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Drone Incursions Closed Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's Airspace Friday Night

Wright-Patterson AFB, a high-profile base that's home to critical Air Force units, is the latest installation to deal with mysterious drones.

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WRIGHT PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE

The sprawling Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio is the latest military installation to report mysterious [drones flying over its airspace](#), *The War Zone* has learned.

“I can confirm small aerial systems were spotted over [Wright-Patterson](#) between Friday night and Saturday morning,” base spokesman Bob

Purtiman told *The War Zone* on Sunday in response to our questions about the sightings. “Today leaders have determined that they did not impact base residents, facilities, or assets. The Air Force is taking all appropriate measures to safeguard our installations and residents.”

The drones “ranged in sizes and configurations,” Purtiman said. “Our units are working with local authorities to ensure the safety of base personnel, facilities, and assets.”



| The sprawling Wright-Patterson AFB complex. (Google Earth)

After the drones were seen over Wright-Patterson, a Notice To Airman (NOTAM) was issued closing the airspace between Friday night and Saturday morning. The airspace has since been reopened, Purtiman said.

“Q) ZID/QFALC/IV/NBO/A/000/999/3949N08402W005 A) KFFO B) 2412140400 C) 2412140800 E) WRIGHT PATTERSON CLASS D AIRSPACE CLOSED DUE TO SECURITY THREAT M1133/24 NOTAMN

Q) ZID/QXXXX/IV/NBO/A/000/999/3949N08402W005 A) KFFO B) 2412140403 C) 2412140800 E) CAUTION: USE EXTREME CAUTION; HEAVY UAS ACTIVITY IN KFFO SURFACE AREA”

The following radio call between Wright-Patterson AFB tower and a medical transport aircraft that occurred during the drone incident was provided by a radio enthusiast reader:

Wright Patterson AFB drone incursions radio call night of Dec 13-14, 2024



Wright-Patterson is a critical installation for the USAF. It’s home to the Air Force Research Lab, Air Force Materiel Command, the 655th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, the National Air and Space Intelligence Center, the 445th Airlift Wing and the host 88th Air Base Wing, among other base tenants.

The confirmation of drones over Wright-Patterson came a day after the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration, and Defense Department (DoD) held a joint press conference to address the growing concern about sightings over the U.S., mostly in the airspace above New Jersey. *The War Zone* was the first to report the confirmation of [drones being spotted over Picatinny Arsenal](#) in that state. Since then, there has been a

flood of mostly unconfirmed and erroneous reported sightings throughout New Jersey.

Of more than 5,000 tips called into a national hotline set up to deal with these sightings, fewer than 100 generated leads “deemed worthy of further investigation,” an FBI spokesman told reporters, including from *The War Zone*, on Saturday.

The overwhelming majority of these sightings, [as we have previously reported](#), are crewed aircraft, the official reiterated on Saturday.

“Most of the reports of UAS have originated from the ground, with very, very few reports of UAS activities from pilots of manned aircraft,” said the FBI official, speaking on condition of anonymity. “Overlaying the visual sightings reported to the FBI with approach patterns for Newark-Liberty, JFK, and LaGuardia airports – the density of reported sightings matches the approach patterns of these very busy airports, flights coming in throughout the night. This modeling is indicative of manned aviation being quite often mistaken with unmanned aviation or UAS.”

Still, [as we have reported in the past](#), there are several confirmed drone sightings in New Jersey reported by trained observers at Picatinny and Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey. A [Coast Guard vessel off New Jersey also had](#) a recent encounter with what it called “multiple low-altitude aircraft.” U.S. officials are still trying to discover the origin of drones that appeared over four U.S. Air Force bases in the U.K., [a story we first broke](#). They’ve been spotted over RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, and RAF Feltwell, all within close proximity, and RAF Fairford, about 130 miles to the west.



A stock picture of a “No Drone Zone” sign and other warnings along the perimeter of RAF Lakenheath. Mark Kerrison/In Pictures via Getty Images

Though the origin of these drones remains a mystery, DoD officials continue to claim that they are neither dangerous nor actions by foreign adversaries.

“We have no intelligence or observations that would indicate that they were aligned with a foreign actor or that they had malicious intent, but just kind of simply tell you we don’t know. We have not been able to locate or identify the operators who are the points of origin,” the DoD official told reporters on Saturday. “The main point is to deter the activity using some of our electronic means that can respond to most of these small commercial systems and deny them access to the airspace over our bases. We don’t know what the activity is. We don’t know ... if it is criminal. But I will tell you that it is irresponsible. Here on the military side, we are just as frustrated with the irresponsible nature of this activity.”

Such ambiguity is wearing thin on the public as people are increasingly demanding clarity from the federal government on the issue.

Wright-Patterson is just the latest in a long string of drone sightings over sensitive facilities and military capabilities. A few days ago, [Ramstein Air Base in Germany](#) joined the growing list of places registering unknown drone overflights.



The U.S. Air Force has confirmed that there were drones seen over Ramstein Air Base in Germany. (Boris Roessler/picture alliance via Getty Images)

TWZ has [been on the leading edge](#) of [covering this topic for years](#) and has broken multiple stories now about [drone incursions over key U.S. bases](#) and [training ranges](#), as well as uncrewed aerial systems, [harassing American forces off the coasts](#) of the United States and making [worrisome overflights of important non-military sites](#). A spate of [drone incursions over Langley Air Force Base](#) in Virginia in December 2023, which [TWZ was the first report on](#), has now become a particular focal point of concern about these instances.

Most of the New Jersey drone sightings were misidentified, so it is notable that the ones spotted over Wright-Patterson, as with the other U.S. military installations, were seen by trained observers that are equipped with high-end gear to maintain security and to discriminate between friend and foe.

We will continue to provide additional details on the Wright-Patterson AFB incident and the larger drone incursions story as we get them.

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