



At present the 142nd Fighter Wing is equipped with the F-15A MSIP, which was upgraded with some of the features of the F-15C. The A/B aircraft are to be retired in the next two to three years, to be replaced by F-15C/Ds.

Currently, the 142nd FW has a total aircraft inventory of 18 F-15As and two F-15Bs, flown by about 30 pilots. Most pilots fly between 80 and 100 hours a year, making some eight sorties a month. The younger pilots get to fly between 10 to 12 sorties a month, and a substantial amount of the training missions take place over the largest supersonic training complex in the USA, located just of the coast.

Between March and July of 2007, eight F-15As will be replaced by long-term (identified airframe lifetime until 2020) C-models coming from Kadena, Japan. The remaining A-models will be replaced in fiscal years '08 and '09, and will follow their predecessors to the AMARC at Davis Monthan.

Every single aircraft has its own assigned crew chief who follows a particular aircraft through the maintenance cycles (i.e. lifetime of the airframe and its components) and it is his responsibility to get the aircraft fully mission-capable (FMC) or crew-ready. That includes working the timelines or deadlines and coordinating with the maintenance group to get the aircraft ready in time, and thus plan upcoming inspections and upgrades as the aircraft undergoes its hourly, calendar and special inspections. This is all done at Portland Air Base itself and the wing's maintenance group consists of around 400 full-time maintainers working in the different workshops for weapons, avionics, aero repair, hydraulics, egress, environmental control systems, corrosion control, sheet metal and engines.

After every 200 hours of flight time, each aircraft comes in for its phased inspection, and after 1,200 flight hours it gets its periodic inspection. The depot inspection takes place Robins, Georgia, and—depending on the aircraft—takes place between 6,000 and 8,000 hours.

A trio of 114th Fighter Squadron Eagles holds formation during a training sortie. The Eagles from Klamath Falls are usually 'armed' with missile acquisition rounds only, as befits their training status. The unit flew F-16 ADFs until 1998, when the air defence version of the F-16 was withdrawn and the need for training evaporated. Its expertise was then used to teach new F-15 pilots.

173rd Fighter Wing

Land of no slack

Klamath Falls is the centre of an urban area of about 45,000 people and lies in the middle of an agricultural, lumbering, recreational and increasingly high-tech area, close to the border with California. The town is the home of the Oregon Institute of Technology, the only polytechnic college in the Pacific Northwest.

Located approximately 4 miles southeast of the city is Klamath Falls International Airport, home to the second F-15 Air National Guard wing in Oregon, the 173rd Fighter Wing. While leasing the ground the unit operates on, the 173rd Fighter Wing here has three large classrooms, a 28-station learning centre, seven briefing and debriefing rooms, and one classified learning centre. The unit is accommodated in five administrative, one dorm, one services and 66 industrial buildings, totaling 484,981 sq ft (45055 m²) with 485 full-time personnel. A unit training drill is conducted once a month and results in a surge of up to a total of 750 personnel.

Aviation history started at Kingsley Field in 1928 when bond sales were approved to construct an airport to be located approximately 4 miles southeast of Klamath Falls. Known as the Klamath Falls Municipal Airport, it consisted of gravel runways and had one fixed-base operator. At the beginning of World War II the airfield was selected to become a Naval Air Station but in January 1946 the Navy decided to deactivate the Air Station and the airport was transferred back to civilian use.

In 1954 the airport was selected to become a US Air Force Base, and in 1957 the base received its current name Kingsley Field in honour of Lieutenant David Kingsley, an Oregon World War II hero who was killed in action on 23 June 1944 after a bombing mission over the oil fields of Ploesti, Rumania.

In the early 1960s the base hosted a squadron of F-86 Sabres, these later being replaced by F-101 Voodoos. The 460th Fighter Interceptor Squadron then operated the F-106 at Kingsley Field when the unit arrived from Oxnard AFB in November 1969. In April 1971, the unit then relocated to Grand Forks AFB where the 460th was deactivated on 15 July 1974.

Phantom training unit

In 1982, the Air Force announced it was establishing an air defence 'schoolhouse' for F-4 Phantoms at Kingsley Field to be run by the Oregon Air National Guard. The new unit, the 8123rd Fighter Interceptor Training Squadron (FITTS), was activated on 1 January 1983 and the first class began in February 1983. On 1 February 1984, the 8123rd was re-designated as the 114th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron and a later change simplified the designation to 114th Fighter Squadron (FS). The first F-16 aircraft arrived at Kingsley Field in August 1988 and in mid-November 1988, the last F-4 class graduated. The first General Dynamics F-16A modified under the Air Force's Air Defense Fighter (ADF) programme was delivered on 1 March 1989, followed by the first F-16 student class graduating on 13 July 1989.

