



# CONR - 1 AF/AFNORTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## CONR achieves 55,000th Noble Eagle sortie

**TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** – The quick response of two Continental U.S. NORAD Region fighter jets that intercepted a small airplane in Florida in late December resulted in a new and impressive record for CONR—its 55,000th successfully completed Operation Noble Eagle sortie.

Air National Guard pilots with the 125th Fighter Wing, Detachment 1, at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., flew two F-15 Eagles to reach the milestone sortie.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Shaun Withers

The Noble Eagle mission began Sept. 14, 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Pa. The operation is designed to protect North America from an airborne attack.

Before 9/11, CONR was charged with keeping an eye on the nation's borders, looking outward for threats from abroad in the form of long-range missiles or Soviet bombers.

Now, with the assistance of its Canadian partners, every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and multiple federal agencies, CONR watches the nation's skies for a threat from within.

Maj. Gen. Garry Dean, CONR commander, said the recent sortie in Florida, along with tens of thousands of previous flights throughout the country, is an impressive record for all those involved in the CONR mission.

"We have achieved an astounding 55,000 accident-free, Operation Noble Eagle sorties," he said. "Our efforts since 9/11 have ensured the continued sovereignty of our skies and have protected America and her most valuable treasures, and I am extremely proud of the work these dedicated men and women have accomplished."

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## **2-2-2 SORTIE**

Through the leadership of the Eastern and Western Air Defense Sectors, the air sovereignty alert wings throughout the United States are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, sitting constant alert in the event they are called upon to react to a potential threat.

Col. John Bartholf, Eastern Air Defense Sector commander, commented on the historic milestone. "In the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, and for many months following that attack, our nation kept fighters in the air 24 hours a day non-stop," he said. "Nearly nine years later, an unparalleled 55,000 sorties have been flown in support of Operation Noble Eagle. It continues to be a 'no-fail mission' that protects our most precious resource—the citizens of this great nation."

CONR's deputy commander, Canadian Brig. Gen. Andre Viens, said that since 9/11, at least 24 terrorist attacks have been thwarted by the collective efforts of all agencies operating under the auspices of homeland defense and security. But he's cautious not to become overconfident.

"Make no mistake -- we will continue to be called upon in the future," said General Viens. "Consequently, we must remain steady, tirelessly vigilant, and be on close watch regardless of the time of day or night to deter, prevent and, if necessary, defeat hostile air attacks on North America."

In addition to flying the 55,000th sortie, CONR fighters have responded to more than 2,350 possible air threats in the United States, and also fly in support of special security events such as the Super Bowl, presidential inaugurations, state funerals, United Nations General Assemblies and the State of the Union Address.