

NATO Tiger Association

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Tiger Formation during NTM'12
Source: Metternich/NTA

Arctic Tiger in Norway

Incorporated into the Air Exercise "Arctic Tiger II", NATO Tiger Meet 2012 took place at Ørland Main Air Station (MAS). Host was 338 Squadron of the Royal Norwegian Air Force.



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Czech JAS-39 Gripen from 211 Squadron, Caslav AFB
Source: Metternich/NTA

For the second time after 2007 the airbase, 70 kilometers northwest of Trondheim, became the center of one of the biggest air exercises in Europe. Norway's beautiful coastline with its small islands, deep fjords and snow-capped mountains was the background scenery for high value training of aircrews and technicians from 10 different nations. Between May 28th and June 8th approximately 700 men and women, plus 54 aircraft were based at Ørland MAS. The principal focus was the cooperation of different air assets. Fighters, fighterbombers, recce aircraft, SEAD forces (Suppression of Enemy Air Defences), electronic jammers, CSAR helicopters (Combat Search and Rescue), Boeing E-3A early warning aircraft and KC-135 tankers conducted joint operations over eight flying days.

High Value Exercise

Beside painted Jets with tiger schemes and colorful accessories for the flight suits and overalls of aircrews and technicians that always attract the attention of the public, the objectives of the exercise were certainly focused on the so called Composite Air Operations (COMAO). An average of 40 aircraft were involved in these "COMAO packages". In two waves per day up to 75 missions could be flown daily. During the exercise a total of 500 missions were executed from 11 Tiger Squadrons and 4 external flying units. In addition several Norwegian units with Special Forces, ground based air defense (GBAD) with NASAMS (Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile System) and a CROTALE Surface to Air Missile system (SAM) from EMSA (Escadron de Missiles Sol-Air) 01/950 from Istres in southern France were included in the exercise scenario. Overall 30 different units from 10 nations plus representatives from different Norwegian and NATO Headquarters participated in the exercise "Arctic Tiger 2012". Also in attendance were observers from another 7 Tiger units which could not join the exercise due to operational and budget reasons.



Radar Console inside a NATO Boeing E3-A AWACS
Source: Metternich/NTA



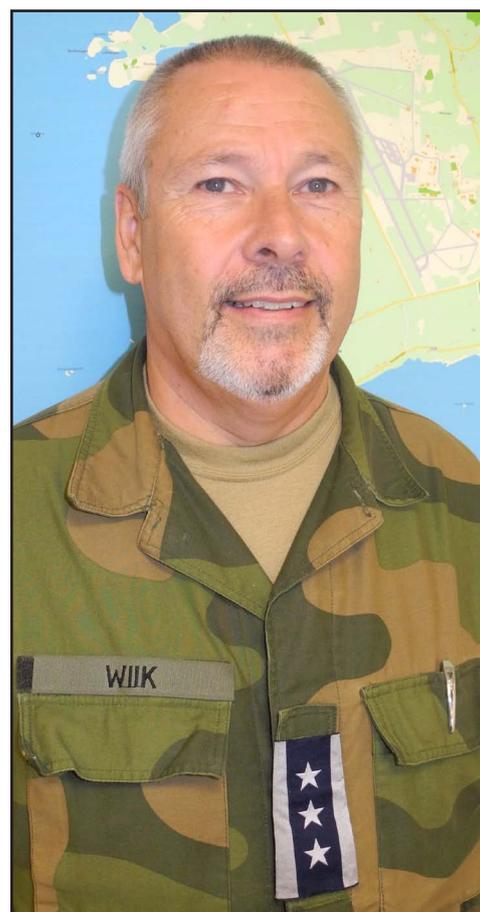
Two Puma HC.1 of 230 Sqn, Royal Air Force
Source: Goovaerts/NTA

Realistic Scenarios

A fictional regional situation was the basis for all the missions flown during the whole exercise. The political conflict between 2 countries led to terroristic acts and military actions that had to be countered from the joint TIGER FORCES. Even without direct relation to an actual military conflict, the exercise scenarios were closely attached to recent military conflicts in the world. This is very important, since realistic training is of utmost importance for every operational squadron. As an example, the Air and Ground Forces of the invented state of TORTUGA had to be engaged due to their support of terrorist organizations and the existence of terrorist training camps in some of their provinces. The task for one of the COMAOs was to destroy with a bomber attack one of these terrorist training camps that was heavily defended by SAM-Systems. At the same time a second camp had to be neutralized with Special Forces that were dropped from helicopters in the vicinity.

