

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Employers observe military training

By Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – Employers of South Dakota Air National Guard Airmen had the rare opportunity to observe their citizen-Airmen as they trained this week at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

Members of the SDANG will be in Florida for two weeks to participate in Combat Archer, the air-to air Weapons System Evaluation Program conducted by the 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group at Tyndall.

The 22 employers participated in an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Bosslift Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, departing from Joe Foss Field, S.D., to the Air Force base in Florida.

“Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is the Department of Defense volunteer agency that seeks to promote a culture in which all American employers value their employee’s military service,” said Capt. Lona Christensen, South Dakota ESGR executive director. “These trips take the employers from the workplace to the training site so they can see the type and quality of training that their employee receives when they leave to fulfill their military obligations.”

Employers began their day by boarding an Iowa Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker military aircraft at the Air National Guard base at Joe Foss Field. As the aircraft traveled to Florida, the employers were able to observe as the military tanker refueled two F-16 Fighting Falcons flown by 175th Fighter Squadron pilots of the SDANG. The mid-air transfer of jet fuel from tanker to fighter jet is an exciting sight and a great way to start their action packed two day trip.

“It was amazing,” said Tonya Pfeifer, owner of the Tea Tots Childcare Center. “Being able to see a side of the military that a civilian like me would never be able to see was incredible.”

Once they arrived at Tyndall, employers had the opportunity to see more aircraft from the Air Force fleet including the F-22 Raptor, F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-4 Phantom, and BQM-167 Air Force Subscale Aerial Target. Tyndall has the distinction of being one of only a few locations in the United States where live missiles can be fired at aerial targets.

This training and the Combat Archer exercise is critical for the unit’s pilots. Without training of this type, pilots would not know what to expect when firing munitions in a real air-to-air combat situation.

“Combat Archer is a valuable exercise that gives our pilots an opportunity to employ actual weapons against airborne targets,” said Lt. Col. Nate Alholinna, 175th Fighter Squadron commander. “These Combat Archer exercises could very well be the only time in their career that these pilots expend live munitions and that makes this training extremely valuable.”

The fighter pilot will fire at remotely controlled aircrafts called drones. All the data is tracked to determine the successfulness of the attack and in turn this data is used to improve the missiles used by aircraft around the world.

Another part of the Bosslift was the employers signing of the Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve. This is a public proclamation of their support for their employees' military service and benefits both the employee and employer.

"These trips are a huge deal to us," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard. "Without the support of our employers we can't do our mission. We've been able to show these employers the tactical nature of the National Guard and what the training looks like, to help them understand what it means to be in the Guard."

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SIoux FALLS, S.D. – Employers board a KC-135 tanker from the 185th Refueling Wing, Sioux City, Iowa, as they prepare to leave Joe Foss Field, S.D., on Jan. 31, 2012, for Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., on an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve trip. The employers are traveling to Florida to observe firsthand the quality training their employees receive as members of the South Dakota Air National Guard. (SDNG photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart) (RELEASED)



TYNDALL AFB, Fla. – Employers of South Dakota Air National Guard members had an opportunity to observe a mid-air refueling between a KC-135 tanker from the 185th Air Refueling Wing, Sioux City, Iowa, and two F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 114th Fighter Wing, Sioux Falls, S.D., while enroute to Tyndall AFB, Fla., for an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve trip Jan. 31, 2012. The trip is a way to show employers the quality training their employees receive while away fulfilling their military duties in the National Guard. (SDNG photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart)

(RELEASED)



TYNDALL AFB, Fla. – Tonya Pfeifer, owner of Tea Tots Childcare Center in Tea, S.D., signs a statement of support during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve trip to Tyndall AFB, Fla., Jan. 31, 2012. Employers of South Dakota Air National Guard members had an opportunity to observe some of the quality training their employees receive while they are away fulfilling military requirements. Also pictured left to right are Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, Command Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, Col. Russ Walz, and Mr. Don Kelpin. (SDNG photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart)

(RELEASED)



TYNDALL AFB, Fla. – A BQM-167 Air Force Subscale Aerial Target launches from Tyndall AFB, Fla., headed for the Gulf of Mexico Feb. 1, 2012. The drone serves as an aerial target for pilots of the South Dakota Air National Guard as they fly the F-16 aircraft and train on air-to-air combat missions. Members of the 114th Fighter Wing are deployed to Tyndall for Combat Archer for two weeks and Employers Support of the Guard and Reserve conducted a Bosslift

during this time as well. (SDNG photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart) (RELEASED)



TYNDALL AFB, Fla. – Employers of South Dakota Air National Guard members had an opportunity to observe the recovery of a BQM-167 Air Force Subscale Aerial Target from the Gulf of Mexico here Feb. 1, 2012. The aerial target is used for air-to-air combat training and was recovered to be reused in future training missions. The employers were at Tyndall to observe the quality training their employees receive while away from their full-time jobs to serve in the National Guard. (SDNG photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart) (RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Capt. Lona Christensen, SD ESGR executive director, at (605) 737-6540 or Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson, 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, at (605) 988-5644, or e-mail pao@sd.ngb.army.mil.