



Iowa Guard to deploy 'Eye in Sky' plane at Des Moines airport



William Petroski, bpetrosk@dmreg.com 4:33 p.m. CST December 2, 2014



(Photo: U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Dennis Young)

f 115 CONNECT | **t** 6 TWEET | **in** LINKEDIN | **1** COMMENT | EMAIL | MORE

The Iowa Air National Guard plans to deploy a so-called "Eye in the Sky" reconnaissance aircraft at the Des Moines airport, a senior Guard official disclosed Tuesday.

Maj. Gen. Tim Orr, adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard, told Gov. Terry Branstad during a state budget hearing that a twin-turboprop, RC-26 aircraft equipped with surveillance gear will be stationed at the Des Moines Air National Guard Base effective Friday. The Air Guard Base is at the north end of the Des Moines airport.

The RC-26 is used for aerial surveillance and reconnaissance for government, law enforcement and by the U.S. Southern Command. State and federal law enforcement agencies specifically use the aircraft for efforts to counter drug trafficking and terrorism, and at presidential inaugurations and for natural disaster support, military officials said. The aircraft can also be used to gather intelligence in a combat zone.

Orr said an RC-26 aircraft from Wisconsin was used during Iowa's floods of 2008 to record video of the state's rivers that was provided to an operations center. The plane is known for having an ability to send real-time, high-resolution streaming video to ground incident commanders.

"We will have one here. We will be allowed to put some folks through the school to fly the aircraft. We think it is important to keep an interim aircraft here," Orr told The Des Moines Register.

The Air Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing, which has nearly 1,000 airmen, is based at the Des Moines airport. However, the unit has lost all of its F-16 aircraft as its airmen go through a process of being trained to fly so-called remotely piloted aircraft, commonly called drones.

Orr said there are still no plans to launch remotely piloted aircraft in Des Moines, although the unit's aviators could remotely pilot the aircraft from Des Moines.

Until October, when the last military aircraft left the Des Moines Air Guard Base, the 132nd's airmen had been performing work to upgrade the electronics on military planes that were flown here from throughout the country, Orr said.

MORE STORIES



81 photos: Tom Harkin's political career

Dec. 4, 2014, 1:38 p.m.



Public pension fund improves, but still \$5.5B in red

Dec. 4, 2014, 1:07 p.m.



Iowa leaders echo call to fight female incarceration

Dec. 4, 2014, 12:41 p.m.



MORE STORIES:



David Letterman not impressed with Joni Ernst's speech

NEWS | 27 days ago

SPONSOR CONTENT:



28 Celebs Who Have Severe Illnesses

PressroomVIP