



# Successful finish for NATO Tiger Meet 2014



**17 flying units from NATO and PfP (Partnership for Peace) countries called it a success. By the end of June 2014 all participants of NATO Tiger Meet 2014 were more than satisfied with the results of the high value training exercise hosted by the GAF TakLwG (Tactical Air Force Wing) 51 "Immelmann".**



**Commander of TaktLwG 74, Oberst Frank Gräfe, after landing with his painted Eurofighter at Jagel Air Base.**

**Jagel Air Base / Northern Germany** – Over 70 aircraft out of 11 different nations were involved in the two-week large scale air exercise. In two waves per day jets and helicopters took off from air base Jagel, about 100 kilometres north of Hamburg. Up to 50 aircraft at a time transited to specific areas over the North Sea that offered perfect training opportunities. Composite Air Operations (COMAO) extended from the Dutch coastline northwest of Amsterdam via the German Bight up to the Danish coast. With 160 x 200 NM the training area has about the dimensions of the Netherlands. Besides a few technical drop outs two ops waves had to be cancelled due to bad weather. While the first week saw some strong winds and sea state beyond the limits of some units, the second week had a big thunderstorm in the vicinity of the air base Jagel. In total over 600 COMAOs and other missions could be flown under generally good weather conditions, so that the training goals of this multinational exercise could be achieved.

**High Value Training** – Facing budget cuts in the recent years it becomes more and more important for most NATO countries to spend the money effectively for their aircrew training. The preparation of possible combat missions needs specific training tailored to the needs of the individual squadrons. All this should be embedded in the international environment of Composite Air Operations to train standardised procedures and minimize friction between different assets. Complex missions with a great diversity of forces involved need detailed preparation, planning and coordination. That everything during the exercise worked successfully was largely a result of the planning staff of the host wing with its “White Cell” team that ensured the proper and safe conduct of the exercise.

**New participants** – Colonel Frank Gräfe (45), commander of Tactical Air Wing 74 at Neuburg / Donau in southern Germany is highly pleased with the results of the exercise. It is the first full NATO Tiger Meet for his Wing. On day 2 of the NTM he flew in with a fully tiger painted Eurofighter and stated a few remarks towards the end of the exercise: *“Until I became commander of the 74 Wing last year and learned about the tiger tradition that had been taken over from the decommissioned FBW 32 at Lechfeld, I knew very little about the tiger community. This has changed. Already when we visited the NTM 13 at Orland Main Air Station in Norway for a few days, I started to understand the high value of this unique NATO exercise. Last year we were only 13 observers with three jets, but this year we are present with over 100 men and women from our wing. This will highly increase the acceptance of the NATO Tiger Meet within our Wing. What my detachment in experiencing here is outstanding. Besides the great hospitality of Recce Wing 51 “Immelmann” it is the brilliant organisation and the excellent training opportunities for the pilots and the technicians that are convincing everybody. For the future the NTM will have a fixed spot in our annual training program. We hope to become a*



**Painted tail of Dutch F-16 MLU of 313 Squadron / Volkel.**

full member of the NATO Tiger Association very soon.” Another debut had 361 Squadron of the German Army attack helicopter regiment 36 “Kurbessen” from Fritzlar that came up to Schleswig with a small detachment and brought one EC 665 Tiger for flying in the exercise. Not only for the name of this airframe the NTA is hoping to see them again, but especially for the reinforcement of the exercise helicopter fleet.

„White Cell drives the exercise“, says Major Stefan Kuzia (34) who had the operational authority as exercise director for NTM 14. As deputy chief standardization of the 51 Wing and experienced Weapon System Officer (WSO) with over 2000 flying hours on Tornado, he already participated in many NATO Tiger Meets and other major air exercises. Being busy with the preparation of the flying part of the exercise in the months prior he describes his task as exercise director as follows: *“For every large exercise it is of vital importance to have prepared scenarios that can be inserted into the daily exercise play. The so called “White Cell” is responsible for the operational flow of the exercise with all tasking details, such as routing, targets, air refuelling tracks, slot times and the composition of the attack forces. All this is laid down in the Air Task Order (ATO) which is distributed to the participants and*



Aircrews receiving last updates at tiger ops prior to the mission.

*external support units the day prior to the mission. During the planning conferences last autumn and this spring we collected the various training needs of the different squadrons and incorporated them into the exercise play.”* During the NTM 2014 four experienced aircrews supported the exercise director as well as two intelligence officers that held the briefings with the daily intel scenarios plus an ATO officer that kept the Air Task Order updated. In addition the Mission Monitors, or short “MiMos” supported the participating aircrews with the coordination of complex formations and rechecked the planning with respect to routing, timing, mission flow to assure deconfliction between different formations of an attack force or Red Air forces.

