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# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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# 148FW

MN AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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# FROM THE COMMANDER

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There is no national asset more flexible, ready or accessible than your Air National Guard and we have proven it in ways I had never imagined. This year was just as challenging as the last. We were hopeful going into 2021 the world was returning to normal. After successfully navigating the previous pandemic year, we were immediately faced in January with a short notice activation of over 100 of our Airmen to provide security to our Nation's Capitol in support of the 59th Presidential Inauguration.

As we returned from a successful mission in Washington, D.C., we began the process to plan and execute our first ever deployment up into the Arctic during Winter. We brought a small team of multi-capable airmen and a number of F-16s to Yellowknife, British Columbia. We then took half that team and F-16s to Thule Air Base in Greenland – truly the top of the world. We operated out of both locations simultaneously proving how capable, resilient and versatile the men and women of the 148th are. There is not a fighter wing with more experience or practice in the cold than Duluth's very own.

Soon after we returned from the high north, we were tasked again to support and protect people, property and the right to peacefully protest during the trials in the Twin Cities. The way our citizen airmen can relate to and protect our neighbors is unparalleled in this world. We also provided wildfire support, community based COVID testing and short notice deployments to welcome and support Afghan refugees around the country. We could never have predicted how vital we would be to successful Domestic Operations around our State and Nation.

None of these things are normal or routine for the 148th. Normally, we perform the federal mission centered around our aircraft and other world-wide capabilities. Throughout all these crises, we continued to train, equip and prepare for our critical Federal mission without skipping a beat. A culminating event was Northern Lightning, a major exercise with 60 other aircraft participating across the joint force conducting training in our local airspaces. Then we had a major capstone inspection from higher headquarters that validated the 148th Fighter Wing is 'what right looks like and an exemplar to all units'.

Never have we done so much for so many. We have never had such an overlap of so many strategically critical missions in a single year. Yet, we did so during a global pandemic while military resources and finances have been constrained at an ever increasing rate. Our people are our greatest asset and there are none better than these. It is because of the Men and Women of the 148th that we excelled during extraordinarily challenging times. This has certainly been a tough year on our people – who have answered the call every time.

I've never been more proud of the Men and Women of the 148th and I've never been more thankful for the support of their family, friends, civilian employers and our community partners. Thank you to everyone that supports the people of the 148th Fighter Wing. Thank you most of all to the men and women of the 148th!!



*Chris Blomquist*



# 148th FIGHTER WING

*Legacy of Excellence*

## FEDERAL MISSION

Maintain well-trained, well-equipped units available for prompt mobilization during war and provide assistance during national emergencies (such as natural disasters or civil disturbances).

## STATE MISSION

When MN Air National Guard units are not mobilized or under federal control, they report to the governor of Minnesota, supervised by the Adjutant General. Under state law, the MN Air National Guard provides protection of life and property and preserves peace, order and public safety.

## Our VISION

Be the premier Wing ready to lead, employ and support superior air power with advancing weapons systems

## Our MISSION

Protect America's global interests and defend the homeland with exceptional people, aircraft, equipment and capabilities

## Our VALUES

Bulldog pride, development, professionalism, balance and commitment



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# READINESS

The 148th Fighter Wing flies the Block 50 F-16CM, the newest and most capable F-16 in the U.S. Air Force fleet. The 148th is one of two Air National Guard wings trained to provide Suppression and Destruction of Enemy Air Defense (SEAD/DEAD) support for our nation. The 148th is also a NORAD Aerospace Control Alert-trained flying wing capable of defending the air sovereignty of North America when tasked.

When called upon, we provide Airmen with diverse skills, capabilities and experience with specialized equipment to support Minnesota's domestic operations response efforts. In 2020, the 148th provided Citizen-Airmen to support pandemic relief and civil unrest missions.



**1,150**

AIRMEN ASSIGNED

470 Full-Time

**4,470**

FLYING HOURS

**2,211**

SORTIES (FLIGHTS)

**96.47%**

PILOT MISSION-READY RATE

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# FEDERAL MISSIONS

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## 59TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

In January, the 148th deployed over 100 Airmen to provide security support for the 59th Presidential Inauguration. With three days notice, Airmen packed their bags and received riot control training to ensure protection of the right to peacefully protest at our Nation's capital. Another dozen Airmen were tasked to help feed the more than 25,000 Soldiers and Airmen from all 50 states and four territories tasked to support the inauguration.

## EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) continued its support of NORTHCOM Very Important Persons Protection Support Activity (VIPPSA) missions by staffing two Presidential and one Secretary of State visits in the region. During VIPPSA missions, EOD personnel worked with the Secret Service to plan safe official visits to the Midwest.

EOD staff responded to four Defense Support to Civil Authorities in International Falls, Britt, Nimrod and Little Falls, Minnesota.

## OPERATION ALLIES WELCOME

After the U.S. vacated Afghanistan, many Afghan refugees who were eligible for Special Immigrant Visas were transported and housed at U.S. Military facilities. They received medical screenings and a variety of services before resettling into the U.S. as part of a mission called Operation Allies Welcome.

Airmen from the 148th Fighter Wing deployed to both Joint Base Mcguire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. and Holloman Air Force Base, N.M. to support resettlement processes. In this capacity, Airmen provided logistical support, mentored female and male Afghan refugees on U.S. culture, provided medical support and helped provide a positive transition to Afghan citizens who worked alongside U.S. agencies for two decades.

## OVERSEAS MISSIONS

Over 100 Airmen from the 148th deployed to various locations in Southwest Asia and Africa in support of U.S. CENTCOM and AFRICOM missions.



## COVID-19 SUPPORT

The 148th continued to support the Minnesota National Guard's COVID-19 efforts as requested by Governor Tim Walz in 2021. These efforts included staffing COVID-19 community based testing sites across the state and augmenting long term care facilities as certified nursing assistants during staff shortages.

## OPERATION SAFETY NET

More than 100 Airmen with the 148th stepped up to support civilian authorities in a mission called Operation Safety Net. OSN was a coordinated effort to ensure the safety of the public by protecting people, property and free speech.

## WILD FIRE SUPPORT

148th Airmen responded with a fuel truck to a rapidly moving wild fire near Isabella in August. The Airmen supported the Minnesota National Guard's 2-211 General Support Aviation Battalion which sent a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter with a hoist to provide aerial fire suppression.

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# STATE MISSIONS

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# PREPAREDNESS

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## AMALGAM DART

In March, Airmen and F-16s participated in a NORAD-planned arctic air defense exercise that spanned from the Beaufort Sea to Thule, Greenland and south to the U.S. coast of Maine. The Bulldogs arrived at their first destination in Yellowknife, Canada. Then, less than 36-hours later, forward deployed to Thule Air Base, Greenland. This was the first time the 148th deployed people and F-16s to exercise the Agile Combat Employment concept.

## CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

In August, the 148th partnered with the 26th Special Tactics Squadron and 133rd Airlift Wing to conduct realistic close air support at Fort McCoy, Wis. The training scenarios included having Special Tactics Operators jump from C-130s into a Drop Zone while F-16s provided Suppression of Enemy Air Defense against surface-to-air missiles and air defense artillery.

## SILVER FLAG

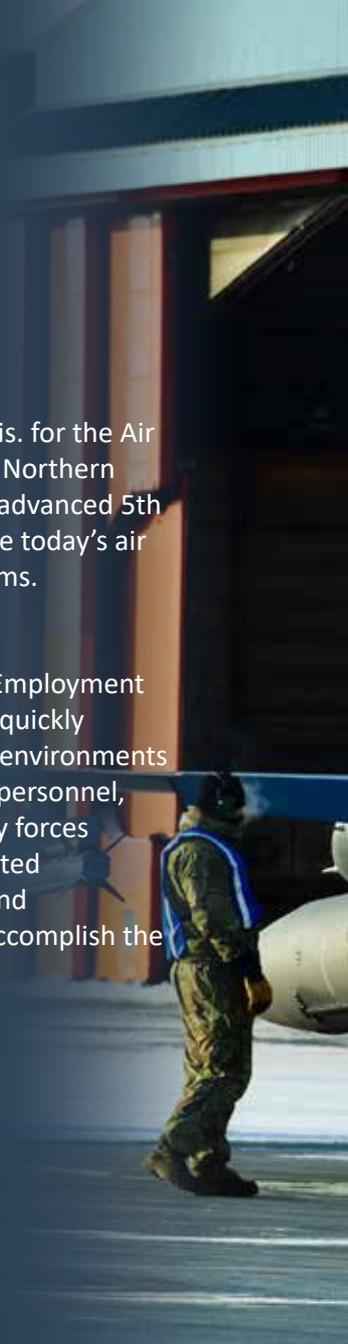
In April, 148th Civil Engineers attended a Silver Flag exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Silver Flag is an Air Force rapid airfield damage recovery training program which allows students from different Air Force specialties to develop their skills by repairing airfields after sustaining combat damage.