Air Task

The planning of a complex mission with more than 40 aircraft is not easy to accomplish, since dissimilar aircraft from different squadrons have to fit into one plan. Especially fast jets and slow helicopters have to coordinate their timings and routings. “For planning an execution of a COMAO a so called Mission Commander is labeled, who receives an Air Task Message (ATM) a day prior of the mission to be flown. In this ATM all intentions and desired results are listed, as well as all available forces” explains Colonel Geir Wiik from the National Joint Headquarter (NJHQ) of the Norwegian Forces at Bodø in northern Norway. He is the Exercise Director of “Arctic Tiger” and supervises the exercise. As a former Fighter Allocator he has a lot of experience with complex air operations and COMAOs. “The Mission Commander is supported by our so called Air Bosses, who help to coordinate as aspects of the mission. They are all Norwegian fighter pilots, which are well familiar with the local procedures and national rules. Every morning after a surveillance flight with a weather check they have a Go-NoGo-Meeting in which the decision is made, if the missions can be flown as planned or not, because flight safety is paramount” adds Colonel Wiik.



Exercise Director Arctic
Tiger: Colonel Geir Wiik
NJHQ
Source: Metternich/NTA

**LEFT**

Mission Planning Meeting a day prior to the COMAO Source: Metternich/NTA

BOTTOM

Tiger Spirit to land: Tornado of AG 51 "I" Source: Metternich/NTA

Planning

Prior to the actual planning cycle all details of the ATM have to be analyzed. In a coordination meeting a rough plan and first planning details are jotted down for the different elements of the formation. Besides routing, air-to-air refueling, holdings and altitude separation, the close coordination includes who is when and where. This is not only vital in the target area, but already on the ground prior takeoff. If someone taxis too early, he might block the taxiway for others that have to takeoff earlier. Then again during landing phase a well-organized recovery is important, when more than 40 jets have to land on the homebase within a short timeframe. Additionally time coordination between jets as "fast movers" and helicopters as "slow movers" is a critical issue.



Mission

Every jet and helicopter has defined roles and tasks that in combination result in the specific strength of such a big mixed force. First early warning aircraft and tankers position themselves into their orbits. Then the COMAO package follows them into the holding areas and forms up to a compact formation after air-to-air refueling, before leaving the "push points" into hostile territory. In front fighters act as "sweep", to clear the route from "red force fighters". Subsequently SEAD forces (Suppression of Enemy Air Defences) follow to hold down or destroy fire control radars of



Mass Debriefing after Mission

Source: Metternich/NTA

hostile SAM systems with their HARMs (High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles). In trail fighter bombers attack defined key-targets, such as bridges, railroad yards, airfields or command and communication facilities close to the frontline or further back in hostile territory. They are escorted by own fighters that works in a dual role. If necessary they can defend the formation as fighters, but their other task as fighter bomber is to drop their weapons on the targets. Last but not least reconnaissance aircraft overfly the attacked targets to make an immediate damage assessment, besides electronic communication and radar jammers that are in the area all the time to saturate hostile communications. Furthermore helicopter operations with CSAR tasks are conducted to rescue downed aircrews, free hostages or evacuate own troops with Special Forces.



Belgian F-16 from 31 SQN - Kleine Brogel AB in Tiger Look

Source: Metternich/NTA

Debriefing

After all aircraft have landed the mission is not yet over for the aircrews. The Mission has to be analyzed and debriefed. Together all participants collect the data to reconstruct the “Big Picture”. Shots are claimed and analyzed and the results are presented on over sized screens in the auditorium at the “Mass Debriefing”. At the end of the debriefing „Lesson learned“ are summed up to improve future operations.

Organisation

Besides the preparation of the NTM 2012 and the conduct of the exercise with the support of external units and the NJHQ in Bodø, it was the base's hospitality that made foreign participants feel like home. Lieutenant Colonel Jörg Schroeder, Detachment Commander of FBW 32 Lechfeld/ Germany and squadron commander of 321 Tiger Squadron was impressed: “

“Not only the excellent food and the on-base accommodation were the basis for a good exercise, but also the multinational cooperation, the large exercise area, and the professionalism of the Norwegian hosts guaranteed the success of the exercise. For my Tornado crews the participation on the NATO Tiger Meet creates a lot of additional motivation, since it is one of the few remaining opportunities get complex training and gather experience in an international surrounding.” From next year on the GAF Tactical Recce Wing 51 “Immelmann” will remain the only German unit that continues to hold up the Tiger traditions. After the closure of EC 01/12 at Cambrai last March the 321 Squadron will be decommissioned in spring 2013 due to force reductions of the German Air Force. After 16 years as full member in the NATO Tiger Association (NTA) and winning the Silver Tiger in 2004 at Schleswig the 321 squadron will leave a gap among the Tiger society as well as EC 01.12 “Cambresis” as one of the founding squadron of the NTA. Part of the Lechfeld Tigers will join up with TRW 51 “Immelmann” at Schleswig with their ECR Tornados. For the near future the NTA is looking at the integration of new Tiger squadrons like the 6th Squadron from Poznan-Krzesiny in Poland with F-16 Block 52+ and of course EC 01.07 “Provence” with Rafale, who is taking over the “Cambresis” traditions by integrating the SPA 162 “Tigres” in their squadron at St. Dizier.



