

Photo by Erik Hillbrand



**Klamath Falls is home to the 173rd Fighter Wing, Oregon Guard.**

# The Eagles of



The primary mission of the 173rd at Kingsley Field, adjacent to the Klamath Falls airport, is to provide an F-15 air-to-air schoolhouse.

There the unit trains both active duty and Air National Guard pilots in fighter and combat maneuvers, tactical and electronic countermeasures intercepts, long-range missile employment, and basic NORAD procedures. The 173rd Fighter Wing's mission also includes training ANG flight surgeons for the demands of aviation medicine.

The field was named for Medal of Honor recipient 2nd Lt. David R. Kingsley, an Oregonian killed in a World War II bombing mission over Ploesti, Romania. During the Cold War, this location 15 miles north of the California–Oregon border was especially important: In 1954, USAF filled a critical gap in the air defense system by selecting Klamath Falls as the site for an all-weather fighter–interceptor squadron and aircraft control and warning squadron.

These F-15s on a training sortie show the subdued eagle fin flashes that mark Kingsley Field fighters.

**Air National**

**Photography by Erik Hildebrandt**

# Klamath Falls



The Oregon ANG began operations at Kingsley in the 1970s, providing ground radar control for fighter aircraft. The Guard flying mission at the field began with F-4s in the 1980s.



The F-4s gave way to F-16s, and in 1998 the 173rd began the switch to the F-15s (shown on these pages) it flies today.

The front door–back door style of the hangar (above) is a carryover from the full-time alert mission the Guard handled at Kingsley from 1981–94. It's typical of an air defense facility: It gives alert aircraft a quick start.





Kingsley Field Guard members assumed airport tower control duties from the FAA in 1995. In addition, they train air traffic controllers and provide radar approach control at the field.

Above, a tight four ship of aircraft flies in the pattern over the facility. At right: coming in for a landing.





Three F-15s in the air above Klamath Falls. Below, the view from a “class-room,” as three jets get ready for takeoff and the day’s sortie.



The 173rd supports Aerospace Expeditionary Force deployments and exercises throughout the year. In 2000, they deployed to Canada for the Maple Flag exercise. Last month, 130 personnel and aircraft from Kingsley deployed to Minsk–Mazowiecki AB, Poland, to provide training for the new NATO partner. The wing planned to train against MiG-29s and possibly MiG-21s, and Su-22s.





The skies above Klamath Falls provide a spectacular background for the 173rd Fighter Wing's Eagles. As the only ANG F-15 training unit, the wing is establishing itself as an expert in its profession. With the deployment to Poland, it has an opportunity to share this expertise in the international arena, as well.



Photos by Erik Hildebrandt