

WISCONSIN AIR NATIONAL GUARD

115TH FIGHTER WING, WI ANG



TRUAX FIELD MADISON WISCONSIN

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1

WHY DO I HEAR SO MUCH MILITARY AIRCRAFT NOISE?

The 115th Fighter Wing operates and shares the airfield with Dane County Regional Airport and flies the F-16C Fighting Falcon. The 115th Fighter Wing was recently selected to receive a fleet of F-35A Lightning II aircraft that are estimated to arrive in April of 2023. The 115th Fighter Wing typically executes a flying schedule of two flights per weekday, eight in the morning and six in the afternoon, four days per week and one weekend per month. These numbers do vary. In addition, the 115th executes an Aerospace Control Alert mission in support of U.S. Northern Command and Operation Noble Eagle. The Wisconsin Air National Guard's F-16s are on alert 24/7 in support of this mission and they can and do take off and respond within a moment's notice. Speed is critical to this mission.

WHERE ARE THE F-16S FLYING TO?

2

The training missions operated daily are vital to pilot qualifications, and to maintenance and support personnel proficiency. Upon departure from Truax Field, the F-16s from the 115th typically execute their training in the Volk Airspace Complex, north of Madison in central Wisconsin. This area provides unique and diverse training opportunities. Additionally, our pilots also accomplish training at Hardwood Range near Babcock, WI. It typically takes less than 10 minutes for our pilots to reach their training destination and begin training. Qualification and currency training is mandated by the Air Force to keep our pilots proficient. In many cases, as in years past, much of our pilot's qualification and proficiency training has occurred at other locations around the country, to limit the amount of impact to the residents of Madison.

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WHY DO AIRCRAFT FROM THE 115TH FIGHTER WING HAVE TO FLY OVER MADISON?

Pilots flying the F-16s from the 115th Fighter Wing follow all Air Traffic Control directions when departing the airfield. While they try to follow flight paths that direct our aircraft over less densely populated areas, sometimes they need to deviate from those paths due to weather, wind, or at the direction of Air Traffic Control. All flight patterns are dictated and tailored to safety and operational standards set by the Federal Aviation Administration, which sometimes necessitate aircraft to take off and land to the south of the airfield.

WHAT ROLE DOES WEATHER PLAY DURING TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS? HOW DOES WEATHER IMPACT AIRCRAFT NOISE?

4

Weather can change the various procedures and flying options for the local air traffic pattern. For example, a tailwind exceeding 10 knots from the south will require the takeoff direction to switch to the south. Rain, thunderstorms and low cloud cover can also trap and amplify sounds created by aircraft operating near the base.

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HOW LOW ARE AIR NATIONAL GUARD AIRCRAFT ALLOWED TO FLY?

115th Fighter Wing aircraft comply with all Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration Regulations, as well as Truax Field specific flying procedures designed to help minimize noise impacts on surrounding communities. While in transit over congested, populated areas our aircraft do not fly lower than 1,000 feet unless they are taking off, landing, or if there is an emergency.

WHAT IS THE BASE DOING TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF NOISE ON SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES?

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The 115th Fighter Wing's arrival and departure procedures are coordinated and directed with the Federal Aviation Administration and Air Traffic Control at Dane County Regional Airport. All airport arrival and departure procedures in place for the airfield are also followed by our pilots. To the maximum extent possible, 115th pilots follow noise abatement procedures specifically designed to address community concerns. In order to minimize the aircraft noise experienced by our neighbors, our pilots maintain a higher altitude than required by FAA regulations. They prioritize departing to the north and landing from the north, unless operational, safety or weather conditions dictate otherwise. The base also observes quiet hours from 10:30 PM until 6:00 AM. Although uncommon, military flights can be approved during quiet hours based on mission requirements.

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WHY DO I SEE MILITARY AIRCRAFT FLYING AT NIGHT?

115th Fighter Wing pilots and crews are required to train at night to maintain readiness and all-weather capabilities. We limit night operations to what is required to remain proficient in night flying training. During after-dark operations, the wings' personnel train with advanced sensors such as night vision goggles. When deployed overseas, the 115th Fighter Wing provides close air support and must remain proficient in night flying to successfully accomplish their mission. When on a night schedule, flying is anticipated to be completed before 11:00 p.m. and residents will be notified.

WHEN DO THE JETS USE AFTERBURNERS?

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As part of noise abatement procedures, jets ordinarily do not use their afterburners when flying over the city of Madison. However, Operation Noble Eagle is the one exception. Wisconsin Air National Guard F-16s are on alert 24/7 at Truax Field in support of U.S. Northern Command. They can, and do take off at a moment's notice to ensure aerospace control over more than 225,000 square miles, covering all of the mid-west region. Speed is critical to this mission, necessitating the use of maximum power. These aircraft take off and execute a rapid climb to altitude for noise abatement. This has been a mission at Truax Field following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The 115th Fighter Wing recognizes the impact and unpredictable nature of this mission, but the preservation of our air sovereignty is one way the DoD has been tasked to support national security.

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HOW DO I FILE A NOISE OR OVER-HEAD FLIGHT COMPLAINT? WHAT DOES THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD AND THE AIR FORCE DO ABOUT COMPLAINTS?

Write down the time, date, location, direction of flight, how many aircraft and their description – such as one or two tails, color, jet or propeller, etc. You may submit the information online to the 115th Fighter Wing website at www.115fw.ang.af.mil/contactus/ or call the noise concern hotline at (608) 245-4395. 115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs personnel log noise complaints into a database and review every complaint for anything out of the ordinary. The majority of aircraft noise complaints come from areas where routine flying operations take place. If we are provided details of something out of the ordinary, the Air National Guard investigates each incident and, if it was a violation of directives, takes steps to prevent it from reoccurring.