Tiger Rafale from ECE 05/330 - Mont-de-Marsan taxiing back after a succesfull mission
Source: Metternich/NTA

Special Tiger Spirit Award

Only Advisors “Don” and “Doc” have seen more NATO Tiger Meets than 1st Master Sergeant Gilbert Van Hoof from the 10th Wg at KB. 26 times since 1978, he's participated in NATO Tiger Meets. This was his last as active personnel before he retires. He was honoured in front of the assembled participants with a slide show showing a “younger” Gilbert. Next, BG Guttormsen was recognized for his gutsy decision last Sept to quickly (within a day) offer Ørland as host base after 301 had to cancel. Finally, as an acknowledgement of the maintenance troops contributions over the years, the advisors decided to present the Special Tiger Spirit Award to the Kleine Brogel Crew Chiefs as the longest serving and most recognizable ground crew unit over the many years.



For the last time on a tiger meet: Lechfeld Tornado crew
source: Metternich/NTA



1st Master Sergeant Gilbert Van Hoof at his 26st but last tiger meet
Source: Metternich/NTA

Silver Tiger

31 Squadron won the Silver Tiger with best overall performance during the NTM 2012. It is the 8th time that 31 Squadron won this special Trophy since it was created and first presented in 1977. Staffel 11 came in second in the voting and 51 Wg was third.

The awards in the other sub categories went to:

- 1 SQN NATO for Tiger Games
- 51 TRW GAF for Best Dress and Best Painted Aircraft
- 230 SQN RAF for Best Skit
- 11 Staffel SwAF for Best Flying Squadron



Crew Chiefs of Kleine Brogel with the "Special Tiger Spirit" Award
Source: Metternich/NTA



Winners of the "Silver Tiger" Trophy 2012 - 31 SQN
Source: Metternich/NTA

Outlook

"The close cooperation of dissimilar squadrons from different nations is one of the key points for a successful air operations in big exercises and even more in real world conflicts", explains Brigadier General Tom Guttertsen, commander of 138th Air Wing on Main Air Station Ørland and adds: "It is a big advantage that every year more or less the same squadrons train together. Such an exercise already starts on a much higher level as comparable other air exercises, where the squadrons do not know each other at the beginning." On the question about what will be important for future NATO Tiger Meets he answers: "The focus of the NTM has to be operational and realistic training as much as possible and the continuous update of the exercise scenarios. Next year we will organize the NTM again here at Ørland MAS in a two-week exercise. We hope to get even more participants from the Tiger community and also external units from Army and Navy that augment the whole exercise."



Brigadier General Tom Guttertsen, Commander of 138 Air Wing at MAS Ørland
Source: Metternich/NTA

Next year Arctic Tiger will roar again over Main Air Station Ørland during the last two weeks in June, when NATO Tiger Meet 2013 will take place.

Participants NTM 2012

Tiger Squadrons

1 SQN	NATO	Geilenkirchen / Germany	2 E-3A AWACS	
31 SQN	BAF	Kleine Brogel / Belgium	6 F-16	
313 SQN	RNLAF	Volkel AB / Netherlands	7 F-16	
1./JaboG 32	GAF	Lechfeld / Germany	6 Tornado ECR	
AG 51 "I"	GAF	Schleswig / Germany	6 Tornado Recce	
Staffel 11	SwAF	Meiringen / Switzerland	3 F/A-18	
ECE 05/330	FAF	Mont de Marsan / France	2 Rafele	
230 SQN	RAF	RAF Benson / United Kingdom	2 Puma HC.1	
192 FILO	TuAF	Balikesir / Turkey	3 F-16	
338 SQN	RNoAF	MAS Ørland / Norway	8 F-16	
211 SQN	CzAF	Caslav / Czech Republic	3 JAS-39 Gripen	1st week only
335 SQN	HAF	Araxos / Greece	Observers	
EC 1/7	FAF	Saint Dizier / France	Observers	
221 Sqn	CzAF	Namest / Czech Republic	Observers	
21 SQN	ItAF	Grazzanise / Italy	Observers	
301 SQN	PoAF	Monte Real / Portugal	Observers	
JTS	AAF	Flh Vogler / Austria	Observers	
6 SQN	PAF	Poznan-Krzesiny / Poland	Observers	

External Support Units

121 ARW	USAF/ANG	Rickenbacker ANGB / USA	2 KC-135R	
717 SQN	RNoAF	Rygge / Norway	1 DA20ECM	
720 SQN	RNoAF	Rygge / Norway	2 Bell 412HP	
GFD	Civil	Hohn / Germany	1 Learjet	
138AW GBAD - NASAMS		RNoAF		
EMSA 01/950 - Crotale		FAF		
Polygone Threat Simulators		Germany		