



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

TED STRICKLAND, GOVERNOR

MAJOR GENERAL GREGORY L. WAYT, ADJUTANT GENERAL

For immediate release

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Springfield Air National Guard unit kicks off international training mission

SPRINGFIELD—The Ohio Air National Guard will celebrate its new mission joining the 178th Fighter Wing with the Royal Netherlands Air Force at a noon ceremony April 24 at the Springfield Air National Guard Base, 5319 Regula Ave., Springfield, Ohio 45502-8784.

Originally scheduled to lose its flying mission as a result of the May 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, the unit has now been selected to participate in the Foreign Military Sales program. The fighter wing will host an F-16 jet training mission at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport and provide flight instruction, facilities, flight operations and maintenance support to the Royal Netherlands Air Force. In addition, the wing will continue its mission of training Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve pilots to fly the F-16 through 2010.

“The impact of this new international training mission on the local economy is significant,” said Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland. “One hundred and five additional personnel are required to support the mission at an annual combined salary exceeding \$9 million.”

The first four Dutch student officers arrived this week and began the ground school portion of the six-month initial training course. By September, 15 Dutch students are expected to be on station.

The Netherlands will provide 14 F-16 aircraft, the first six of which arrived in Springfield on April 17, as well as four instructor pilots and seven additional support personnel. The new mission will account for half of all flying time at the wing.

“Ohio Air National Guard instructor pilots will train Dutch pilots in F-16 flight operations and combat tactics,” said Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, Ohio adjutant general. “Our Airmen are very excited for this unique opportunity to train with and exchange knowledge and culture with members of the Royal Netherlands Air Force.”

Strickland and Wayt, along with Gen. Duncan J. McNabb, commander, Air Mobility Command, U.S. Sen. George Voinovich, U.S. Rep. Dave Hobson and Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland, will be among the distinguished guests. Expected Dutch dignitaries include Ambassador Christiaan Kröner of the Netherlands, Maj. Gen. E. Oliemans, deputy chief of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, and Col. Jaap Reijling, Royal Netherlands Embassy Air Attaché.

"The training of Royal Netherlands Air Force F-16 pilots at Springfield Air National Guard Base is an excellent example of cooperation between the Netherlands and the United States," Ambassador Kröner said. "The Dutch and U.S. Air Forces have trained together for decades now, building the mutual trust required for facing today's challenges with confidence. I am pleased that our young pilots will find a home in the birthplace of aviation for the next few years."

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EDITORS NOTE: A brief question and answer session will follow the ceremony. If you plan to send a reporter to the base, please contact Capt. Laura Powers, 178th Fighter Wing executive officer, at 937-525-2557. All names must be added to the security roster in order to gain access to the installation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: The Ohio National Guard Public Affairs Office at 614-336-7000.

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