



CC-Air Ramstein

Allied Air Component Command Headquarters Ramstein

Public Information Office



Press Release

AIR COM visits Downrange U.S., NATO Bases

By 1st Lt. Elizabeth Culbertson



RAMSTEIN – The AIR COM Ramstein and U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander visited multiple downrange locations Feb. 8-10 to fulfill NATO and USAFE objectives. Gen. Tom Hobbins traveled to Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, Kandahar AB and Kabul, Afghanistan and Al-Udeid AB, Qatar with USAFE Band “Direct Hit” during the three-day trip, visiting with deployed USAFE members, touring facilities and meeting with NATO officials.

The general dined with expeditionary deployed USAFE Airmen at Manas and Al-Udeid air bases, leaving a lasting impression. General Hobbins made it a priority during his visits to address troop concerns and get feedback on expectations. “Going to see the air operations center USAFE Airmen [at Al-Udeid AB] was, in fact, a promise I made as the Airmen deployed out of Ramstein a month ago,” said the general. “I was careful to make sure that they knew they’re in an expeditionary role now, and not assigned to USAFE, but I care and I wanted to understand what their concerns were for me as USAFE’s new commander. So as I sat around the dinner table with them, I was asking them, ‘What would you change if you were me?’ and I got great feedback.”

General Hobbins also donned his NATO hat for the visit; as commander of NATO Allied Air Component Command Ramstein, he was interested in command and control processes for air operations, a hot topic at the latest Joint Force Command Brunssum commander's conference and for NATO’s International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. “The NATO visit was aimed at being able to go see the ISAF mission [in Afghanistan] and the support to the ISAF mission, in multiple locations. I wanted to see first hand how we connected our refueling and airlift missions that were going on at Manas along with the command and control and receiving missions at Kabul. Also, at Kandahar, I wanted to see first hand how ISAF connectivity will function with provincial reconstruction teams in the future,” said the general.

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The visit demonstrated the importance of interdependence in air operations, said the general. "For me to see the command and control that goes on from Kabul from an ISAF standpoint, gave me an appreciation of how we connect those forces. And while I was there, I was able to watch the theater air operations center and how they connected with the forces in Bagram and how they connected to their Army and NATO counterparts at the distant PRTs," he said. At the trip's end, the general recapitulated he was struck by the tremendous work being accomplished by the coalition and NATO forces.

Picture: Gen. Tom Hobbins, U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander (second from left), meets with Brig. Gen. Piotr Lusnia, Air Task Force commander (left) and Maj. Gen. Jaap Willemse, International Security Assistance Force deputy commander during his trip to ISAF headquarters Feb. 9. Regularly Brig. Gen. Lusnia is the Deputy Chief of Staff Support in CC-AIR HQ Ramstein.

Photo by 1st Lt. Elizabeth Culbertson