

185th AIR REFUELING WING



LINEAGE

185th Tactical Fighter Group activated, 1 Oct 1962
Redesignated 185th Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1992
Redesignated 185th Air Refueling Wing

STATIONS

Sioux City, Sergeant Bluff, IA

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-51, 1946
P-51D, 1951
F-100C, 1961
A-7D, 1977
F-16, 1991
KC-135E, 2003
KC-135R, 2007

COMMANDERS

Col Warren Nelson, Apr 1976
Col Dudley Smidt, May 1980
Col Gerald Swartzbaugh, Oct 1983
Col Dennis Swanstrom, Oct 1987
Col V. Thomas Considine, Dec 1998
Col John Janson, Aug 2001
Col Donald W. Forney
Colonel Brian A. Miller

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1986

1987

1990

1991

2007

2008

EMBLEM

Blue represents the blue skies of Iowa; Yellow represents the yellow cornfields of Iowa; Silver Arrows represents the squadrons that make up the wing; Feather helps control the flight of our spear and the red tip represents the blood lost; Indian head represents our weapons; Lightning bolts represents the quick action taken by the squadrons to get the task done; Spear also represents our weapons.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On October 1, 1962, the Iowa Air National Guard was reorganized and designated as the 185th Tactical Fighter Group, nearly doubling the authorized personnel to over 800 officers and airmen. This era would also mark the longest continuous period of flying one aircraft. The 185th flew the F-100 from 1961 until 1977.

National attention focused on the unit in 1989 when United Airlines Flight 232, flown by a crew led by Captain Al Haynes, was forced to crash land at the Sioux City Airport. With one engine out, and its' hydraulic and backups not operating, the pilot could only turn the plane in one direction. With a key role in the crash recovery and rescue of survivors in the crash, the quick efforts of the 185th undoubtedly saved numerous lives and showed the nation the true heart of the unit. A photo of Colonel Dennis Neilson carrying a 2-year old Spencer Baily from the wreckage became a symbol of the heroism and compassion of the unit.

On December 19, 1991, the 185th received its first F-16s. The 185th Tactical Fighter Group was redesignated the 185th Fighter Group on March 16, 1992, and was rated operational on April 15th of that year. As the Air Guard standardized its structure, the 185th was designated the 185th Fighter Wing. As the world changes, the missions of the units must adapt and change as well. For the first time in its history, the unit will not be flying single engine jets. The 185th will be flying multi-engine KC-135 refueling tankers. They were redesignated the 185th Air Refueling Wing. In November 2003, the first all Sioux City crew flew a KC-135 out of Sioux City. Within a year, the 185th was flying refueling missions out of Geilenkirchen, Germany supporting NATO AWACS.

Closer to home, the KC-135s of the 185th Air Refueling Wing flew multiple missions transporting troops and supplies in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region in September 2005.

In 2007, the 185th began transitioning from KC-135E to KC-135R, newer planes, with larger engines, capable of more missions, making the 185th a unit ready to serve, whenever and wherever they are needed.

The 185th ARW was the first ever ANG tanker unit to integrate with active duty forces at Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan flying 288 combat sorties totaling 1451 hours while offloading a record setting 15.8 million pounds of fuel to 621 receivers. The unit deployed over 30% of its unit members in support of Operations JUMP START, IRAQI FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE AND ENDURING FREEDOM. Over 250 unit members deployed to Incirlik, Turkey. Meanwhile, on the home front, Over 600 Airmen deployed throughout the state to support Iowa towns in flood relief efforts.

F-16s of the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing and a KC-135 from the state's 185th Air Refueling Wing flew to Australia, joining Royal Australian Air Force airmen for exercise Sentry Down Under. Operating from RAAF Base Williamstown in New South Wales, the F-16s will engage RAAF F-18s in dissimilar air-to-air combat training, while the KC-135 provides air refueling support. "We get to fight against F-18s, different pilots, and they're a very skilled air force," said 132nd FW commander Col. Drew DeHaes, according to a report from WHO TV 13 of Des Moines, Iowa. The Air Guardsmen began departing their bases in Des Moines and Sioux City on Feb 13 for the three-week exercise. Though this is the first time the Iowans have participated, Williamstown routinely hosts Air Guard units for Sentry. Hawaii's 199th FW and Oregon's 132nd FW took part in 2008 and 2009, respectively. 2011

1/30/2012 - Sioux City, Iowa -- The National Guard Bureau in Washington DC announced that the 185th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) from Sioux City, Iowa has been awarded the 2011 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for outstanding achievement from November, 2009 to October, 2011. Col. Brian Miller, commander of the 185th ARW said this award is not just for the unit members. "This award is for the 185th family members and the communities where we live. The wing, comprised of over 800 members, flies nine KC-135R and is comprised of numerous support elements. The wing's main mission is to provide mid-air refueling and mobility sustainment in support of the global mission of the Air Force. As a community based organization, the wing is also tasked to support the state of Iowa in the event of a state emergency. During the two year time period starting in November of 2009, nearly 400 members of the 185th have deployed to numerous locations throughout the world in support of Department of Defense contingency operations. Members of the 185th have deployed to 24 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan and missions in support of Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya, many of which were short notice deployments. In addition to supporting global missions, this past summer the 185th ARW served as the Air Operations Center for flood relief and provided members to monitor levee conditions in the Sioux City area.



Air Force Order of Battle

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Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

The Bats, The History of Iowa's ANG 174th Squadron From Fighter to Tanker. Garry R. Pape. Schiffer Publishing Co. Atglen, PA. 2013