



Northrop Grumman Celebrates 20th Anniversary of First B-2 Spirit Delivery

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Stealth bomber provides key strategic deterrent in nation's diplomatic toolbox

PALMDALE, Calif., Dec. 17, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- On a grey, chilly afternoon 20 years ago today, the first operational B-2 stealth bomber, the *Spirit of Missouri*, circled the airfield at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., once, then landed, marking the start of a remarkable history that has given the U.S. one of its most powerful defensive – and diplomatic – weapons.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/pmh/20121024/LA985631LOGO>)

Developed, produced and sustained by a U.S. Air Force/Northrop Grumman Corporation-led (NYSE: NOC) industry team, the B-2 is the nation's premier long range strike aircraft. The fleet of 20 bombers is based at Whiteman, near Kansas City, ready to defend the nation's interests anywhere in the world, anytime day or night.

"For 20 years, the B-2 has been one of the nation's most decisive, most effective weapon systems for defending America's interests around the world. It deters our enemies and assures our allies of our capabilities and our commitment," said Brig. Gen. Thomas Bussiere, commander of the Air Force's 509th Bomb Wing.

The B-2, which can carry both conventional and nuclear weapons, is the only aircraft that combines stealth, long range, large payload and precision weapons. Its stealth characteristics allow it to penetrate sophisticated enemy air defenses and threaten heavily defended targets.

"The strength of the B-2 lies not simply in its warfighting capabilities, but also in the passion and the spirit of innovation of the men and women who have kept it lethal and effective against evolving threats for the past 20 years," said Dave Mazur, vice president and B-2 program manager, Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems. "It remains one of America's most important symbols of strength and freedom."

Northrop Grumman leads all B-2 modernization efforts. It also performs programmed depot maintenance on the fleet at its B-2 program office in Palmdale, Calif. Current modernization efforts will enhance the bomber's communications, defensive and weapons capabilities.

"The capabilities of the B-2, and the technological innovations behind it, are part and parcel of U.S. defensive and diplomatic leadership around the world," said Mazur. "As it has helped define the present, so it will continue to inform and help define the future."

Northrop Grumman is a leading global security company providing innovative systems, products and solutions in unmanned systems, cyber, C4ISR, and logistics and modernization to government and commercial customers worldwide. Please visit www.northropgrumman.com for more information.

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