



In common with several ANG units, the 142nd FW shares a base with the local airport, integrating the operations of its F-15s with those of airliners and other commercial traffic.

The Commission found that the Department of Defense recommendation to realign the Portland Air National Guard base and to continue to support an alert commitment at Portland with a two-fighter-aircraft detachment on a rotational basis could not be supported and actually recommended to increase the number of primary assigned aircraft (PAA) to 18 F-15 aircraft. The Commission found that the recommendation

regarding the KC-135 tanker realignment to be adequately supported, thereby giving the green light to go ahead and dissolve the unit.

As the commander of the Oregon National Guard, Major General Reese explains: "We made very strong arguments that were accepted almost unanimously within the BRAC commission about the need to have this air defence capacity in the Pacific Northwest that the 142nd provides. The bottom line was that there wasn't anyone within a reasonable distance of the highly populated areas of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, that could provide this mission. Even

pre-9/11, when considerations were made to downsize the air sovereignty units to just a handful of bases, Portland's 142nd Fighter Wing was already recognised as essential for the Northwest, and as long as there is a requirement for the air sovereignty mission in the United States or within the NORAD arena, we expect the 142nd to continue its mission".

Major General Reese continues: "As a consequence of the previous BRAC reorganisation that also affected Oregon, we were very much disappointed when the rescue mission of the 939th Rescue Wing was lost when the mission was changed into a refueling mission in 2003. You basically have one unit in southern California and one in Alaska, and there is obviously a long way in between. We found this difficult but, at the same time, we took this to our advantage and managed to beef up the search and rescue capabilities of our Army Guard as provided by the 1042nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) operating with their UH-60 Blackhawks from the Army Aviation Flight Facility at Salem. They don't have the long legs as the combat rescue unit had, but at least for the local population we have been able to partly fill in that void. With regards to the 939th Air Refueling Wing, they really did a nice job and we are proud of the contributions they have made to Oregon. Fortunately for the Oregon Air National Guard, with the formation of this super air refueling wing at Fairchild, we should be able to continue to receive the necessary support to continue our operation."

As well as its F-15As, the 142nd FW also flies two F-15B two-seaters. Because of its serial number (76-0142) this aircraft is the unit's flagship, carrying the name of the wing commander, Colonel Gregg.

