

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lancers, Falcons share South Dakota skies

By Airman 1st Class Hrair H. Palyan
28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. -- The skies above Ellsworth Air Force Base are routinely filled with B-1 bombers, but during Sept. 17 to 21, base bombers shared the airspace and ramp area with several South Dakota Air National Guard F-16s during a Guard training exercise.

The 114th Fighter Wing Fighting Lobos headquartered in Sioux Falls came to Ellsworth for their 2012 Live Drop exercise.

“We’re not allowed to use live ammunition for training purposes around Sioux Falls because we share airspace with a civilian airport,” said Master Sgt. Shawn Greer, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron first sergeant. “Ellsworth was instrumental in allowing us to utilize their resources for our fighters to complete their annual requirements.”

Prior to touching down at Ellsworth with more than 90 Airmen and six F-16 Fighting Falcons, Capt. Steve Schultz, 175th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, said he visited Ellsworth in July to complete a site survey and ensure the base was capable of accommodating the group during the exercise.

“Luckily for us, the 37th Bomb Squadron is deployed to Southwest Asia,” Schultz said, who previously participated in the Air National Guard’s 2007 Live Drop exercise at Ellsworth. “We were able to land on Monday and immediately set up our operations for the week.”

Schultz said he flew with four other F-16s to the Utah Test and Training Range Sept. 18, and successfully conducted long-range strike missions. He noted that at the completion of the exercise, aircrews were able to validate F-16 tactics, techniques and procedures used during long-range strike missions.

“It was great training for our new pilots,” Schultz said. “We met our goal in hitting times over targets as precisely as possible. Things get a lot more serious when you fly with live ammunition, but because we practiced how we play, we were able to persevere.”

With the culmination of the exercise, South Dakota Airmen from both sides of the state united to accomplish a true feat of total force.

Greer added that he appreciates how Ellsworth Airmen stepped up to ensure F-16 aircrews and support personnel had everything they needed to accomplish their mission.

“We came together as an Air Force team, not individual units or squadrons,” Greer said. “I’m thankful for all the professionalism Ellsworth Airmen demonstrated.”

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High resolution photos are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard/>



120918-F-UR602-001: An F-16 Fighting Falcon assigned to the South Dakota Air National Guard’s 175th Fighter Squadron thunders skyward at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., Sept. 18, 2012. The 114th Fighter Wing’s F-16s shared the flightline with Ellsworth’s resident B-1 bombers Sept. 17 to 21. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hrair H. Palyan)(RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION please contact Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson at (605) 310-9476.