

United States Senate

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Barbara Barrett
Secretary
Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Barrett:

I write to you concerning your postponed tour of Malmstrom Air Force Base (AFB) and the 120th Airlift Wing in Great Falls, Montana. Currently, restrictions and guidelines regarding COVID-19 are being relaxed allowing for limited travel. Considering your visit was canceled due to the pandemic, I would like to invite you to Montana again to observe the outstanding work of the men and women of the Montana Air National Guard and Malmstrom AFB.

Malmstrom AFB has a long and distinguished history in the Air Force. In the 1940s, the base was instrumental in the success of the lend lease program, and provided critical training to pilots for the Berlin Airlift. Additionally, Malmstrom was President John F. Kennedy's 'Ace In The Hole' during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This year, Malmstrom airmen won the coveted Blanchard Trophy, given to the best ICBM base in Global Strike Command. Malmstrom holds the distinction of being the only base in history to win the Blanchard Trophy three times in a row and the base will continue to play an important role in United States' Nuclear Surety. As the Air Force starts to transition to Ground Based Strategic Deterrence (GBSD), Malmstrom has a unique set of attributes that make it the perfect location to ensure the program is implemented efficiently and effectively. Malmstrom has the largest footprint and most unique soil and geographic considerations of the three ICBM bases. We look forward to you seeing this first hand and hearing directly from the men and women of the 341st Missile Wing.

Along with Malmstrom AFB, Great Falls is also home to the 120th Airlift Wing of the Montana Air National Guard. The 120th currently is home to 8 C-130H cargo planes. The 120th has had an impressive record of missions with the C-130s following the Wing's two-year conversion from F-15 fighter jets in 2016. The C-130H models are the oldest in the Air Force's fleet and need to be updated. The citizen soldiers of the 120th have done a fantastic job maintaining these outdated airframes with the high operations tempo currently demanded of them. In addition, the 120th is one of the sited currently under consideration for the new Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (AES). We would love the opportunity to show you the unsurpassed airspace Great Falls has for the continued mission of the 120th, as well as, consideration of any future new opportunities to provide rapid, global mobility and sustainment for America's armed forces.

Thank you for your consideration of my invitation I look forward to welcoming you to the great state of Montana.

Sincerely,


STEVE DAINES
United States Senator