



FACT SHEET

140TH WING, COLORADO AIR NATIONAL GUARD

The 140th Wing, Colorado Air National Guard (COANG) is comprised of five groups, 12 squadrons and two geographically separated units (GSUs). The 1500 personnel that fall under four Air Force Major Commands provide our nation with fighter, airlift, space-based early missile warning and support forces capable of global employment.



The 120th Fighter Squadron (Air Combat Command), the 233d Space Group (Air Force Space Command), the 200th Airlift Squadron (Air Mobility Command) and the 240th Civil Engineer Flight (Pacific Air Forces) provide mission-ready Air and Space Forces to combatant commanders and support to our community, state, and nation. The vision of the 140th Wing is to be the model wing for the next generation militia, responding to the changing needs of their community, state and nation.

In addition, COANG Airmen deploy in support of combatant commanders in various locations around the world, as well as respond in a state capacity to significant unexpected contingencies throughout the United States to protect life, property and preserve peace, order and public safety.

Located east of Denver, the 140th Wing, Colorado Air National Guard prides itself on its rich history dating back to 1923 when aviation began for the Colorado National Guard. Buckley Army Air Field was first established in 1942 and in 1946, three full years and three months before the U.S. Air Force, the COANG unit became the first federally recognized Air National Guard unit. In 1947, Buckley was renamed Buckley Naval Air Station until 1960, when it changed again and became Buckley Air National Guard Base for 40 years.

The Colorado Air National Guard also made a name for itself as the home of the "Minutemen," the Air National Guard's first and only precision aerial flying demonstration team. The team performed across the United States and Canada, including appearances in the then territories of Alaska, Hawaii, and in the Republic of Panama. In the fall of 1956 the National Guard Bureau designed the "Minutemen" as the official team to represent the Air National Guard of the United States. For the next four years, the team flew more than one hundred airshows before millions of

spectators. In 1960, however, the "Minutemen" were disbanded due to lack of funding. A fledgling team the Air Force was promoting, called the "Thunderbirds," came on the scene about this time.

Activated in May 1968, the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed twenty F-100 fighter bombers to South Vietnam, a distance of 10,000 miles, and using in-flight refueling, arrived in three days. As a result of the deployment, the 120th TFS became the first Air National Guard squadron sent to a combat zone, as a unit, since World War II.

During their one-year tour of duty in Vietnam, the squadron compiled a remarkable record of flying 10,000 hours, and of having the lowest abort rate and the highest munitions reliability rate during their tour at Phan Rang, Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. Members of the 140th Tactical Fighter Wing, 140th Tactical Fighter Group and the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron were deactivated on April 30, 1969, and returned to Air National Guard status.

In 2000, Buckley was converted to an active duty Air Force base and it has since converted to Buckley Space Force Base on June 4, 2021, as it remains today.

The 120th Fighter Squadron (FS), which operates the F-16 Fighting Falcon is a dual-purpose fighter squadron with pilots qualified to perform air-to-air and air-to-ground missions, including Offensive Counter-Air (OCA), Defensive Counter-Air (DCA), OCA Interdiction, Close Air Support (CAS), and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) missions. With the addition of the LITENING II and SNIPER targeting pod and the latest software upgrades, the 120th pilots are able to employ precision guided GPS and Laser-guided weapons. In addition, the squadron provides Air Sovereignty Alert (ASA) forces to defend the Front Range and employs their force with mastery and lethality, if required, in defense of the country.

In February, 2003, the 120th FS and many support personnel mobilized and deployed to a still classified location in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While deployed with sixteen aircraft and over 30 pilots, the 120th flew over 500 combat sorties, 2500 hours and dropped over 350 precision guided weapons, while successfully preventing the launch of any Theatre Ballistic Missiles in their area of responsibility. The unit redeployed to Iraq in 2004 and was responsible for setting up flying operations at what is now known as Joint Base Balad, the largest and most forward deployed combat wing in Operation Iraqi Freedom. They deployed again over the 2007-2008 holidays in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom where they employed air power for 41 continuous days and flew over 300 combat sorties and 1600 combat hours. The 120th FS recently returned yet again from Iraq in July 2009 from their fifth deployment since 2003.

The 233d Space Group is composed of more than 300 Airmen and is the United State Air Force's only strategic, survivable, mobile ground system that provides immediate, worldwide missile warning, space launch, and nuclear detection to National Command Authority. They are able to survive and operate through all phases of trans/post nuclear attack.

The 240th Civil Engineering Flight is a 40-person unit with expertise in operational planning, engineering design, construction management, and expeditionary site planning and reporting. The unit deploys in continuous six-man, six-month rotations to Afghanistan.

The 200th Airlift Squadron provides VIP airlift as directed by the Department of Defense. They use C-21 Lear Jets and operate out of Peterson AFB, in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The Air National Guard provides almost half of the Air Force's tactical airlift support, combat communications functions, aero medical evacuations and aerial refueling. In addition, the Air National Guard has total responsibility for air defense of the entire United States and the 140th Wing COANG has been an integral part of this support.

Throughout its history, the 140th Wing has been involved in all major conflicts and contingency operations. Personnel are permanently assigned to Buckley AFB, Greeley ANGS, Peterson AFB, and Airburst Range near Ft. Carson. As such, this proud wing maintains both a Federal and State militia heritage and capability, and is prepared to support our Nation, State and local Community in times of need.

Updated: 21 Oct 2021.