

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2017

The Honorable Heather Wilson  
Secretary of the Air Force  
United States Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Wilson:

As members of the United States Congress representing the State of Alabama, we are writing to express our appreciation to the Air Force following its site visit last month to Dannelly Field in Montgomery, Alabama. As the Air Force evaluates possible locations to base its F-35A, it is our hope that you will give every consideration to the 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard.

As your team no doubt will relay to you, the 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is in an excellent strategic location, receives outstanding community support in Montgomery, and is a low cost option for the Air Force. With its superior training, operational capabilities, and a rich combat history, the 187<sup>th</sup> at Dannelly Field is ready to receive new aircraft now. Alabama's entire Congressional delegation offers its unqualified recommendation of the unit's selection.

We encourage you to give the 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing your full consideration when making basing decisions for the F-35A. We look forward to closely following developments related to this program and hopefully hearing your positive response.

Sincerely,



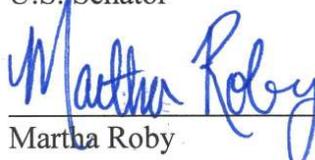
Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senator



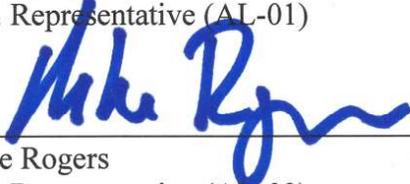
Luther Strange  
U.S. Senator



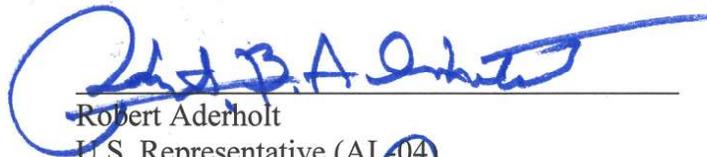
Bradley Byrne  
U.S. Representative (AL-01)



Martha Roby  
U.S. Representative (AL-02)



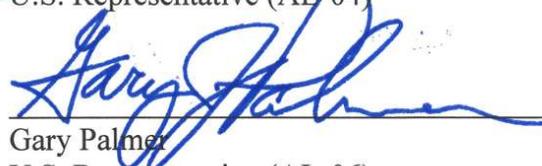
Mike Rogers  
U.S. Representative (AL-03)



Robert Aderholt  
U.S. Representative (AL-04)



Mo Brooks  
U.S. Representative (AL-05)



Gary Palmer  
U.S. Representative (AL-06)



Terri Sewell  
U.S. Representative (AL-07)

# 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Alabama Air National Guard Montgomery, Alabama

## **Best Strategic Location**

The 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing offers the full package for the Air Force operationally. According to the Air Force site visit team, the 187<sup>th</sup> FW's "overall airspace is excellent and opportunities exist for superior joint training with dissimilar aircraft." These local training assets include F-15C/E, F-16CM, F-22, F-35, ADAIR (T-38), KC-135, A-10, AC-130, CV-22, and U-28 capabilities. With a low historical weather attrition rate of 3.8%, the unit is capable of flying year-round with little to no issues.

## **Lowest Cost Option**

The Air Force site visit team estimates that the total bed down cost for the 187<sup>th</sup> FW would be a low \$18.76 million given "adequate capacity and facilities that are in good condition." The local community has committed to fund a new Entry Control Point for the 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. Additionally, the Airport Authority, from which the unit leases its footprint, has purchased 78 acres to protect against encroachment and to extend their second operational runway to 8,000 feet.

## **Ready Now**

The 187<sup>th</sup> FW has a fully staffed (4/40) active association today that is functional and supported. Its close proximity to Maxwell Air Force Base (5 NM) provides support for the total force association and Maxwell's ability to host international officers offers a potential F-35 combat unit for partner nation visitation. When addressing environmental factors, the Air Force site visit team reported back, "Concerns – none." Minimal facility modifications combined with the ability to leverage simulators at Eglin AFB could allow early aircraft acceptance if required.

## **Continuing the Legacy: A Rich Combat History**

The 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing has a proven combat track record and an unparalleled military heritage. The F-16s flown by the 187<sup>th</sup> FW carry the designation of the 100th Fighter Squadron, the first of three original WWII squadrons created to train African American Fighter Pilots in 1942. Guardsmen at the 187<sup>th</sup> still fly aircraft with "red tails" today and continue to honor the original Tuskegee Airmen. The 187<sup>th</sup> FW was the first Air National Guard Wing in the total force to conduct a stand-alone, six-month combat deployment to Afghanistan for which the unit received high accolades and has successfully completed numerous missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom and throughout the Middle East.