

Air Force News

All Air Force News

Guard & Reserve

This Week's Issue

 [Subscribe to RSS](#)

- Quick Links**
 Hall of Valor
 AirForce Discussions
 Frontline Photos
 Honor the Fallen

ADVERTISEMENT

WEBTOOLS

Click here for Military Times Webtools



   Like Confirm  Tweet  SHARE   

Air Force seeks to cut 492 Iowa Air Guard jobs

By William Petroski - Des Moines Register
 Posted : Tuesday Mar 6, 2012 18:48:15 EST

The Air Force today asked Congress today to eliminate 492 positions with the Des Moines-based 132nd, a 39 percent reduction in staffing, according to members of Iowa's congressional delegation who received briefings from Pentagon officials.

Air Force officials said last month they want to eliminate all 21 F-16 combat aircraft in Des Moines, but they didn't immediately provide specifics about future staffing levels. The Air Force said it recommended that a unit be established in the future at the Des Moines airport to remotely control unmanned combat aircraft. But the drone aircraft wouldn't be based in Des Moines. Instead, the aircraft would probably be located outside of the United States.

FACTS ABOUT 132ND FIGHTER WING

DES MOINES AIRCRAFT: 21 F-16 fighter jets.

COMMANDER: Col. Drew DeHaes.

PROPERTY: The Des Moines Air National Guard Base has 38 buildings on 162 acres owned by the city of Des Moines and leased through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the U.S. Air Force for \$1 per year through 2060. The facilities have a replacement cost of \$267 million.

ECONOMIC IMPACT: The annual economic impact to central Iowa is estimated at \$54 million, including \$36 million payroll, \$4.5 million in operating expenses, and \$13.5 million in indirect jobs created.

OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS: Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, other countries.

IOWA MOBILIZATIONS: 1993 and 2008 for Iowa floods.

AWARDS: Outstanding unit award three times in the past six years, ranking it as one of the best Air National Guard units in the country.

Source: Iowa National Guard

Today's announcement calls for eliminating 761 positions related to losing the F-16 aircraft, while gaining 239 positions by establishing an MQ-1/9 Remote Squadron at the Des Moines Air Guard Base. There would also be a gain of 34 positions from an Air National Guard "readiness offset." Overall strength at the Des Moines Air Guard Base would be reduced from 1,250 to 758 personnel, including full-time and part-time Guardsmen and civilian employees.

Congress will have the final say on the matter, and members of Iowa's congressional delegation have vowed to battle the Air Force's proposal. Forty-nine of the nation's governor's last week signed a letter criticizing the Air Force's plan, saying the cuts in the Guard would be disproportionate to reductions facing full-time Air Force units. The reductions have also been criticized by National Guard leaders nationwide, including Maj. Gen. Tim Orr, adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard.

The Air Force has proposed eliminating \$8.7 billion in spending, while retiring 303 aircraft worldwide. The overall Pentagon

ADVERTISEMENT

MOST VIEWED STORIES

- State-by-state Air Force proposed job cuts
- Schwartz: AF didn't blame pilot in F-22 crash
- Air Force cutting 600-person Tinker unit
- Many military homeowners in line for big payout
- AF proposes cutting 997 jobs at Niagara Falls
- Airmen PT testers are back; more changes ahead
- Air Force plans reduce Pa. positions by 25%
- Women accuse Hill NCO of inappropriate touching
- Schwartz defends reduced F-35 combat radius
- Remains in 2006 trainer crash sent to landfill
- Air Force looks to cut 652 Mich. Air Guard jobs
- Marine's Facebook page tests military rules

CONTESTS AND PROMOTIONS

Win a Premium Portable Music System!

Enter to Win the Military Times Sweepstakes!



Click Here To Enter.

FREE STICKERS

Click [here](#) and we'll send you a FREE AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, VIETNAM, or DESERT STORM sticker.



ADVERTISEMENT

CLASSIFIEDS

- Announcements
- Attorneys
- Automobiles
- Business
- Employment
- Financial Services
- Mail Order Market
- Milestones

budget would slash nearly \$32 billion in annual appropriations.