## NORTHERN LIGHTNING

In August, Airmen and F-16s traveled to Volk Field, Wis. for the Air National Guard's tactical-level, joint training exercise, Northern Lightning. Northern Lightning hosts the world's most advanced 5th generation aircraft like the F-35 and exercises replicate today's air battle space with current and future weapons platforms.

## HOME STATION ACE EXERCISE

In November, the 148th conducted an Agile Combat Employment exercise. ACE is a concept that enables flying units to quickly deploy personnel and aircraft to remote or degraded environments with a smaller blueprint. Pilots, aircraft maintenance personnel, fuels specialists, communications experts and security forces simulated a deployment to a remote airfield with limited infrastructure. Airmen established new workspaces and infrastructure with minimal equipment and time to accomplish the mission.





THULE  
AIR BASE  
*The Top of the World*



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# PEOPLE

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**102.81%**

PERSONNEL END STRENGTH

**92.18%**

RETENTION RATE

**98**

NEW RECRUITS

**31**

AIRMEN EARNED CCAF ASSOCIATE DEGREES

**\$1.5 Million**

190 AIRMEN USED STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

**\$256,000**

97 AIRMEN RECEIVED STATE ENLISTMENT/RETENTION BONUSES

**\$2.3 Million**

276 AIRMEN RECEIVED FEDERAL ENLISTMENT BONUSES

**Airmen volunteered 5200 hours** to charitable or non-profit organizations to include Civil Air Patrol, Veterans of Foreign War (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the Salvation Army.

# PARTNERSHIPS

In 2021, the 148th and Minnesota National Guard partnered and collaborated with many organizations to accomplish our state missions, conduct effective training exercises and to be an active part of the community we serve.

- » Duluth Airport Authority
- » Duluth Air Show
- » Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
- » Duluth Police
- » Federal Aviation Administration
- » Federal Emergency Management Agency
- » Hermantown Police
- » Memorial Blood Center
- » Metro Transit Police
- » Military Affairs Committee
- » Minnesota Dept. of Health
- » Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
- » Minnesota Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- » Minnesota Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- » Minnesota State Patrol
- » Salvation Army
- » STARBASE
- » Twin Ports Thanksgiving Buffet



# ENGAGEMENTS

## PATRIOTIC & HONORARY FLYOVERS

# 25

Grandma's Marathon

Independence Day

Duluth Air Show

Civil Air Patrol Encampment

Burnett County Air Expo

Wings of the North Air Expo

Burial of Fire Fighter First Class,  
Neal Todd (KIA, Pearl Harbor)

Funeral of WWII pilot,  
Lt. William Melville

9/11 20th Anniversary events

- Minnesota State Capital
- University of Minnesota Duluth
- Minnesota Twins



# MODERNIZATION



The 148th began efforts to collaborate with the National Guard Bureau and Federal Aviation Authority to modernize our Military Operating Airspaces to meet current training needs and prepare for future missions.

