

The North Dakota Air National Guard

Home of the

Happy Hoodigans



Welcome!

119th Wing

North Dakota Air National Guard



Above, N.D. Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David Spryncynatyk places a ribbon on the unit flag signifying the 119th Wing's award for Outstanding Unit for the 11th time

Above, the 119th Wing has won the Hughes Trophy twice.

Right, the North Dakota Air National Guard first flew the P-51 Mustang in 1947 and has flown fighters for 60 years. It achieved an unparalleled flying safety record compiling over 145,000 hours in fighter aircraft without a Class A mishap.



The Happy Hooligans

What's in a name?

Possibly no other Air National Guard has a nickname as well known as the “Happy Hooligans.” Where did that nickname come from?

The North Dakota Air National Guard's 178th Fighter Squadron commander in the mid 1950's was Brig. Gen. Duane S. Larson (retired). Because of his fatherly instincts, (then major) Larson became known as “Pappy” to his entire squadron.

His men were dubbed “Hooligans” for their mischievous antics. Locally, they became known as “Pappy and his Hooligans.”

Because of his striking resemblance to the Steve Canyon comic strip character, “Happy Easter,” the squadron was soon known as “Happy and his Hooligans,” and later shortened to the “Happy Hooligans” (around 1958). Soon everyone around the base was using the nickname “Happy Hooligans” to describe the squadron.

According to unit lore, the name really took hold because of events at a 1950s summer camp at Volk Field. Legend has it the 178 Fighter Squadron had to march on the ramp to make up for the late night shenanigans of throwing all the “brass” out of bed after the club closed for the night. While marching on the ramp the next day with their 178th FS commander at their side, Maj. Duane Pappy Larson, the 119th Group Commander, Lt. Col. Marsh Johnson, called the Squadron a bunch of Hooligans to which someone answered “we might be Hooligans but we are happy Hooligans.”

In the early 1960's, the North Dakota Air National Guard was searching for a motto to set them apart from other units (similar to the Pittsburgh motto: “Have no fear, a Sam is near”). A contest was held to choose an official nickname; no names received topped “Happy Hooligans,” so it was officially adopted as our unit's nickname.

In 1964, during the ANG Rick's Trophy competition, “Happy Hooligans” was painted on the unit's F-89J aircraft. This was the first time it appeared on the aircraft, but since then, each North Dakota Air National Guard aircraft has carried that motto/logo prominently displayed on the tail.

After our nickname gained national renown, the question was raised concerning a cartoon character bearing the same name. Some investigating turned up the following facts:

The comic strip “Happy Hooligan” was created by Frederick Burr Opper and made its debut in Hearst's Sunday comic sections in New York and San Francisco on March 26, 1900, and ran intermittently until 1932, when Happy Hooligan had to be abandoned by its creator because of his failing eyesight.

Happy Hooligan was Fred Opper's classic Irish tramp with a tin-can hat and distinctly ruddy nose. He was portrayed as the simple innocent whose impulsive undertakings nearly always landed him in the hands of the law. Despite his continued ill-luck, Hooligan lived up to his name by remaining always optimistic, and his enormous smile became a quick symbol of the new comic strip art form to millions of readers.



Welcome to the 119th Wing, home of the Happy Hooligans, North Dakota Air National Guard. This guide is intended to provide you with a look at our history and some interesting facts about our unit.

Our Wing consists of the 177th Airlift Squadron, currently flying the C-21A, and the 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, currently flying the MQ-1 Predator UAS, both located at Hector Field in Fargo N.D.

During your visit, I am certain that you will realize why the N.D. Air National Guard has earned its impeccable reputation. The personnel of our unit are absolutely committed to all of our assigned missions providing superior service, support and combat capability to our state and nation.

The C-21A mission is multifaceted and includes the transport of distinguished visitors and space available passengers, aeromedical airlift, pilot seasoning and global readiness. The C-21 is serving as a bridge mission until we receive the joint cargo aircraft mission.

The primary mission of the MQ-1 Predator is conducting interdiction and armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets. The first Predator mission was flown remotely from our base in June 2007. The airmen of the 119th Wing are leading the way in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and target acquisition.

We hope that your visit to Fargo is interesting and informative. I am certain that not only will you experience the Midwest hospitality of North Dakota, but you will also see first-hand the hard work and Hooligan pride that our unit is known for.

ROBERT BECKLUND, Colonel, NDANG
Commander, 119th Wing

THE *Happy Hooligans*

Our Flying Missions

The 119th Wing is comprised of two squadrons, the newly created 177th Airlift Squadron and the 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, formerly the 178th Fighter Squadron.

The 177th Airlift Squadron accomplishes several missions including Operational Support Airlift (OSA), transportation of distinguished visitors, and a responsive aeromedical airlift system to move eligible patients.

The 178th Reconnaissance Squadron includes operations of the MQ-1 Predator. The MQ-1 Predator is a medium-altitude, long-endurance, remotely piloted aircraft. The MQ-1's primary mission is interdiction and conducting armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets. When the MQ-1 is not actively pursuing its primary mission, it acts as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander-owned theater asset for reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition in support of the Joint Forces commander.

Right, Maj. Jon R. Wutzke, 177th Airlift Squadron, pilots a North Dakota Air National Guard C-21 aircraft during a typical take-off at Hector International Airport, Fargo, N.D. Mar. 16.



Left, A life-sized model of an MQ-1 Predator sits on the hanger floor at the North Dakota Air National Guard Jan. 16, 2007 signifying the beginning of the new mission for the 119th Wing.

North Dakota Air National Guard

"History of the Happy Hooligans"

The North Dakota Air National Guard officially became a National Guard on January 16, 1947, at Hector Airport, Fargo, North Dakota. The newly established Air National Guard units formed in the 1947 - 1949 period were commonly assigned the history and accomplishments of a deactivated World War II flying unit.

The 367th Fighter Group, made up of the 392nd Fighter Squadron (FS), 393rd FS and 394th FS was one such unit. Known as the "The Dynamite Gang", 367th Fighter Group pilots flew 14,175 combat sorties in P-38's and P-47's during WWII, destroying 432 enemy aircraft. The unit received two Presidential Unit Citations and two Belgium Army Order of the Day Citations.



North Dakota Air National Guard members from left to right, Robert Olwin, Duane 'Pappy' Larson, and Thornton E. Becklund gather in front of a P-51 in 1953.

The leading ace of the 367th Fighter Group, Capt. Larry (Scrappy) Blumer from Kindred, North Dakota, became known as the "Fastest Ace in the West", when, as a member of the 393rd FS, he shot down five German fighters (FW 190's) in fifteen minutes on August 25, 1944. Scrappy commanded the 393rd FS from November 10, 1944 until he completed his combat tour in mid January 1945.

Upon inactivation of the 367th Fighter Group, the 178th Fighter Squadron, North Dakota Air National Guard, received the heritage of the 392nd Fighter Squadron, one of three fighter squadrons of the 367th Fighter Group.

The first fighter aircraft was the P-51D “Mustang,” which the unit flew from February 1947 to 1954. The unit was called to active duty status in April of 1951 for the Korean War and assigned to Strategic Air Command at Moody AFB, Georgia in a bomber escort role. The unit was later transferred to George AFB, California in an air to ground and air to air role. On December 31, 1952 the unit was released from active duty and returned to Fargo, ND. The 178th, which left Fargo as the 178th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, became the 178th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and given an Air Defense Mission upon its return to Fargo in January of 1953. In September of 1953 the runway alert program began with two P-51’s on alert 14 hours a day. In 1954, the unit was assigned to the Air Defense Command and entered the jet age when the unit converted to the F-94 which it flew until 1958. Since then, the Hooligans have flown the F-89 “Scorpion” from 1958 to 1966, the F-102 “Delta Dagger” from 1966 to 1969, and the F-101 “Voodoo” from 1969-1977. Starting in 1977, the unit flew the F-4 “Phantom” until 1990 and the F-16 “Fighting Falcon” from 1990 to 2007. Since 1973, the 119th Fighter Wing has flown more than 115,000 hours in fighter aircraft without a Class A Mishap, unprecedented in any U. S. fighter unit. In Jan 2007, the unit officially retired the F-16 mission after 60 years of successful fighter jet missions. The 119th Wing now pilots C-21A aircraft and performs MQ-1 Predator operations.



Mission

The mission of the North Dakota Air National Guard is two-fold. Its state mission, under the command of the Governor, is to support state and local authorities in civil emergencies. Under the federal mission, the unit is available for mobilization and immediate integration into the U.S. Air Force. The unit has been tasked to perform its state mission on many occasions. Prominent examples include Operation Haylift in 1949, providing relief to blizzard-bound farms and ranches, and more recently, Operation Snowball and Operation Good Neighbor in 1997, to combat unprecedented winter snowfall and spring flooding conditions throughout North Dakota. Federalization of the North Dakota Air National Guard occurred during the Korean Conflict, with the unit mobilized and ordered to active duty in 1951, returning to Fargo and state control in 1953. It also occurred following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 when hundreds of airmen were voluntarily recalled to active duty status for Operation Noble Eagle, under the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the “all States agreement.”

Right, a NDANG member directs traffic after a tornado strikes Fargo, N.D. in 1957.



Left, then Staff Sgt. Eric Johnson helps unload sand bags during the 500 year Red River Valley flood of 1997.

Right, Chief Master Sgt. Terry Jacobson, N.D. state command chief, looks over damage in Gulfport Miss. with survivors from Hurricane Katrina during the Sep. 2005 119th Civil Engineer Squadron deployment in support of the Katrina recovery effort.



Air Defense alert has been a major part of the North Dakota Air National Guard's tasking since September 1953. The unit provided alert coverage at Fargo, with either two or four aircraft continuously on status, until March 1990 when home station alert was discontinued. Other alert sites include March Air Reserve Base, California, and Kingsley Field, near Klamath Falls, Oregon. The most recent permanent alert detachment was at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia with 36 full-time personnel operating aircraft maintenance, munitions, supply, administrative and operational command responsibilities. The detachment closed in October 2006 due to the new C-21 mission of the North Dakota Air National Guard.

The first overseas deployment of the North Dakota Air Guard occurred in 1983, with six F-4s and 120 support personnel deploying to Keflavik, Iceland. Eight Russian TU-95 Bear bombers were intercepted by Hooligan pilots during the deployment. In 1986, the 119th Fighter Group became the first core unit to assume the USAF Zulu alert mission at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Referred to as "Creek Klaxon," the 119th and other Air Defense units stood continuous alert for one year providing air sovereignty in Europe for NATO. During Desert Storm, 107 Happy Hooligans were mobilized and deployed in support of operations at numerous CONUS locations. The C-130 support aircraft assigned to the North Dakota Air National Guard and aircrew also provided stateside airlift of crucial, war-related personnel and equipment to support Desert Storm. Most recently, after Hurricane Katrina destroyed the gulf coast, the 119th Fighter Wing answered the call for assistance, responding with less than forty-eight hours notice and deployed 64 personnel from the Civil Engineering Squadron, prepared 251.5 short tons of equipment and supplies and loaded three C-5A and one C-130H transport aircraft for deployment to Gulfport, Mississippi, to build and support the tent city required to house over 2,000 National Guard relief workers. The Services Flight also prepared over 210,000 meals over a 60 day period for the relief workers.

Right, A TU-95 Russian Bear bomber is intercepted by a North Dakota Air National Guard F-4 near the coast of Iceland in 1983.



Two F-16A Air-Defense Fighter (ADF) Fighting Falcons of the 178th Fighter Squadron, North Dakota Air National Guard, are seen in a turn during an early morning Combat Air Patrol mission over Washington D.C., Nov. 11, 2001. The NDANG F-16s were the first to respond from their alert Detachment at Langley AFB during the Sep. 11, 2001 (911) attack on the Pentagon in Washington D.C. The effects of the attack on the Pentagon can be see in this photo.

Accomplishments

Happy Hooligans have a proud record of accomplishments over the years. Among the many unit awards, the **Hughes Trophy** and the **USAF Daedalian Maintenance Trophy** are special standouts, presented on the basis of an Air Force wide competition to the single most deserving unit. In 1994, the Hooligans won the Hughes Trophy for the second time. The only F-16 unit to win the award, the 119th is one of only two Air National Guard units to have captured the Hughes Trophy, and the only Air National Guard unit to win the award twice, winning it for the first time in 1975. In addition to the Hughes Trophy in 1975, the unit was also presented the USAF Daedalian Maintenance Trophy (which the unit has won twice). It was the first time the two awards were presented to the same unit, and the first time either of these trophies had been awarded to a Reserve Component unit.

The 119th has performed impressively in the **William Tell** competition, a world-wide weapons meet at Tyndall AFB, Florida. The unit's most recent win occurred in October 1994. This was the third time the Hooligans had won the overall tournament, winning it in 1970 and 1972. The unit also won the F-4 division in 1986. The 119th has competed in the event a total of nine times, including the combined Air National Guard team in 1996, merging both F-15's and F-16's into a unified combat unit, drawn from the North Dakota and Oregon Air National Guard units. The 119th Wing has won the **U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 11 times**, most recently for continuing actions of Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The award is given for exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement that clearly sets the recipient above and apart from similar units. In addition, the following are recent awards presented to the Hooligans: The **John J. Pesch Flying safety award 6 times**; the **U.S. Air Force Flight Safety Award 26 times**; the 1994 **Winston P. Wilson Trophy** for the most outstanding ANG unit with jet fighters or reconnaissance aircraft (the second time in the unit's history); the 1994 **Air National Guard Supply Effectiveness Award** for promoting maximum supply efficiency and outstanding supply activities; the 1994 **William W. Spruance Safety Award** for the Air National Guard unit which makes the most significant contributions towards accident prevention; the **American Petroleum Institute Award** three times for the Air National Guard's top fuels element in, 1995, 2002 and 2004; and an incredible flying safety record of **145,000 flight hours** in fighters without a class A accident dating back over 33 years.



North Dakota Air National Guard members inspect a C-21 aircraft in the maintenance hanger in Fargo, N.D. The NDANG continues its tradition of outstanding flying safety in the current C-21 aircraft mission.

North Dakota National Guard Joint Executive Council



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North Dakota Air National Guard Chain of Command



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Governor of North Dakota
Honorable John Hoeven



*The Adjutant General
of North Dakota*
MG David Sprynczynatyk



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Vice Wing Commander
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North Dakota Air National Guard