**Flight Safety** – Safe conduct of large air exercises with numerous aircraft in small target areas is of highest priority and needs detailed coordination between the forces with respect to time and airspace. In order to achieve all this, a special flight planning tool was used during NTM 2014. With the Portable Flight Planning Software (PFPS) and the Combat Flight Planning Software (CFPS) respectively it was possible to spot possible points of conflict already prior to mission execution. Falcon View is a special function of these planning tools. It allows displaying the flight paths of different aircraft both track and time-wise, which is good for small target areas.



Always a bit of tiger flair – Czech Pilots on the way to their jets.

Furthermore all participating air and ground crews received at Startex a thorough safety briefing.

**Multinational Environment** – More than 1000 personnel were hosted for the two weeks at Jagel Air Base. That was a logistic challenge which was well handled by Tactical Recce Wing 51 “Immelmann” (TaktLwG 51“I”) especially with respect to food and transport, not talking about the ops side of the exercise. Besides a large fleet of 20 F-16 from Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey and Poland, France was up with a 3 Mirage 2000 from ECE 05.330 and 7 Rafale from EC 01.07 and Flotille 11. The Gripen Community from 211 SQN CzAF and 591 SQN HunAF represented the second largest group with 9 jets followed by the GAF Eurofighters from GAF Tactical Fighter Wing 74 (TaktLwG 74) that employed 7 jets. In absence of 15 Wing from Spain, the Swiss from 11 Staffel kept up the Hornet spirit with 5 F/A-18 C/D. JTS from Austria came in with 4 Saab 105OE and 51 Wing as host added 4 Tornados RECCE/ECR. The helicopter fleet was present with a Merlin from 814 SQN Royal Navy, 2 Mi-24 Hind and a Mi-17 Hip from 221 SQN CzAF plus an EC 665 Tiger from 361 SQN German Army for the first time ever. Civil contractor GFD



Colonel Hans-Jürgen Knittlmeier during closing ceremony of NTM 2014 .



JTACs returning from mission .

from Hohn AB /Germany added a Learjet for electronic jamming. Together with all the flying Tiger units a number of further ground units supported the exercise play with special tasks. Two Joint Terminal Attack Controller Teams (JTAC) from the Czech Republic and Germany participated in Close Air Support Missions (CAS) with their Forward Air Controllers and a Personal Recovery Team (PRT) from the GAF Regiment at Jever Air Base was employed during Combat Search and Rescue Missions (CSAR) to pick up downed aircrews behind the line of own troops. Furthermore SAM systems with SA-6 and SA-8 fire control radars from POLYGON Multinational Aircrew Electronic Warfare Tactics Facility (MAEWTF) were stationed in the exercise area at the air bases Nordholz and Wittmund. German GCI Controllers (Ground Controlled Intercept) worked together with an E-3A AWACS of 1 SQN NAEW&CF (NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force from Geilenkirchen/Germany that flew out of their Forward Operating Base (FOB) at Ørland

Main Air Station / Norway. Danish fighter allocators controlled the northern part of the exercise area. In addition the German Navy had the frigate „Mecklenburg-Vorpommern“ employed in the exercise.

**Invaluable experience** – For aircrews the NTM is a welcome occasion to exchange ideas on an international level. Major Raffael Klaschka (36) flies the Eurofighter at GAF Tactical Air Force Wing 74 Neuburg. He was involved in the preparation of his wing for the exercise and notes: *“For us, pilots on the Eurofighter, it is very important to have the chance to fly against other airframes of the third and fourth generation. Here at the NATO Tiger Meet we have an excellent opportunity for that. We can test the capabilities of our platform and improve our skills. But not only operational flying is that what counts on a Tiger Meet. There something more to it. I was impressed by the spirit and the bonds between all the international squadrons. This convinced a lot of people in our wing to join the tiger community. Aside of that I am very happy that we already won a trophy for the best tiger paint of a jet. That was worthwhile. For next year I am hoping that we will be able*



Winner of Silver Tiger Trophy - Fliegerstaffel 11 Swiss Air Force.

to participate in NTM with a similar detachment as this year to profit from valuable training experiences” concludes Major “Klax” Klaschka.

