

Die Hard 2



**Visit northern Michigan where
scenes from this iconic film series
were filmed.**



It's Christmas Eve. John McClane, played by Bruce Willis, is waiting for his wife to land at Washington Dulles International Airport when terrorists take over the air traffic control system. He must stop the terrorists before his wife's plane, and several other incoming flights that are circling the airport, run out of fuel and crash.

Die Hard 2 (sometimes referred to as *Die Hard 2: Die Harder*), is a 1990 American action film and the second movie in the *Die Hard* film series. *Die Hard 2* had a budget of \$70 million and made \$239.5 million worldwide, almost doubling that of the first film.



ALPENA COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT

Alpena

Numerous scenes from the movie were filmed at Alpena County Regional Airport, including the exterior shot of the grating door on the runway. However, the weather in Alpena was not as corporative as the crew hoped. Temperatures dropped as low as -5 degrees Fahrenheit the first night of shooting and four days later it was in the 60s. Lack of snow was at the heart of many of the production team's

problems and cost overruns. Initially, director Renny Harlin planned on using the normally snowed-in Stapleton International Airport in Denver as the primary location. But the snow melted early in the season and the crew was forced to move farther north, to Moses Lake, Washington. Unseasonably warm temperatures sent them packing again to Minnesota, which also did not have any snow. Finally, they decided to film in Alpena. Although there was some snow in Alpena while filming, they needed more and had to make artificial snow before going further north to Michigan's Upper Peninsula town of Kinross.

"We went to four locations and as soon as we got there, it stopped snowing," reported actor Bruce Willis. "So we had to pack up 150 guys and take them somewhere else. We even considered going to Greenland. And that's a true story."



PHOTO: ALPENA CVB

Tarmac scenes were filmed at the airport and featured many locals as extras in shots inside the plane, during the evacuation scenes, and on the tarmac.

Meet Odin, the official wildlife control dog for Alpena County Regional Airport. He has the serious duty of keep the runway clear of birds and other animals so planes can land safely and wildlife can stay healthy.



PHOTO: ALPENA CVB

KINCHELOE AIR FORCE BASE

Kinross

Die Hard 2 stunt doubles and crew filmed at this air force base for the scene showing a plane landing and rushing toward the screen. Kincheloe Air Force Base was a U.S. Air Force base during the Cold War. The base was named for Iven Kincheloe, an aeronautical engineer and test pilot from Michigan. Kincheloe was a recipient of the Silver

Star and distinguished Flying Cross, as well as an flying ace in the Korean War. Kincheloe Air Force Base served as a refueling base for aircraft heading to Alaska during WWII, and as an air base for defense of the Soo Locks. Without the use of the Soo Locks, America could not effectively operate its war machine. If the locks were bombed, ships carrying Upper Peninsula iron and copper ore to the mills of the lower lakes would be unable to sail from Lake Superior.

Some of the jets that were stationed at Kinross were Northrop F-89H Scorpions, and Lockheed F-94B Starfires. After filming completed at this air force base, the crew and production staff returned to L.A. where final shooting was done on refrigerated sound stages where they covered the ground with crushed ice to resemble snow.



PHOTO: CHIPPEWA COUNTY AIRPORT

Area attractions

While in Alpena the cast and crew enjoyed the small-town charm of the community. Alpena's winding bike paths, locally owned restaurants and boutiques, taverns and parks offered a relaxing environment when filming wrapped each day. While filming, Willis rented a historic private residence on the dignified State Avenue, near Campbell Street, on the shore of Lake Huron. Crew and production team filled up the area's many hotels.

GLASS BOTTOM BOAT SHIPWRECK TOURS

Alpena

Beautiful and spooky at the same time. There are dozens of wrecks in the Thunder Bay area of Lake Huron. The crystal-clear waters and large, glass bottom, viewing wells on the shipwreck tours in Alpena allow you to dive into the wrecks, without getting wet. Learn the exciting tales of many famous ships, the history, and legends and lore of Lake Huron aboard this unique boat



PHOTO: ALPENA CVB

tour. For more information, visit www.alpenashipwrecktours.com.