Supporters of the Air Guard said it is much less costly to operate than full-time Air Force units and it has more experienced pilots and aircraft maintenance personnel. Guard officials have said the Air Guard provides 35 percent of the Air Force's capability for 6 percent of the budget.

Sen.Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, issued a statement today in response to the Air Force's announcement:

"Reversing this decision will take a concerted effort by National Guard advocates in Congress. So far, the effort has been significant, and there will be an opportunity to determine a different outcome when annual legislation to authorize defense spending is considered later this year.

"Fiscal responsibility and stewardship dictate that the Air Force should use a cost-benefit analysis that looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the active and reserve forces. It's not clear that such a process has been used, and the Air Force needs to account for its approach."

Gov. Terry Branstad said the cuts would dramatically alter the ability of the National Guard to respond to emergencies and protect citizens, such as the levee monitoring activities last summer along the Missouri River.

As co-chair of the Council of Governors, Branstad said he is leading a nationwide effort on behalf of the nation's governors to ensure that the complete value of the National Guard is reflected in national policy and the Pentagon budget. Branstad also said he is very appreciative of the initial response of the Iowa congressional delegation and will continue to work with Members of Congress, fellow governors, their adjutants general and the Air Force to find alternative solutions to maximize capabilities at the lowest possible cost.

"We can best manage and execute responses to emergencies, and better protect our citizens here at home and abroad by empowering the National Guard," Branstad said. "To cut this efficient, low-cost, and effective response force in the name of cost savings is short-sighted. We should rely on the National Guard more, not less."

Rep. Dave Loebsack, D-Iowa, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said, "Today's announcement is nothing short of appalling. The Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing is one of the most experienced and best performing fighter wings in the Air Force. In this time of economic hardship, I have called on the Air Force to fully explain how they would plan on supporting the men and women and the families of those whose jobs would be eliminated under their proposal. I will continue to fight against any budget proposal that negatively affects the Iowa Air National Guard."

Air Force officials, in a recent guidance memo announcing plans to eliminate F-16s in Des Moines, said Guard and Reserve forces have been a "superb investment." But an Air Force analysis concluded that active-duty Air Force units have been reduced to the point that further reductions would limit the nation's ability to respond quickly to multiple crises or to sustain long commitments without asking active-duty Guard and Reserve forces to deploy at rates that cannot be sustained by airmen and their families.

Maj. Gen. Edward Bolton Jr., deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for budget, told reporters at a recent Pentagon briefing: "We understand that the Air Force must do its part to reduce spending and have made the difficult choices necessary to achieve those savings. We firmly believe this is not a choice between national security and fiscal responsibility, and this budget starts the transformation of the Air Force in support of a new defense strategy constrained by limited resources."

Central Iowa business and government leaders have rallied around the 132nd Fighter Wing, promising to employ a lobbying strategy with Congress that emphasizes the experience and the cost-effectiveness of the Des Moines Guard unit. A group of about 20 local leaders met in February at the Des Moines airport with Maj. Gen. Orr and U.S. Rep. Leonard Boswell, D-Iowa, a former Army helicopter pilot whose district includes the Des Moines unit.

The 132nd Fighter Wing has a proud tradition dating to 1941 with the

- Computers
- Education
- Real Estate
- Travel

MARKETPLACE

MIL-MALL

2011 Insider's Guide To Military Benefits

This handbook for military life includes essential information on pay and benefits, housing, education, health care and more.



MILITARY TIMES GEAR SHOP



TRU SPEC BDU BELT W VELCRO

MILITARY DISCOUNTS

Save on your purchases!

In honor of your military service, you can find regular and name brand products at a special discount.



Local Online Deals

Find the best deals at your local stores.

establishment of the 124th Observation Squadron in Des Moines. The wing has 332 airmen who work full time, while the rest of its members are traditional part-time Guardsmen. About a fourth of the unit is now deployed in Afghanistan.

