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Air Force to retire Maryland National Guard's A-10 planes in leadup to Cyber transition

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The Maryland Air National Guard is about to get a new mission. On Thursday the Air Force chose Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River to transition from an A-10 Thunderbolt flying operation to a cyber wing mission. "Replacing the aging A-10 Thunderbolt IIs at the 175th Fighter Wing with a cyber mission will create a natural synergy between cyber assets at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, and the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group already operating out of Warfield ANGB," the Air Force said in a press release. [READ MORE: https://www.wmar2news.com/local/air-force-to-retire-maryland-national-guards-a-10-planes-in-leadup-to-cyber-transition](https://www.wmar2news.com/local/air-force-to-retire-maryland-national-guards-a-10-planes-in-leadup-to-cyber-transition)



By: [Ryan Dickstein](#)

Posted at 10:35 AM, Mar 07, 2024 and last updated 2:43 PM, Mar 08, 2024

MIDDLE RIVER, Md. — The Maryland Air National Guard is about to get a new mission.

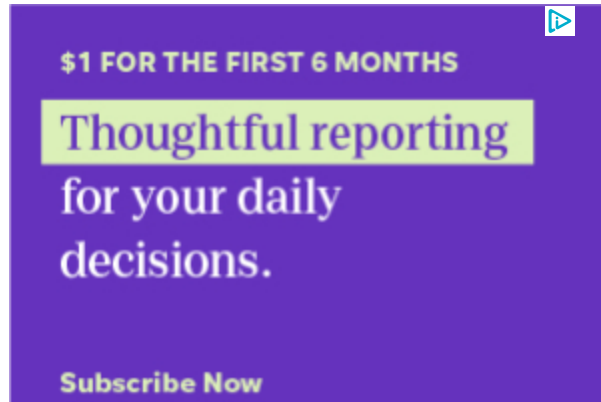
On Thursday the Air Force chose Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River to transition from an A-10 Thunderbolt flying operation to a cyber wing mission.

"Replacing the aging [A-10 Thunderbolt IIs](#) at the 175th Fighter Wing with a

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Before any final decision is made, the Air Force will conduct an environmental impact analysis to be completed by fall 2025.

In the meantime the Air Force will begin divesting in the 21 A-10 planes at Warfield this fall. Manpower numbers are estimated to remain neutral, although they could take a year to finalize.

Maryland State Delegate Ryan Nawrocki has long expected the move, which would make Maryland the only state without a flying mission.

He called the idea "silly and very foolish," claiming hundreds of jobs could be at stake.

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The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) also criticized the Air Force, saying their decision will squander scarce talent.

"Unlike their active-component counterparts who move every few years, Air National Guardsmen have deep ties to their communities. Most have civilian jobs. They cannot pick up and go to a new base easily. The Air Force must bring planes to them," said NGAUS President, Retired Major General Francis M. McGinn. "This decision makes no sense in this era of Great Power Competition. Air Force officials are actually pushing the 175th Wing's flying personnel out of the service when the U.S. military is critically short of skilled pilots and maintainers."

Other Maryland leaders were pleased with the expansion aspect of the plan, but expressed frustration with the decision to retire the A-10's.

MORE: [Push back on plans to retire A-10 'Warthogs'](#)

"The Maryland Air National Guard has flown A-10s since 1979, making it one of the most experienced A-10 units in the Air Force. Any new cyber wing must be fully resourced in order to build the facilities and train personnel." Governor Wes Moore said in a statement. "We are disappointed to learn of the Air Force's decision to hurriedly retire the A-10 mission across the nation, including the mission at Martin State, without a plan to retain experienced pilots and maintainers or to replace older systems with advanced aircraft."

U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, along with Maryland Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger, issued a joint statement agreeing with Moore.

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that, despite our repeated objections, the Air Force will move forward with retiring the A-10 presence at Martin State without immediately assigning the 175th a replacement flying mission."

As it stands now Maryland's Air National Guard is still scheduled to deploy with the A-10's, later this month to U.S. Central Command in the Middle East.

"As decisions around the future of the 175th Wing continue to be solidified, I want to focus on our pilots, maintainers, and their families as they prepare for an imminent combat deployment," said Major General Janeen L. Birckhead, adjutant general for Maryland. "I want to thank all of our Airmen for their dedication as they continue to focus on the mission at hand and I ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers."

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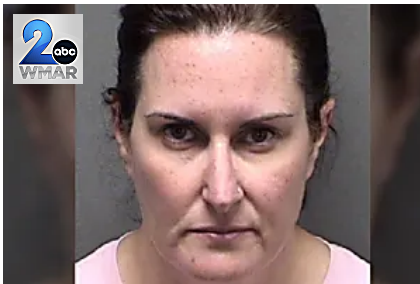
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