

## **161ST AIR REFUELING WING: ARIZONA**

The 161st Air Refueling Wing (ARW) is located at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (Sky Harbor IAP), which is owned and operated by the City of Phoenix. Sky Harbor IAP is the largest airport in Arizona. The



base operates from the south side of the airport.

Tracing its lineage to the 412th Fighter Squadron, the 161st ARW is nicknamed the

“Copperheads”. The unit has a proud history of supporting global air refueling and air mobility missions and is aligned under Air Mobility Command. It currently operates KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft.

The 161st ARW contributes approximately \$90 million to the local economy.



**Above:** A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 161st ARW refuels an F-15 Eagle from the Hawaii Air National Guard during an aerial refueling mission over the Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Air Force photo)

**Left:** A KC-135 Stratotanker refuels two F-16s from the 162d Wing over Arizona. The 161st ARW serves as the tanker base for units from Kansas, Wisconsin, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey Tennessee, New Hampshire and Utah. (U.S. Air Force photo)

### **FAST FACTS**

- » Location: **Phoenix, AZ (Maricopa County)**
- » Land Area: **60 acres**
- » Sorties/Operations: **~1,000 per year**
- » Military Personnel: **Approx. 800**
- » Civilian Personnel: **Approx. 20**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Deliver FIRST class, mission-ready citizen Airmen and resources to meet the air refueling and support needs of our community, state and nation

### **VISION STATEMENT**

**F**lexibility  
**I**ntegrity  
**R**eadiness  
**S**ustainability  
**T**eamwork

### **CONTACT**

**Public Affairs Officer**  
(602) 302-9449

## UNIT MISSIONS

- **161st Air Refueling Wing (“Copperheads”):** The Wing's Federal mission is to maintain well-trained, well-equipped units available for prompt mobilization during war and provide assistance during national emergencies such as natural disasters or civil disturbances. Provides aerial refueling in support of global national security interests and for several military flying units located throughout the Southwest, including units operating out of Luke Air Force Base and the 162nd Fighter Wing. In addition to geographically separated units at Luke Air Force Base and Papago Park Military Reservation, it includes the following groups:
  - **161st Operations Group:** Maintains all-weather war fighting capability in support of conventional and nuclear operations, special operations, contingency taskings, and homeland defense. It includes the 197<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron and the 161<sup>st</sup> Operations Support Squadron.
  - **161st Maintenance Group:** Provides safe, readily deployable aircraft manpower, and equipment in support of homeland defense and worldwide contingency operations. Approximately 240 Airmen assigned to the group perform several levels of maintenance on the KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft. The group consists of the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Maintenance Squadron, Maintenance Operations Flight and Quality Assurance.
  - **161st Medical Group:** Its peacetime mission is to monitor the physical health and fitness of all unit members, assuring the highest degree of worldwide duty capability. Medical personnel monitor the workplace, including ensuring occupational standards are met and that toxic materials and waste disposal practices meet federal, state and local standards. They train and sustain medical personnel in specialty training, required ancillary training and combat and disaster medical training, to mirror Air Force medical operations in the event of mobilization, natural disaster or civil unrest. Its wartime mission is to provide medical support for the aircrews and other support personnel of the 161st Air Refueling Wing. The group provides trained personnel in support of wartime taskings and mobility operations.
  - **161st Mission Support Group:** Provides support to the Air Force, State and wing by providing ready Airmen from the following squadrons- Logistics Readiness, Force Support, Security Forces, Communications and Civil Engineering; along with Environmental Management and Contracting support.

For more information, please see <https://dema.az.gov>



**Above:** 161st Air Refueling Wing emblem

### COMMANDER RANK

Colonel

### UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- » Established December 12, 1946
- » Located at Sky Harbor IAP
- » Operates from a 275,000 square foot base that is one of the Air National Guard's most modern facilities
- » Highly experienced unit; flying and maintaining the KC-135 for over 36 years
- » Rated "Excellent" by the Air Force Inspector General's Office during the 2012 Operation Readiness Inspection (ORI)