THUNDER BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Alpena

Alpena is home to the nation's only freshwater preserve protecting an astounding 200 historic shipwrecks. Visitors can get an up close view by diving, snorkeling or kayaking the area. Be sure to stop in at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, a museum devoted to the history of the ships on the Great Lakes. Highlights include a wooden Great Lakes schooner and shipwreck where visitors can walk the decks, feel a Great Lakes storm, and touch the massive timbers of the boat resting on the lake bottom...all without getting wet!

INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK

Alpena

Meet the stars of Alpena! Alpena is centrally located to three of Michigan's newest officially designated Dark Sky Preserve Parks. This is the perfect place for dark sky viewing of constellations, aurora borealis, and meteor showers.

THUNDER BAY RESORT ELK VIEWING

Hillman

Thunder Bay Resort is known for its award-winning Elk Viewing Dinner Ride and Wine Tasting Adventure. You can also board a horse-drawn carriage and let a mighty team of draft horses whisk

you away for an up close look at majestic elk. Afterwards, back at the Antler Cabin, guests are greeted by a warm fire, wine tasting and a five-course meal prepared in 100-year-old wood cook stoves. It's a phenomenal experience.



PHOTO: CIRCLE MICHIGAN

MILL CREEK DISCOVERY PARK Mackinaw City

Soar like an eagle on this zip lining adventure and trek through the treetops on the Adventure Tour! This special guided nature experience takes visitors over the Forest Canopy Bridge, down the 425-foot Eagle's Flight zip line, and up the five-story Treetop Discovery climbing wall. For more information, visit www.mackinacparks.com/parks-and-attractions/historic-mill-creek-discovery-park.

SOO LOCKS BOAT CRUISE Sault Ste. Marie

Only 50 miles north of the beautiful Mackinac Bridge is the oldest city in Michigan and the third oldest city in the U.S. — Sault Ste. Marie. Founded

by French missionaries in 1668, it is home to the historic Soo Locks and the Soo Locks Boat Cruise, a top attraction that has been offering exciting tours through the famous Soo Locks since 1934. Experience "locking through" where Lake Huron meets Lake Superior with a 21-foot drop in elevation. Cruise alongside giant lake freighters and ocean vessels. It's an experience you will never forget. For more information, visit www.soolocks.com.



TAHQUAMENON FALLS

Tahquamenon Falls State Park, Paradise

These thundering waterfalls are one of the largest waterfalls east of the Mississippi. It has a drop of nearly 50 feet and is more than 200 feet across. A maximum flow of more than 50,000 gallons of water per second cascades over to the river below. A sight to behold and worth the short trip — there are several miles of walking trails, a pub and brewery and gift shop. For more information, visit www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails.

GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECK MUSEUM

Whitefish Point

Be sure to check out this benchmark shipwreck museum situated on the largest of all the Great Lakes, Lake Superior. Deceptively beautiful, Lake Superior's unrelenting fury has earned the reputation of being the most treacherous of the Great Lakes. Throughout the museum and theater, visitors will see maritime legends come to life. Artifacts and exhibits tell stories of sailors and ships who braved the waters of Superior and those who were lost to its menacing waves. One of the highlights in the museum focuses on the story and legend of the country's most famous shipwreck, the Edmund Fitzgerald. It is a hauntingly beautiful exhibit and the complex includes a lighthouse and lightkeepers home, which is open to the public. For more information, visit www.shipwreckmuseum.com.



PICTURED ROCKS BOAT CRUISE

Munising

About an hour to the west, you'll come to the picturesque harbor town of Munising. Nestled along the shores of Lake Superior, Munising is home to the famous Pictured Rocks Boat Tour. This narrated boat tour tells of stories in stone as you cruise by towering formations of rock made from wind and water. This is the spectacular Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. It was voted by "Good Morning America" viewers as one of the top 10 most beautiful places in America. When you take the boat tour, you'll see why. For more information, visit www.picturedrocks.com. For the more adventurous, experience Pictured Rocks by kayak. Join the Pictured Rocks Kayak Company for guided tours. Visit www.paddlepicturedrocks.com for more information.