The fiscal 2013 President's Budget adjusts Air Force military end strength to 501,000, with net reductions of 3,900 Active Duty, 5,100 Air National Guard and 900 Air Force Reserve billets.

According to the Air Force Chief of Staff, the Air Force's strategy is to apply resources to the people, programs, and systems that will best contribute to the new DoD strategic guidance.

"Working with our Guard and Reserve leaders, we used a balanced approach to adjust our Total Force end strength while maintaining the ability to execute strategic guidance," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz said. "Our Total Force programmed reductions follow detailed assessments of future conflict scenarios and rotational requirements consistent with the new strategic guidance."

Here are comments issued today by other members of Iowa's congressional delegation in response to the announcement:

U.S. SEN. TOM HARKIN, D-IOWA:

"Calling for the elimination of this many jobs from our states is nothing short of unconscionable — particularly given the countless missions and deployments that have been made over the last decade. The 132nd Fighter Wing in Des Moines has been recognized as one of the top performing units in the country. It simply makes no sense to take away its mission and cut it so deeply. To date, the Air Force has failed to satisfactorily answer a single question posed about this decision since rumors of this proposal first surfaced. The Air Force has failed to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of cutting so deeply into the guard and reserve personnel, decommissioning the 132nd Fighter Wing, or any other guard unit or the impact any of it will have on local communities. The National Guard and Reserve provide a great benefit to the nation at a lower cost than the active component. They work seamlessly alongside the active military when called to duty, while also remaining flexible and ready to help at home when needed in crisis or natural disaster. Now that Congress has the Air Force's full proposal, I will consult with the rest of the Iowa delegation on our next steps to address our concerns."

REP. TOM LATHAM, R-IOWA:

"The elimination of nearly 500 positions within the Iowa National Guard's 132nd F-16 Fighter Wing is painful news for the regional economy and, especially, the men and women who depend on those jobs to support themselves and their families. The justification given for eliminating these positions has been vague and imprecise, and it's become apparent that a sound cost-benefit analysis did not factor into the decision.

"It is irresponsible to design the nation's entire Air Force structure by jamming together pieces of a puzzle that just don't fit. The 132nd Fighter Wing counts among its ranks some of the most experienced F-16 pilots and maintainers in the force, with around four times the amount of flying time and years of experience as their active duty counterparts. The fighter wing has served our country with distinction and honor. We owe it to the American people to scrap this misguided plan and start over with a process that promises the result of an accountable plan based on truths, real facts, solid data, and maintaining the capabilities that are key to our national security in the years ahead."

REP. STEVE KING, R-IOWA:

"At a time when the American people are demanding that their tax dollars be stretched as far as possible, it makes no sense to cut the National Guard," said King. "The Guard is an extremely effective and efficient component of our nation's military, and Iowa's Guard units are among the best in the country. The Air Force still has much to explain about the basis for its decision to remove the 132nd's F-16s and the nearly 500 positions that go with them, and I will continue to work with my colleagues in the House, Senators Grassley and Harkin, and Governor Branstad to demand answers and action."

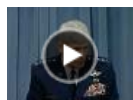
VIDEOS YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN



Proposed 2013 Budget to (3m33s)




Air Force Budget (40m24s)



Air Force leaders speak (31m1s)

LEAVE A COMMENT



Posting as Rick Murray [\(Change\)](#)

Post to Facebook

 Facebook social plugin



THIS WEEK'S AIR FORCE TIMES

Who deploys most

Ground-based airmen deployed more than aviators in 2011

[Read this week's issue](#) | [Read past issues](#)

MILITARY TIMES NETWORK

The websites of the Military Times Network provide members of the U.S. Military and their families with independent, award-winning journalism that impacts their lives.

Select a site

CUSTOMER SERVICE

cust-svc@gannettgov.com
1-800-368-5718

Corrections ■

Contact Air Force Times ■

Subscribe to Air Force

Times ■

Subscription Renewal ■

Advertise in Air Force

Times ■

GANNETT

All content © 2012, Gannett Government Media Corporation | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About Us](#)
Not a U.S. Government publication.