148th Fighter Group was federally recognized on 1 July 1960. The group consists of five squadrons under the headquarters and the current strength of the entire command is 79 officers and 683 airmen. Prior to 1 July 1960, the unit functioned as the 179th Fighter Interceptor Squadron with augmented elements for base support. At the time of reorganization to the fighter group, the 179th consisted of 550 officers and airmen.

Colonel Ralph M. Jerome, assumed command of the 148th Fighter Group on 1 July 1960. On 1 December 1966, Colonel Wayne C. Gatlin assumed command of the Fighter Group, following General Jerome's appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff - Air, Minn ANG.

The primary mission of the 148th Fighter Group was to reach a level of effectiveness as an all weather fighter interceptor group that will enable it to mobilize and operate as a combat capable organization and effectively support itself and efficiently perform all missions as directed by higher headquarters. The Group Headquarters is responsible for the overall command and supervision of the group. Its primary functions under the commander are the Offices of the Deputy Commander - Operations and the Deputy Commander - Materiel. The 10 officers and 15 airmen assigned to Group Headquarters are attached to the 148th Combat Support Squadron for administrative purposes.

On October 1, 1999, the 148 FW officially entered a mission conversion from the Air Superiority mission to the General Purpose (GP) mission. For the next two years, the unit trained in all the essentials of air-to-ground tactics and in the delivery of precision guided and unguided bombs. The GP mission included air superiority and air defense functions as well and officially encompassed "any mission the aircraft can accomplish, anywhere in the world." The 179th FS saw a first when they dropped live bombs during training exercises in March 2000.

The Minnesota Air National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing is actively courting the Air Force to install an active associate unit at its Duluth International Airport, according to a June 13 report by the Duluth News Tribune. The Air Force's first community basing active associate unit, which put active duty airmen in Burlington, Vt., working with the Vermont ANG's 158th FW, was a hit with lawmakers who want to preserve their Guard and Reserve units and with USAF which capitalizes on the experience of the airmen in the two reserve components. Money became an issue after the Vermont test, but USAF now has reconfirmed the Burlington model and plans new community basing-type active associate units. 148th FW and Duluth officials are concerned about the gap facing the Air Guard unit before it gets the new F-35. They got a chance to "pitch the idea of a long-term mission for the 148th" and discuss the active associate possibility with

Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, ANG Director, who is in Duluth last week. Chamber of Commerce President David Ross told the News Tribune that he expects some decisions to be made over the next few months that will plot future missions.

The Duluth-based 148th Fighter Wing distinguished itself in 2007, deploying 302 Airmen to 12 different countries. The F-16s of the 148th Fighter Wing logged 2,385 combat hours in the skies above Iraq, while simultaneously performing Air Sovereignty, Air Expeditionary Force and Expeditionary Combat Support missions throughout the world. In addition to the "Bulldogs'" stellar performance in combat, the 148th Fighter Wing performed 251 crash and rescue responses at the Duluth International Airport and responded to 28 Explosive Ordnance Disposal incidents at the request of local law enforcement.

In 2008, the 148th Fighter Wing will continue to seek out opportunities to acquire more advanced aircraft and develop improvements in the Maintenance Support Facility. Winner of the Air Force's Raytheon Trophy for 2009, the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is a Minnesota Air National Guard wing head- quartered in Duluth.

In 2009, more than 300 Airmen deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the unit flew 2,394 sorties totaling 5,300 flight hours. At home in 2009, the 148th Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit responded to 17 off-base calls from local law enforcement in Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. The 148th Airfield Fire Department responded to 233 calls for support from the Duluth International Air- port and three mutual aid calls from local fire departments. The 148th Fighter Wing stands ready, in 2010, to support missions both home and abroad.

Fighter pilot Lt. Col. Reed Bowman was all smiles when the first F-16 Block 50 landed at the Duluth Air National Guard (ANG) Base April 27, 2010. "You don't believe it till they're sitting on the ramp in front of you and you're ready to start work on them and we're there today," said Bowman, 148th Fighter Wing (FW) Conversion Officer. "This has been in motion for many, many months and the work to get us into this position took years." The Block 50 aircraft were transferred from the 22nd Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, replacing the 148th's current Block 25 F-16s. Past and present members of the unit, friends and family, along with state and local officials celebrated the arrival of the new aircraft during a ceremony at the Duluth Air National Guard Base on Friday, April 30, 2010.

