



# Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Multinational Cooperation During NATO Training Event

Ramstein, 1 June 2012 – On 29 and 30 May, Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein (HQ AC Ramstein) completed the Baltic Region Training Event (BRTE) XII at the Adazi Training Area some 15 kms southeast of Riga, Latvia. The event which was aimed at providing training opportunities to NATO's Forward Air Controllers (FACs) and Air Policing assets.

Assets involved in the FAC training were French Mirage 2000 fighters (on 29 May), Estonian L-39 jets, a Latvian Mi-17 helicopter, American A-10 aircraft (on 30 May). These aircraft flew Close Air Support (CAS) mission simulating support of forces on the ground. Flying out of Mildenhall in the United Kingdom a KC-135 tanker aircraft refuelled the Mirage 2000 and the A-10 in the air. The Polish MiG-29 aircraft currently executing NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission at the Lithuanian Air Base Šiauliai benefited from special Quick Reaction Alert (Intercept) training with the A-10 on the second day and performed a so-called touch-and-go manoeuvre at Riga International Airport, Latvia.

"We take away a lot of practical benefit from BRTE XII," said Lieutenant Colonel Leszek Błach, commander of the Polish Military Contingent "ORLIK 4" at Šiauliai, Lithuania, "with the touch-and-go we showed our presence in the Baltic region."

"The experience of air-to-air refuelling on a US Air Force tanker was very good," said Captain Gaetan Hermetet, French BRTE XII project officer, "our Mirages flew a CAS mission and also cooperated with the Baltic FACs on the ground."



A US Air Force A-10 employing its 30 mm cannon at Adazi Training Range, Latvia, by Latvian Armed Force

"This was an experience of a lifetime to fly the A-10 Thunderbolt II to the Baltic Region and conduct intercepts with Polish MiG-29s," said Lieutenant Colonel John Liller, 81<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron pilot, who led the A-10 twoship, "our objective was to fully integrate A-10 tactics, techniques, and procedures with ground assets and bolster bonds of cooperation for future exercises. This could not have been done without the support from the men and women of the 52nd Fighter Wing, the KC-135 from Royal Air Force Mildenhall, and the outstanding job by the NATO FACs executing joint close air support procedures."

"Refueling our allies in-flight helps solidify the cohesion that exists between our NATO community," said Colonel Kyle Voigt, 100th Air Refueling Wing vice commander. "We've all gained valuable training from the missions flown during this event, and we anticipate many lasting benefits."

It was the first time the Estonian L-39s participated in a BRTE and benefited from the training with French, US and Polish fighter aircraft and allowed L-39 pilots to gather experience at the multinational level

"BRTE XII was an extremely successful training event with all objectives met. We executed 100 percent of flying missions," said Lieutenant Colonel Steven Behmer, head of the HQ AC Ramstein FAC capability section who oversaw the training provided to Forward Air Controller teams from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. "The highlight of the training event was the employment of 30 mm cannon strafes from a twoship of US Air Force A-10 aircraft under the terminal control of Baltic FACs. This historic event demonstrated NATO's capability to efficiently integrate Air-Land-Integration elements in a multinational complex tactical environment."

Air Policing is one aspect of NATO's Smart Defence concept – a new way of thinking about generating modern defence capabilities and cooperating to develop, acquire and maintain these capabilities.

"During NATO Chicago Summit the Baltic States were named as a good example of the implementation of Smart Defence. This joint training is yet another option for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to provide their input to the Alliance in developing this NATO priority by saving resources and offering a complex training programme in the Baltic countries," said Latvian Minister of Defence Artis Pabriks.

HQ AC Ramstein regularly conducts these BRTEs in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia reaffirming commitment and solidarity to the region. While some NATO countries deploy their fighter aircraft to ensure the territorial integrity of the three Baltic States, the latter make available air bases, air command and control entities and critically needed capabilities like the FAC personnel.

The next opportunity to train NATO FACs is scheduled in the Czech Republic and will occur in September during Exercise Ramstein Rover 2012.

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