

Racer Heritage

The legacy and future of the 181st Intelligence Wing (IW) is carried on the shoulders of even the youngest Airmen, and that future begins with the past. Continuing the traditions of citizen Airmen into the 21st century, the 181st IW has etched itself into national and global history since its very beginning.

The 181st Intelligence Wing, Indiana Air National Guard, dates back to 1921, after Wilbert F. Fagley was given authority to organize Headquarters Battery, 81st Field Artillery in Kokomo, Indiana. Fagley's vision and persistent efforts produced this early air squadron in the National Guard.

The Unit was redesignated the 137th Observation Squadron before being changed to the 113th Observation Squadron. It later became the 113th Tactical Fighter Squadron, and the 113th is still part of the 181st Intelligence Wing. During 1926, the Unit moved to Schoen Field and later to Stout Field, both in Indianapolis. Finally, in 1954 the Wing moved to its present location at Terre Haute's Hulman International Airport.

The Unit served in World War II, flying submarine patrol along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. The 181st was also activated for the Korean War and the Berlin crisis. Additionally, portions of two units within the Wing were activated for Operation Desert Storm. The Wing has served the citizens of Indiana many times during floods and other natural disasters.

The Wing's moniker, the 'Racers,' owes its origin to the long and storied association between the Wing and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Anton Hulman, Jr., then the track's benefactor, played a key role in bringing the Indiana Air National Guard to Terre Haute.

The Wing participated from 1995 to 1997 in a humanitarian deployment to Romania, provided security for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, and deployed to Al Jabar AB, Kuwait, on two separate occasions in support of Operation Southern Watch.

The excellent combat readiness and professionalism displayed by the Wing has carried on to the present. The 181st Fighter Wing wasted no time in joining the War on Terrorism, as it responded in less than four hours after the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to the task of flying Combat Air Patrols over the Midwest.

The 181st increased its operations tempo, deploying members and equipment to 19 countries, simultaneously supporting seven different military operations, including: Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Joint Forge, Noble Eagle, Deep Freeze, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure commission mandated the end of the flying era for the Racer Family. On September 8, 2007, the 181st Fighter Wing flew their last training mission out of Hulman Field International Airport.

The Wing, looking forward to the challenges of the future, was excited to be tasked with two new Air Force missions: a Distributive Ground Station (DGS) and an Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS). Both of these missions put the 181st on the cutting edge of technology.

The DGS is an intelligence based mission, monitoring near real time video feed from unmanned aerial vehicles hovering the skies over any military area of operation. The service members process, exploit, and disseminate the video feed, providing actionable intelligence to the ground commanders and war-fighting forces.

The ASOS consists of battlefield Airmen who deploy with joint forces. Their mission is to advise the ground commanders on the best way to utilize U.S. and NATO assets for close air support.

On May 3, 2008, the 181st Fighter Wing was re-designated as the 181st Intelligence Wing.

The 181st Intelligence Wing carries a rich history and embraces a challenging future. The Racers constantly train to the highest standards to provide a ready, relevant and reliable force to protect the freedom of the community, state and nation.

By building on our past accomplishments, the Racers will attain even greater achievements in the years ahead.