PHOTO: CIRCLE MICHIGAN

KITCH-ITI-KIPI (THE BIG SPRING)

Palms Book State Park, Manistique

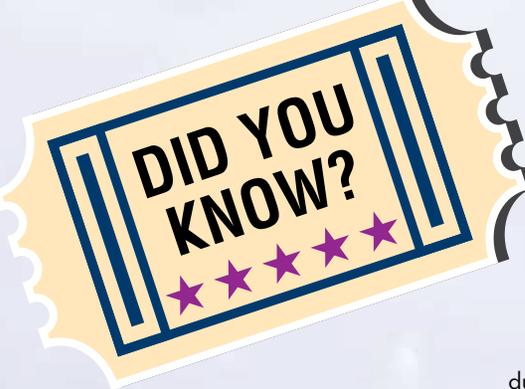
Sixty-five miles south of Munising and just west of Manistique is Michigan's largest underground spring, Kitch-iti-kiipi. An unbelievable 200 feet across and 42 feet deep, the big spring delivers 16,000 gallons of crystal clear water per minute that gushes from fissures in the underlying limestone at a constant 45 degree Fahrenheit. The spring **never** freezes over. You can ride the raft for a beautiful view across the spring. This hidden gem in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a must see! For more information, visit [www.uptravel.com/member-110/kitch-iti-kiipi-\(the-big-spring\)-5932.html](http://www.uptravel.com/member-110/kitch-iti-kiipi-(the-big-spring)-5932.html).



PHOTO: CIRCLE MICHIGAN

HISTORIC FAYETTE Garden

Historic Fayette is Michigan's only restored ghost town and where the Jackson Iron Company produced "pig iron" back in the 1800s. Hugging Snail Harbor, Fayette has a gorgeous setting among white limestone cliffs and the sparkling blue waters of Lake Michigan. Stone structures with archway and alcoves resembles that of Spanish architecture. Once a bustling company town at the tip of the Garden Peninsula, the well-preserved buildings have been standing for nearly 150 years. For more information, visit www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?type=SPRK&id=417



DID YOU KNOW?

For his part in the movie, Bruce Willis was paid \$7.5 million.

One of the writers of the screenplay, Steven E. de Souza, later admitted that the villains were based on America's Central American meddling, primarily the Iran-Contra affair.

Alpena Airport in northern Michigan was chosen for filming because of its propensity for snowfall, but due to unseasonably good weather, a lack of snowfall before and during filming meant artificial snow had to be used throughout.

Die Hard 2 was the first film to use digitally composited live-action footage with a traditional matte painting that had been photographed and scanned into a computer. It was used for the last scene, which took place on the runway.

Black & Decker paid to have its cordless drill featured in a scene with actor Bruce Willis. When the scene was cut from the finished film, the company sued 20th Century Fox in the first-ever product placement lawsuit for a film. The \$150,000 claim was settled out of court.

Die Hard 2 won the BMI Film Music Award for 1990.

Before Bruce Willis landed the role of John McClane in the original *Die Hard* movie, other big name actors were sought

out for the part, including Sylvester Stallone, Harrison Ford, Mel Gibson, Burt Reynolds and Richard Gere.

According to actor, John Leguizamo, his role in *Die Hard 2* was intended to be much larger until the filmmakers realized how short he was. His part was cut down to one line which was dubbed by someone else.

Local actor, Darrel Kelly Milligan, from Alpena, tells a funny story, "I was a fireman in the movie. We were all in place on the set outside in the cold with fire, fake snow blowing around which was laundry detergent. Man, that stuff burned the eyes. The extras, including me, had to be near the fires and plane parts that they set up to imitate a plane wreck. The star, Bruce Willis, refused to do the scene because he had to be too close to the fire. I thought that was funny because all of the extras including me, had to be a lot closer to it than he did, and we were getting \$10 an hour and he was making millions. Production was on hold for hours until they reached a compromise."