"Our leadership, national, state and local, as well as the support we get from the community is the reason we're here. If nothing happened and those forces didn't rise up we would be shutting the doors," said Col. Frank Stokes, 148th Fighter Wing Commander. The 148th Fighter Wing is the first Air National Guard Wing to convert to the Block 50 from the active duty Air Force, and one of only two guard units in the country to fly them. In 2005, the 148th faced the loss of its fleet, and potentially hundreds of jobs, when the Pentagon recommended the unit's Block 25 F-16s be retired as part of the Air Force Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Instead, after years of hard work and support from state and national politicians, along with local community groups and leaders, the unit was awarded a new mission along with new aircraft providing the wing ready capabilities well into the future. "Our previous airplane was like you bought a computer and just couldn't upgrade it anymore," said Bowman. "These new jets have

almost limitless upgrade capability to the point where they'll be the second most capable aircraft we have in our inventory behind the F-22 until the F-35 comes online." "Today, we are at the top of all U.S. Air Force F-16 fighter wings," said Stokes. "It's a good day to be a Bulldog."

2011 The 148th Fighter Wing is a Minnesota Air National Guard wing headquartered in Duluth that operates the F-16CM "Fighting Falcon." The 148th Fighter Wing provides the U.S. Air Force with Suppression of Enemy Air Defense and Aerospace Control; additionally, the 148th Fighter Wing is prepared to support the State of Minnesota with Airmen capable of assisting in a disaster. During 2011, the wing focused its efforts on a major aircraft conversion from the Block 25 F-16C to the Block 50 F-16CM. This conversion process included sending pilots and aircraft maintainers to technical schools, completing extensive acceptance inspections on all 20 new F-16s and accomplishing multiple flying training deployments to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. and Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

The "Bulldogs" of the 148th continued their legacy of excellence by being the first Air Force unit to receive the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's prestigious Voluntary Protection Program "Star Status" recertification. Members of the wing continued to improve proficiency and were awarded certification of the Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory. In addition to supporting numerous overseas deployment taskings in 2011, the 148th Fighter Wing was engaged in support of local authorities for state active duty, including communications support for flood responses, logistics support to the Pagami Creek fire, and a search and recovery mission in St. Louis County.

2012 The 148th Fighter Wing mission is to provide ready Airmen to defeat America's enemies and rapidly respond to state and community needs. In 2012, the 148th Fighter Wing plans to complete its conversion to the upgraded Block 50 F-16 with deployment to the Red Flag combat training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. The deployment will mark the end of an extremely successful two-year conversion process and allow the wing to declare "full capability" in the Suppression of Enemy Air Defense mission.

The 148th will continue its efforts to become an "Active Associate" wing; an initiative to have active duty Air Force personnel work and train on the 148th Fighter Wing campus. The wing will carry on its legacy of excellence with strong performance in multiple higher headquarters inspections to include an Air Force Vulnerability Assessment, Air Combat Command Health Services Inspection, Information Assurance Assessment, and a no-notice North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Alert Force Evaluation. In 2012 the 148th Fighter Wing anticipates the deployment of Airmen from various specialties to include aircraft maintenance, logistics readiness, civil engineering, operations and services.

Amari AB, Estonia-Ten countries and some 4,700 personnel, including 475 US airmen, are participating in this year's Saber Strike exercise in the Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. This year's exercise, which runs through June 20, includes eight F-16s from the Minnesota Air National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth. The fighters, which came directly from exercise Thracian Star in Bulgaria, are flying 10 to 12 sorties a day; they're simultaneously supporting joint terminal attack controllers on the ground for Saber Strike and providing maritime support to US Navy ships operating in the Baltic Sea for NATO's BALTOPS 2014, this

year's largest multinational maritime exercise in the area. "It is very busy supporting two different operations on two locations, but our maintenance people are doing a wonderful job being able to support the pilots, and the operational support people are doing a wonderful job planning," 148th FW Commander Lt. Col. Nate Aysta told Air Force Magazine during a June 13 interview here, the F-16s' staging location, located southwest of Estonia's capital Tallinn. This marks the first time F-16s have participated in Saber Strike; typically A-10s have provided the ground-troop support. It's also the first time Duluth's F-16 Block 50 airplanes have operated in the European theater since the wing acquired them from Spangdahlem AB, Germany, in 2010.

Twelve F-16s and 300 airmen from Duluth ANGB, Minn., arrived at Osan AB, South Korea, on April 20. The Fighting Falcons and airmen from the 148th Fighter Wing deployed as part of a Pacific theater security package to increase security and show commitment to the stability of the Korean Peninsula. US Pacific Command and Pacific Air Forces have routinely used TSPs in the region since 2004, according to a press release. In January, a B-52 Stratofortress from Andersen AFB, Guam, flew over South Korea as a show of force, and F-22s flew over the country in February as another North Korean deterrence measure.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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Unit yearbook. *148 Fighter Interceptor Group, Minnesota Air National Guard, Duluth, MN, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1948-1973.*

Unit yearbook. *148 Fighter Wing, The First Fifty Years.*