



**F-15s from the 123rd Fighter Squadron taxi at their home base at Portland. They carry a pair of AIM-120C AMRAAMs on the inner wing stations, with an AIM-9X on the port outer and an acquisition round on the starboard side. The AIM-9X is now carried across the fighter Eagle fleet.**

F-89D/H/J, F/TF-102A, F-101B/F, F-4C, C-131, C-130A, T-33 and, finally, the F-15.

Commonly known as Portland Air National Guard Base, the property is managed by the 142nd Fighter Wing and provides operational headquarters and training facilities. Tenant units include the 272nd Combat Communications Squadron (CBCS), the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS) and the 123rd Weather Flight, all from the Oregon Air National Guard. The largest tenant on base though is the US Air Force Reserve Command's 939th Air Refueling Wing.

The 142nd Fighter Wing (FW) itself occupies some 246 acres of leased land on the south side of Portland International Airport (IAP), where it has five administrative, 63 industrial and four services buildings totaling 718,592 sq ft (66757 m<sup>2</sup>). At the same time, the 142nd provides employment to around 1,100 Guard members, Active Guard Reservists (AGR), Federal Civilians and State Employees, but when including all personnel of the tenant units, Portland Air National Guard Base provides jobs to just over 2,500 people in the region and, as such, is not only the largest military installation in the state of Oregon but also one of the largest local employers.

#### NORAD mission

Throughout fiscal year 2005, F-15 fighter aircraft and crews at Portland Air Base flew numerous alert missions in response to immediate orders from NORAD, the Continental Air Defense Region (CONR) and the Western Air Defense Sector (WADS). Oregon F-15 pilots not only flew combat air patrols over vital parts of the Pacific Northwest, they also responded as needed to the presence of unidentified aircraft in the region and flawlessly executed Identification of Friend or Foe checklists as required by Air Force regulations.

The unit received an overall rating of 'Excellent' resulting from the Alert Force

China-Burma-India theatre, with others serving in Europe. During the war years, Portland-Columbia, with its associated air base, was an active air transport centre and was handling about 47 military transport landings a day by the end of 1946. At the end of the war, the unit regrouped as the 123rd Fighter Squadron, and in 1946 the ever-expanding unit was redesignated the 142nd Fighter Interceptor Group. By this time it was flying P-51D Mustangs.

In 1952, the airport was officially renamed Portland International Airport while on 1 February 1951 two units of the Oregon Air Guard were called to federal service in response to the Korean conflict: the 123rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron and the 123rd Weather Station. Although the 142nd Fighter Group was never called to combat as a unit, many individual members were assigned to other outfits and sent to Korea. On 1 November 1952, the 142nd Fighter Group was redesignated a Fighter Interceptor Group (FIG), while the 123rd was called a Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS), before converting to the North American F-86A Sabre in September 1953.

With this new aircraft the unit officially became part of the air defence mission. Lockheed F-94Bs were flown briefly until the first Northrop F-89D Scorpions arrived at Portland in October 1957. In

**An F-15A blasts off from Portland. The 142nd FW's primary mission is homeland defence, but the Oregon Eagles have also been deployed overseas to augment and relieve in-theatre assets.**

subsequent years the F-89 fleet was to be updated with more advanced models. In May 1962, the ORANG became the nation's only 'schoolhouse' for F-89 Radar Intercept Officers (the predecessors of the Weapons Systems Officers). In 1966 F-102 Delta Darts replaced the Scorpion, followed by F-101B/F Voodoos in 1971.

The Fighter Group remained very active in air defence matters during the Cold War years. From 1965 to 1968 the US Air Force Reserve managed the property (base) and the Oregon Air National Guard assumed responsibility for the property in 1968. In the autumn of 1980, the 142nd FIG transitioned from the F-101B Voodoo to the F-4C Phantom II. Five years later, in August 1985, the National Guard Bureau announced that the ORANG would stand alert in Germany with other Air Guard units.

The deployment to Germany spanned an 18-month period, allowing the 86th TFW to convert from the F-4 Phantom to the F-16 Fighting Falcon. In total, eight ANG units, including Oregon, supplied personnel and equipment for the operation, which was dubbed Creek Klaxon. The 123rd itself converted to the F-15A/B in 1989/90, with most of these aircraft arriving from the 318th FIS at McChord AFB, which was being disbanded.

The 123rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron was renamed the 123rd Fighter Squadron in 1992, while in 1995 the 142nd FIG became a Fighter Wing. Since its creation, the unit has flown the O-47, BC-1A, F-5, F-51D, B-25J, F-86A, F-94B,

