



News for Immediate Release

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Air Force Selects Horsham's 111th Fighter Wing for New High-Tech Mission

Harrisburg – The U.S. Air Force has chosen the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 111th Fighter Wing, located in Horsham, to take on a new remotely piloted aircraft mission.

The National Guard Bureau has authorized the wing to establish a ground-control station for the MQ-9 Reaper at Horsham Air Guard Base effective Oct. 1, 2013.

"This is an exciting time for our wing, and our Airmen are energized to embrace this new mission," Col. Howard "Chip" Eissler, commander of the 111th Fighter Wing said. "I'm proud to see that the Air Force recognizes our wing's capabilities, strategic location and our diversely talented members. The composition, operational tempo and infrastructure of our unit will increase as we prepare to take on this new challenge of housing a high-tech ground control station right here in Horsham."

Nearly 250 jobs, approximately 75 of which are full-time positions, will be added to the wing to support this new mission.

"This is great news for Pennsylvania, especially when you consider the government cutbacks nationwide," Maj. Gen. Wesley Craig, Pennsylvania's adjutant general said. "We are fortunate that Governor Tom Corbett and local, state and federal elected officials were able to help secure such a major military and economic victory for Pennsylvania."

The MQ-9 Reaper will be controlled from a virtual cockpit on the installation by a two-person team consisting of a pilot and a sensor operator. The actual aircraft will not be located on the base.

"Airmen on the ground here will soon be behind the controls of a remotely piloted aircraft being flown in locations far from home," said Eissler. "While the MQ-9 will be a significant platform change from the A-10 Thunderbolt II that we flew for years, the mission will be nothing new for the pilots of the 111th. We have been overseas multiple times in our A-10s, now we'll be flying overseas missions from Horsham."

Pennsylvania Air National Guard recruiting superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Matt Giacobbe, said a robust recruiting effort is required to put people in these cutting-edge positions.

"The Pennsylvania Air National Guard recruits individuals with a diverse set of skills and offers tangible benefits for their service, especially in their pursuit of their higher education," Giacobbe said. "We're specifically seeking current or former military aviators, but are looking forward to recruiting and training a variety of individuals to fill positions related to this new mission in Horsham."

Individuals interested in learning more about these and other positions can call 1-800-997-2264 or visit www.goang.com.

The 111th Fighter Wing has a long history beginning with the establishment of the 103rd Observation Squadron in June 1924 on the sod fields of Philadelphia Airport as a unit in the U.S. Army's 28th Infantry Division. In 1963, the 111th ended its 39-year history at the Philadelphia Airport and moved to its present location in Horsham. The highly decorated unit has supported numerous overseas operations since 1995 to include operations Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

A fact sheet on the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft is available via the U.S. Air Force site at <http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=6405>.

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