



MAIN AIR STATION, Norway.
This summer, Main Air Station (MAS) Ørland,
Norway, hosted the largest Air Force exercise in
Europe.

Arctic Tigers Awake - World class training a success at NATO Tiger Meet



For two weeks, 78 aircraft from 16 nations practiced the execution of combined air operations and the interaction and cooperation between squadrons and the Norwegian Joint Headquarter (NJHQ). This was augmented by national Norwegian assets, ground forces, and during week one, two ships from the Royal Norwegian Navy.

Twice a day, up to 60 aircraft and helicopters launched and executed Composite Air Operations (COMAO) in the exercise area, which extended 450 km x 180 km mainly over sea, but also over sparsely populated areas of land. The exercise was controlled mainly by two E-3As operated by the NATO E-3A Component, Squadron 1 Tigers in cooperation with the local Norwegian Deployable Air Control Unit (D-ACU). Exercise control logged a total of 812 combat training missions amongst the participating 27 Squadrons of NATO and PfP (Partnership for Peace) countries.

For the third time, Royal Norwegian Air Force's 338th Squadron and 138th Air Wing hosted the NATO Tiger Meet, welcoming more than 800 flight crews, technicians and support personnel. Col. Aage Lyder Longva, MAS Ørland Base commander, stated with extreme pleasure, "It was a great logistical challenge to host so many personnel in the limited space available, but with the experience gained over the last years, we could master it without problems." The concentration of exercise participants to the base facilities bears great advantages. Besides having short distances between facilities, close quarters greatly foster cooperation, coordination and communication between all participants.

As mentioned, NATO Tiger Meet 2013 was not only (again) this year's largest air exercise in Europe, but also the largest Tiger Meet in the 53 year history of the NATO Tiger Association. Even though very traditional squadrons have been decommissioned over the years, the community has still continued to grow. The Hungarian Air Force 591st Squadron, the Polish 6th Squadron and both Eurofighter squadrons of German Fighter Wing 74 are the newest Tiger Community members.





The exercise scenario concentrated on airborne operations, but no mission would be possible without the support of ground personnel, maintenance, mission planning and evaluation specialists. All of them are generally joined in "Tiger Village" and are part of the Tiger Community. One of the overarching objectives of this year's NATO Tiger Meet was on interoperability and the ability to successfully interact with foreign nations in a foreign environment. "It is an important aspect that we create an opportunity, so exercise participants can operate in a multinational environment," articulated Exercise Director, Brig. Gen. Tom Guttormsen. "One of the keys to success for a successful exercise and real operations is interoperability. With the setup here in Orland, the very large exercise area





Besides forces from the Royal Norwegian Army with their Air-Defense Missile System NASAMS (Network Centric Air Defense System), the Royal Norwegian Navy participated with one Frigate and a Corvettes. For the future of NATO Tiger Meets, General Guttormsen has one important vision. "We have to provide our squadrons the best training possible with special emphasis on their individual training requirements," he explained. "Outside the operational aspect it is moreover important to keep up the well-established traditions of the NATO Tiger Association."

Part of which are the squadron challenges like best flying unit, aircraft paintjob, sporting skills, squadron skit, and the all desired "Silver Tiger Award" for the best unit overall. This year, the "Silver Tiger Award" was won by Reconnaissance Wing 51 "Immelmann" (AG 51 "I") from Schleswig-Jagel, whose corporate identity was an exceptional example of the "Tiger Spirit".

For aircrews, this large exercise is one of the best opportunities to broaden one's view outside the own unit because it is one of the best and most intense challenges in aviation. Aircrew personnel were able to participate in a joint and combined exercise and learn about the working processes and skills of their fellow comrades. Moreover, it offered the unique opportunity for experiencing a different airframe from within and often tied bonds that extend beyond the line of duty into personal friendships.

and the changing exercise scenarios we can guarantee this. Compared to NATO Tiger Meet 2012, we have put even more emphasis on Joint Operations between Army, Navy, and Air Force."

The Tiger Community is looking forward to exercising together again at next NATO Tiger Meet in June 2014 hosted by the German Reconnaissance Wing 51 "Immelmann".