**Silver Tiger** – The NTA award of the awards and prize for the best overall performance during a NATO Tiger meet went to Switzerland this year. Fliegerstaffel 11 from Meiringen won it for the third time (also 1982 at RAF Gütersloh and 2008 at Landivisiau). The alpine squadron also got honoured for their stylish elegant flight suit and received the award for the best tiger dress. The remaining awards went to 6. ELT from Poznan-Krzesiny / Poland for best flying squadron, EC 01/07 „Provence“ from Saint Dizier/France for

winning the Tiger Games and 591 SQN from Kecskemet / Hungary for the best sketch during skit night. The Special Tiger Spirit Award was awarded to three individuals from the host wing TaktLwG 51 “Immelmann“ for their special dedication during preparation and conduct of the NTM 2014.

**Mission accomplished**, that is how it is characterized by Colonel Hans-Jürgen Knittlmeier (50), commander of Tac Air Force Wing 51 “Immelmann” after the NTM 2014. It was the fourth Tiger Meet he was involved in. Already in 2004 when the Immelmann Wing organised the exercise for the first time he was impressed by the exercise and its tactical value: *“The NATO Tiger Meet is one of the best air exercises that Europe has to offer and can be seen on the same level as big flag exercises in the US and elsewhere. Teamwork between squadrons and cooperation on all working levels. Mission planning, execution and debriefing uses state of the art tools to*



Mi-24 Hind of 221 Squadron Namest/CZ on CSAR Mission.

guarantee the best possible training outcome. On top there are the personal contacts between the participants from different nations that strengthen bonds and enforce the famous tiger spirit. The appearance of the tiger meets has changed from the sixties up to now. Weekend meets without flying activity were exchanged by two-week air exercises with complex air operations. I hope that the NATO Tiger Meet will remain what it is now and can be held regularly. I will be handing over the command of the wing in soon but I will keep in touch with tigers, since once a tiger always a tiger."

**Outlook** – For the next two years the exercise is be safe with respect to hosting squadrons. In 2015 192 SQN will organize the NATO Tiger Meet at Konya / Turkey and in 2016 the meet will be at Zaragoza / Spain hosted by 15 Ala of the Spanish Air Force.

In the long run Tac Recce Wing 51 "Immelmann" already offered to host NTM 2020.

**Further in-depth information** and hundreds more images of all participating squadrons, their aircraft and operations you will find in the 176 pages of the "NTM 2014 photo+report" book, that will appear January 2015. You can purchase it on this website, at present still for a pre-order price.



Merlin Mk1 from 814 Squadron Royal Navy /Culdrose/UK is specialized on anti submarine warfare.



## Participants NATO Tiger Meet 2014

5	JAS 39 Gripen	591 SQN	HunAF	Keczkemet/HU
4	JAS 39 Gripen	211 SQN	CzAF	Caslav / CZ
5	F-16 Block 52	6 SQN	PoIAF	Poznan-Krzesiny / PL
5	F-16 MLU	313 SQN	RNLAF	Volkel / NL
5	F-16 MLU	31 SQN	BAC	Kleine Brogel / B
5	F-16 Block 50	192 Filo	TuAF	Balikesir / Tu
3	Rafale C	EC 01/07	Armeé de l'Air	Saint Dizier / F
4	Rafale M	11 F	Aeronavale	Landivisiau / F
3	Mirage 2000-5	ECE 05/330	Armeé de l'Air	Mont de Marsan /F
5	F/A-18	Fliegerstaffel 11	SwAF	Meiringen / CH
7	Eurofighter	TaktLwG 74	Luftwaffe	Neuburg / D
4	Tornado Recce/ ECR	TaktLwG 51"l"	Luftwaffe	Schleswig / D
4	Saab 105 OE	Jet Trainer Staffel	Bundesheer	Linz / A
1	E-3A AWACS	1 SQN	NATO	Geilenkirchen / D
2	Merlin	814 SQN	Royal Navy	Culdrose / UK
2	Mi-24 Hind	221 SQN	CzAF	Namest / CZ
1	Mi-17 Hip	221 SQN	CzAF	Namest / CZ
1	EC 665 Tiger	FlgAbt 361	Heeresflieger	Fritzlar / D
1	Learjet	GFD	Zivil	Hohn / D

### External Forces

1	A310 MRTT	Flugbereitschaft BMVg	Luftwaffe	Köln / D
1	KDC-10	334 SQN	RNLAF	Eindhoven / NL

### Ground Forces

1	JTAC team		GAF	Nörvenich/Jever
1	JTAC team		CzAF	
1	PRT team		GAF	Jever
	Polygone	SA-6, SA-8	GAF	Ramstein