In the first *Die Hard* movie (1988), actor Bruce Willis had only a few scripted one-liners. Willis ad-libbed so many one liners and audiences liked them so much, that in *Die Hard 2* more gags were added and Willis was told he could ad-lib as many as he saw fit.

The confrontation scene between John McClane and William Sadler on the airplane's wing took several nights to shoot. Giant fans were used to blow in the fake snow in the background due to the lack of real snow.

In *Die Hard 2*, the Christmas song "Let It Snow!" is sung by Vaughn Monroe; the same song plays both at the end of this film

and in the original *Die Hard* movie. Sort of ironic, since lack of snow was definitely a problem causing the airport scenes to be filmed at a half dozen different locations around the country.

Reginald Vel Johnson said that after his appearances in the first two *Die Hard* films, he would be frequently teased by friends and people on the street for his character's obsession with Twinkies, with some people even going so far as to buy Twinkies and throw them into his car while he was inside.

During filming, actor Fred Thompson told Steven E. de Souza (screenwriter) that the amount of four-letter words in the screenplay was excessive and he thought it made the movie seem unintentionally funny and hard to take seriously. Steven reviewed the script again and agreed to remove some of the curse words.

***Die Hard 2* was filmed in Alpena during the late winter and a warm front came through bringing rain. The plane they had just painted began to streak with color running down the sides. All the soap flakes (and later instant potato flakes) used to make snow, mixed with the rain and turned the ground around the set to mush.**

Screenwriter Steven de Souza, revealed that the studio filmed a second plane crash sequence. Why did they do this? De Souza revealed that the studio wanted to shoot a second plane crash in which far fewer innocent people would die. The studio insisted, "You can't kill all those people. We'll lose the audience. It has to be a UPS plane." They filmed a model UPS plane crashing as another option in case the audience left the theater after the plane crashed in the original filming. Fortunately, audiences loved the movie at a test screening and production kept the original plane crash.

Major Grant's commando team is referred to as "Blue Light." This was the name of a real-life U.S. military anti-terrorist team formed within the U.S. Army Rangers in the 1970s.

An interesting tidbit about Bruce Willis: Acting helped him to overcome a childhood stutter. Willis revealed, "I had a terrible stutter. But then I did some theater in high school and when I memorized words, I didn't stutter, which was just miraculous. That was the beginning of the gradual dispelling of my stutter. I thought I was handicapped. I couldn't talk at all. I still stutter around some people now."

Bruce Willis's performance as John McClane in the *Die Hard* trilogy is ranked No. 46 on *Premiere Magazine's* "100 Greatest Movie Characters of All Time."

A great story from Alpena actor Robert Centala: "As an extra, I was the first one to slide down the emergency shoot. We did have a big controversy because the director's *Die Hard* hat he received from Bruce Willis turned up missing. As all the extras were sitting on the plane during one of the filming sessions, he got up in front of everyone and gave a speech about how special it was and that he wanted it back. He said whoever took it, just put it back, no questions asked. The director was mad. Well, I noticed the guy sitting in front of me whispering and getting red faced and sweaty, he was the one who took it and was afraid to give it back. I told him I would say I found it and put it back. But, people were drinking a little bit on the plane and he didn't want anyone to kick his butt, so I had to take the hat from him and put it back so the director got it back. He was very thankful when I told him what happened, and maybe that's why I got in the scene for my three or four seconds!"



The Michigan Film and Digital Media Office (MFDMO) was created in 1979 to assist and attract incoming production companies and to promote the growth of Michigan's indigenous industry. Since its inception, the MFDMO commissioner has been responsible for implementing a program that lives within the parameters of Michigan law and works to ensure the program runs efficiently and effectively. Today, the MFDMO is working diligently to guarantee the film and digital media program accomplishes key results of private investment and workforce development by encouraging high wages, high-tech jobs and talent retention.

*Die Hard 2 tour is the sole property of the Michigan Film & Digital Media Office.
Special thanks to Janet Kasic of Circle Michigan for content creation.*

mfo@michigan.org ■ tel 800 477 3456 ■ fax 517 241 3689 ■ MichiganFilmOffice.org