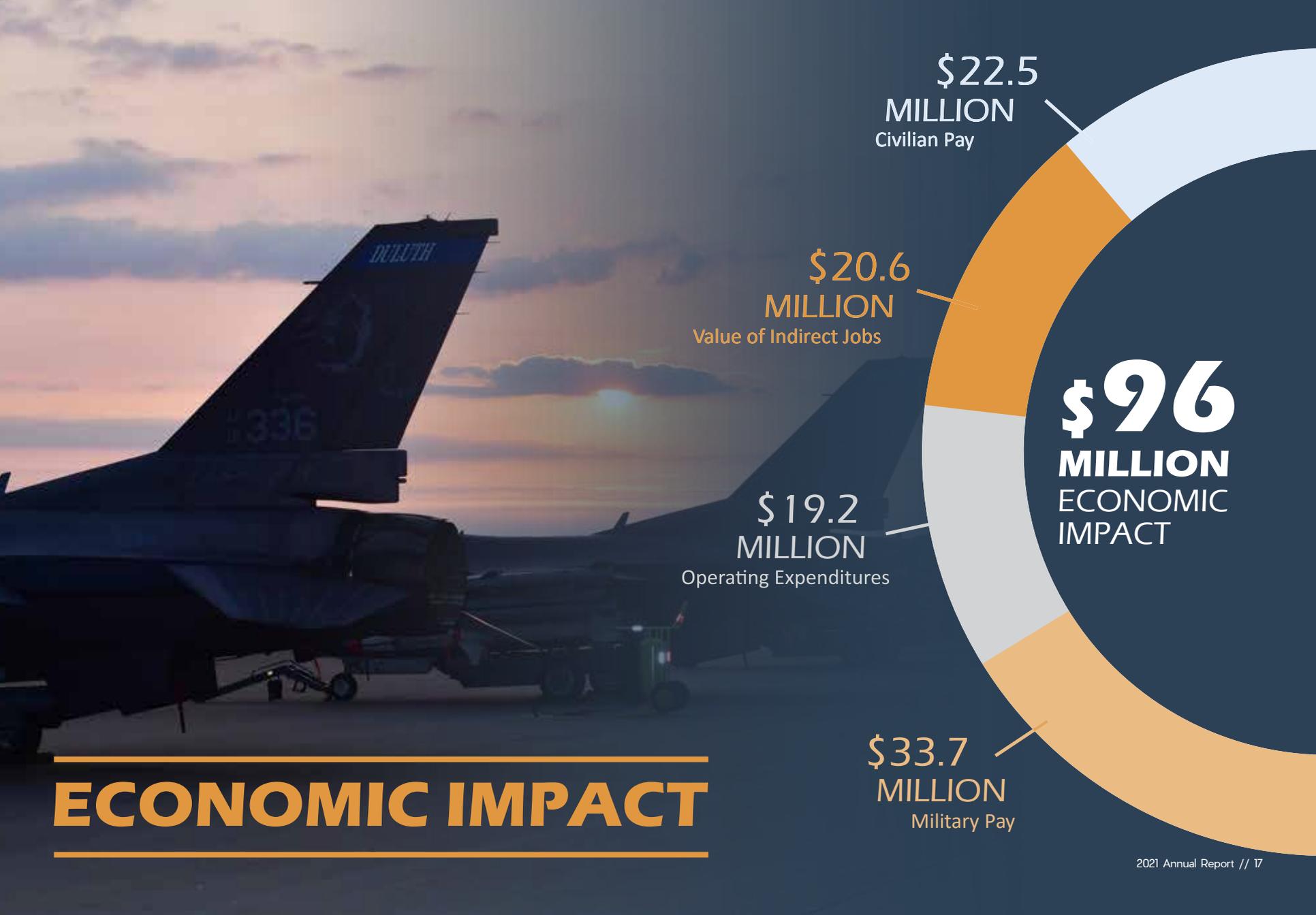
Construction and modernization of 148th facilities focuses on consolidating, updating and improving infrastructure. The 148th completed three major upgrades during fiscal year 2021.

- » A repair of the main electrical distribution system now provides a safe, effective system that enhances the Wing's infrastructure resiliency and maintainability. The \$1.4 million project replaced 13.8kV underground and main loop feeders, provided new main switch gear and replaced antiquated electrical distribution equipment.
- » Replaced a 60-year old utility system that served our Munitions Storage Area with reliable, adequately-sized and compliant utility

systems. The \$1.9 million project modernized a critical work area and now meets current and future 148th mission needs.

- » A \$3.2 million project replaced and upgraded the fire suppression system, repaired life safety systems and upgraded lighting and HVAC systems in the Wing's Corrosion Control facility. The project also finalized the loop of fire service mains and cross connected the base domestic water system with the City of Duluth water mains, further improving the resiliency of both water systems.

In 2022, the 148th plans to break ground and complete a 12,000 square foot firing range which will have a significant impact on mission readiness for all Airmen assigned. Construction of a new, consolidated Logistics Readiness complex will begin providing much needed office space and supply storage for equipment and mobility bags in a centralized location.



**\$22.5**  
**MILLION**  
Civilian Pay

**\$20.6**  
**MILLION**  
Value of Indirect Jobs

**\$19.2**  
**MILLION**  
Operating Expenditures

**\$33.7**  
**MILLION**  
Military Pay

**\$96**  
**MILLION**  
ECONOMIC  
IMPACT

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

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# ACHIEVEMENTS & GOALS

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## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- » 59th Presidential Inauguration support
- » Operation Safety Net
- » COVID-19 Support
- » Amalgam DART
- » Northern Lighting
- » Deployed over 100 personnel in support of AFRICOM & CENTCOM

## FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- » Modernize aircraft shelters
- » Modernize airspace for future missions
- » Prepare for 5th Generation or newer manned fighter aircraft
- » Continue noise mitigation; improving noise contours
- » Maintain full NORAD Aerospace Control Alert mission readiness



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# CONNECT WITH US

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