

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil

Web: sd.ng.mil

www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard

www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard

twitter.com/SD_Guard



February 10, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

114th Fighter Wing participates in Sentry Savannah

By Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SAVANNAH, Ga. – Eleven F-16's and approximately 175 Airmen of the 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, participated in Sentry Savannah 16-1 at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center, Georgia.

Also taking part in this exercise are Airmen of the 43rd Fighter Squadron and the 2nd Fighter Squadron, both from Tyndall AFB, Florida. Supporting these fighter squadrons are KC-135's from the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, the 161st ARW, Arizona Air National Guard, and controllers of the 117th Air Control Squadron, Georgia Air National Guard.

“This exercise gives us an opportunity to bring all the pieces of the puzzle together,” said Maj. Jeremy Doohen, project officer for the deployment and 175th Fighter Squadron pilot. “The joint cooperation between the active duty and the Guard is an important element of us training with these fifth generation fighters.”

In the event that the unit does progress in the future to the F-35 aircraft, these types of deployments give the members of the unit an advanced look into the fifth generation fighters they may someday fly and maintain.

This is the first time the 114th FW has participated in Sentry Savannah. It gives the pilots of the unit an opportunity to integrate in a Large Force Exercise with fifth generation aircraft such as the F-22 Raptor from Tyndall AFB. Missions include defensive counter-air, offensive counter-air, and cruise missile defense. They also benefit from the dissimilar basic fighter maneuvering they do with the F-22's.

“Seeing what the F-22 can do, and how we integrate with them, has been an eye-opening experience,” said Lt. Col. Travis Boltjes, 175th Fighter Squadron pilot. “I'm glad to know that the capability they bring to the fight is on our side.”

The Savannah CRTC is a unique military air training facility and an element of the Georgia Air National Guard. The facility is one of four CRTC's that the Air National Guard operates and it gives unit's like the 114th FW an opportunity to train in a new environment and with members of other active duty and Guard units from across the U.S.

Along with the pilots, aircraft maintainers also benefit from deploying to the CRTC.

“The repetition that is gained on deployments like this can’t be experienced by many traditional Guard members’ home station,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Curley, 114th Maintenance Group officer in charge.

Because the members of the unit normally serve one weekend a month, these two-week deployments are invaluable for training. As a team, the members are a captive audience and get the opportunity to experience what it is like to have all types of issues arise and how they will be resolved.

“Every shop is proving their value on this trip, we have been extremely busy in the maintenance areas,” said Curley. “They start and end each day together and get a chance to work on components of the process they may not see back home on a Guard drill weekend. It really builds comradery.”

Pilots and aircraft maintainers are not the only members it takes to make a deployment such as this work; there are several members of the Support Group who also deploy with the unit. Personnel from 114th Security Forces Squadron, 114th Force Support Squadron, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 114th Medical Group and areas such as finance, safety and public affairs all work jointly to ensure Sentry Savannah is a success.

Thirty members of the 114th Security Forces Squadron deployed with the unit. They have a two-fold mission in Savannah, real-world flight line security of aircraft, and training that includes weapons qualification, building clearing, and shot, move and communicate training.

“We’re not only here to protect our aircraft, we’re here to train as a team on important skills needed to fulfill our mission while deployed and at home,” said Chief Master Sgt. Patrick Marino, 114th Security Forces Squadron chief.

The movement of personnel, equipment and aircraft is a delicate process to orchestrate, so members of the 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron also deploy to ensure the success of this process.

“It can be a challenge,” said 2nd Lt. Josh Nelson, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron deployment officer. “With geographical and functional challenges, it’s nice to come to a place like the CRTC where there are local personnel available to direct us. Their support has been outstanding.”

“I’m a full-time student and so taking two weeks away from school now has been tough, but it has been worth it,” said Senior Airman Makayla McConnell, 114th Security Forces Squadron apprentice on her first unit deployment.

“Being able to work and train with my other team members is what I value the most. It’s been a great trip,” said McConnell.

-30-

High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



160201-Z-BZ340-053: F-16's from the 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, sit alongside F-22's from the 43rd Fighter Squadron, Tyndall AFB, Fl., at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center in Georgia, Feb. 1, 2016. The unit's participated in Sentry Savannah 16-1 exercise, which brought the fourth and fifth generation aircraft together to train. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)



160203-Z-BZ340-247: Senior Airman Eric Hunstad, an avionics technician with the 114th Maintenance Group, South Dakota Air National Guard, listens intently as he works with other team members on an F-16 aircraft during Sentry Savannah 16-1, Feb. 3, 2016. The 114th Fighter Wing deployed to Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center in Georgia to participate in the exercise with other active duty and Air National Guard units. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)



160204-Z-BZ340-054: Members of the 114th Security Forces Squadron, South Dakota Air National Guard, shoot 9mm handguns during qualification training at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center range in Georgia, Feb. 4, 2016. The rainy day didn't stop the unit members from completing their qualification training, which was a part of the 114th Fighter Wing's deployment to Sentry Savannah 16-1. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)



160201-Z-BZ340-148: An F-16 from the 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, launches from the runway at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center in Georgia during the Sentry Savannah exercise, Feb. 1, 2016. The unit, along with other units of the active Air Force and Air National Guard spent two weeks at the CRTTC training together. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil