



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air National Guard Fact Sheet

Portland Air National Guard Base

Mission

Portland Air National Guard (PANG) Base is the North American Aerospace Defense Command's principal Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) location in the Pacific Northwest. From PANG Base, the Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Wing provides 24/7 ACA Alert for the greater Pacific Northwest, from northern California up to Canadian British Columbia.



Base History

Portland Air National Guard Base, located approximately six miles northeast of Portland, Oregon, is built on what began as a Great Depression-era Works Progress Administration project to build a civilian airport. Construction began in 1936 and was completed in 1940. The new Columbia-Portland Airport replaced Portland's original municipal airport at Swan Island.

Urgent plans for the vast expansion of U.S. Army installations prior to World War II led to the new airport's selection by Army planners in 1940 to become an Army air base. It was officially dedicated as Portland Army Air Base on June 14, 1941, although the military facilities were not completed until October, 1941.

In April 1941, the 55th Pursuit Group arrived at Portland Army Air Base and conducted pilot proficiency training and air defense exercises with the P-43A Lancer fighter plane before December 7, 1941. The 16th Transport Squadron, with the C-47 Skytrain transport, began at Portland in July 1941. The base continued training, air transport and air defense roles through the war, and added anti-submarine patrol in 1942. Portland also served as a service base for the British Ferry Service, which transported American-built aircraft from U.S. factories to Canada and Great Britain.

Following the end of the war, an armed forces separation center was activated and maintained until the base was closed in 1946. Ground and air elements of the National Guard began using the base in 1946. The 142nd Fighter Group of the Oregon National Guard began operations with the P-51 Mustang fighter and several other support aircraft. In 1947, the Air Force reestablished a presence at Portland under the Tactical Air Command.

In the spring of 1948, the Columbia River broke through a dike and flooded the area to an average depth of 18 feet. The flood completely submerged the base and damaged many facilities.

In June of 1949, the Air Force Reserve activated the 403rd Troop Carrier Wing and operated the C-46 Commando transport at the base.

In 1950, the government conveyed the land of the base to the Port of Portland. In return, the Port granted the Air Force a lease on approximately 400 acres of land for the sum of one dollar.

Due to the Korean War in 1951, elements of the 142nd Fighter Group were activated and placed in federal service at Portland and other locations, enhancing the air defense capability in the Pacific Northwest. In March 1952, the Air Force Reserve's 403rd Troop Carrier Wing was activated and sent to the Far East for service in the Korean theater.

In 1953, the 503rd Air Defense Group activated at Portland under Air Defense Command (ADC). It began operations with the F-94 fighter-interceptor and later the F-89 Scorpion and F-102 Delta Dagger. ADC maintained host base responsibility through several organizational and aircraft changes until April 1966 when the 337th Fighter Group was deactivated and its F-102 aircraft were transferred to the Oregon Air National Guard (Oregon ANG). The 142nd Fighter Group continued air defense operations through all this time. The Air Force Reserve continued operations with the 403rd Troop Carrier Wing (1953 – 1957), and the 939th Troop Carrier Group (TCG) with C-119 Flying Boxcar transports (1963 – 1968).

In 1957, the 304th Air Rescue Squadron (AF Reserve) activated at Portland, and operated the SA-16 Albatross amphibian. The unit later flew rotary-wing aircraft, including the HH-34, HH-1, HH-3 and HH-60.

When active duty operations ceased at Portland in 1966, host responsibilities passed from ADC to the 939th TCG (AF Reserve). The 939th remained as host until July 1, 1968, when the group moved to McChord AFB, Washington.

On July 1, 1968, the Oregon Military Department, with the Oregon ANG as its agent, assumed host responsibilities for Portland's Air Force property. The principal unit at the base was the 142nd Fighter Group (Oregon ANG). Major tenant units were the Oregon ANG's 142nd Fighter Wing and 244th Mobile Communications Squadrons, along with the AF Reserve's 83rd Aerial Port Squadron and 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

In early 1969, the Port of Portland proposed to expand into the military lease portion of Portland International Airport (PIA) and acquire approximately 180 acres of land. In June 1969, an agreement was reached. The Oregon ANG remained with necessary replacement of facilities including relocation of Army Aviation from Portland to Salem, Oregon.

The Oregon ANG converted from the F-102A Delta Dagger to the F-101B Voodoo fighter-interceptor in 1971.

In 1978, a new base lease agreement was reached with the Port of Portland. Some 80 acres encompassing the western portion of the base formerly occupied by USAF active duty fighter-interceptor units were ceded to the Port, which included the base's original large aircraft maintenance hangar.

The Oregon ANG at PANG converted from the F-101B Voodoo to the F-4C Phantom II fighter aircraft in 1980 and continued air defense alert operations.

In 1985, the Air Force Reserve's 939th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group were activated at the base, equipped with the HC-130 Hercules and successive types of rescue helicopters.

The 142nd Fighter Interceptor Group converted from the F-4C Phantom II to the F-15A fighter aircraft in 1989.

In 2003, the 939th Rescue Wing converted to the KC-135R Stratotanker to become the 939th Air Refueling Wing (ARW). The 304th Rescue Squadron remained in place with its helicopters and continued its rescue mission.

Under the Congressional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee decisions of 2005, the 939th ARW was inactivated by 2008, and the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters of the 304th Rescue Squadron were relocated. The 142nd Fighter Wing and the air defense alert mission at Portland were preserved.

The 142nd Fighter Wing upgraded to the F-15C variant of the Eagle fighter in 2007 and continued its alert mission. In 2011, an improved version of the F-15C began service at Portland. The air defense alert mission became known as the Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) mission and continued uninterrupted.

In January 2013, a new 50-year base lease agreement was signed which will reduce the base from its existing 261 acres of land to 200 acres over the next 10 years, with further reduction options for airport expansion beginning in 2043.

On March 6, 2020 the 142nd Fighter Wing was redesignated the 142nd Wing in an effort to better articulate and represent the broad capabilities of the 142nd which now include the 123rd Fighter Squadron's ACA flying mission as well as the 125th Special Tactics Squadron's special warfare mission and the 116th Air Control Squadron's air battle management.

Today, PANG Base consists of 221 acres of property on the southeast portion of the PIA complex. The 142nd Wing remains the principal unit assigned, and operates the F-15C Eagle fighter and maintains a 24/7 ACA vigil over the greater Pacific Northwest. Tenant units include the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (Oregon ANG), the 123rd Weather Flight (Oregon ANG), the 116th Air Control Squadron (Oregon ANG), the 123rd Air Support Squadron (AF Reserve), the 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (AF Reserve), and the 939th Air Refueling Wing (ARW).