

CC-Air HQ Ramstein and USAFE AGOS prepare Foward Air Controllers for ISAF Mission

By SQL Keven Gambold GBR AF, CC-Air HQ Ramstein ISAF Cell

The ongoing operations in Afghanistan have seen many changes in how NATO conducts the business of warfighting and peace enforcement but the greatest adaptation has been in the area of interoperability.

Whilst previously NATO had had standards and procedures for different countries to be able to work and fight together, today ISAF forces find themselves at an extreme. A Polish Provincial Reconstruction Team may need a Swedish Forward Air Controller (FAC) to call for aid from French Fighters and American MEDEVAC assets.

With lives at stake, and strenuous efforts to reduce the possibility of civilian casualties, the need to train ISAF forces in this realm has never been greater, and one such training event has been going on in central Germany from 17 through 21 August. The Pre-Deployment Training Course held by NATO's air headquarters Allied Air Component Command Headquarters Ramstein (or CC-Air HQ Ramstein) FAC capability branch.

Based out of CC-Air Ramstein, and using the USAFE Air Ground Operations School (AGOS) in nearby Einsiedlerhof Air Station, British and American subject-matter experts have been briefing Portuguese, Swedish and Estonian FACs on rules of engagement and current intelligence prior to their deployment to ISAF in the coming months.

"The Pre-Deployment Training Course, running for the first time, is set to include training on the Rover video equipment and realistic simulator scenarios as well as updates on 'lessons learned' from recent veterans," says Squadron Leader Keven Gambold, GBR Air Force, the CC-Air HQ Ramstein point of contact for the project, "the week-long course is a prelude to additional field training scheduled for September in Estonia."

This second phase, called BRTE IV, is part of the Baltic Region Training Event series and will see international FAC instructors assisting Estonian FACs and ground commanders in employing NATO air strike assets (in this case 2x F15E Strike Eagles) in representative combat mini scenarios. The two-day training event precedes the Estonian Company's national ISAF pre-deployment training.

"CC-Air Ramstein plans to conduct four of the week-long FAC Pre-deployment Training Courses each year with assistance from a wide spectrum of the ISAF troop-contributing nations," concludes the squadron leader.



Jr Sgt Mellow, 2nd LT Koiv, Cpt Walsh and Tsgt Picoc setting up Rover equipment for simulation exercise by MSgt Corey Clements USAFE