



**South Dakota Air National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

175th Fighter Squadron participates in Large Force Exercise

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SIoux FALLS, S.D. – F-16's from the 175th Fighter Squadron of the South Dakota Air National Guard participated in a Large Force Exercise (LFE) conducted Dec. 2-3, 2015 in the newly expanded Powder River Training Complex.

For two days, the unit launched and recovered 16 aircraft from Joe Foss Field, S.D. to the newly designated Military Operations Area (MOA) which covers 28,000 square miles and encompasses parts of four different states. They were not alone. This LFE included various types of aircraft to include F-16's, B-1's, and KC-135's from across the country. Air National Guard and active Air Force units participating included the 120th FS, Colorado Air National Guard, 185th ARW, Iowa Air National Guard, the 28th BW, Ellsworth AFB, S.D., the 7th BW, Dyess AFB, Texas, the 22nd ARW, McConnell AFB, Kan., the 141st ARW, Washington Air National Guard, and an E-3 AWACS from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

The composite force exercise included training in air refueling, air-to-air threats, ground-to-air threats, and F-16's support of B-1 strikes.

"This provides our pilots a close-to-home opportunity for integrated warfighting training over an expansive MOA that we haven't had in the past," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Mark Morrell, 114th Operations Support Squadron commander.

Morrell, who has been flying the F-16 for over 14 years, went on to add that this expanded Powder River Training Complex will be outstanding for the many components of the military who will train at it.

"This area is over 200 miles across and affords us the opportunity to train in a space much closer to home that is a size similar to what we might encounter when we're not training," added Morrell.

While the Powder River Training Complex has existed for many years it has just recently been expanded to the size it is now. The expansion allows for some lower flights, longer runs, faster training flights, and more coordinated training sequences that will feel more like actual missions. Cost savings will also be a benefit of this expansion since the unit will not have to travel as far to train on a MOA of this size.

“This exercise highlights the total force concept.” said Col. Quenten Esser, 175th Fighter Squadron commander. “The ability to have both Active Duty and Reserve Component forces utilizing the expanded Powder River Complex allows our pilots to truly “train like we fight”. Our pilots were able to work and train with multiple strike aircraft. These assets provide the real world, dynamic and complex training scenario’s we need to meet our future tasking’s.”

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