



CC-Air Ramstein

Allied Air Component Command Headquarters Ramstein

Public Information Office



Article

NATO makes Ramstein a Multinational Post

In addition to Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe (HQ USAFE) Ramstein Air Base has also been hosting North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or NATO commands. In 1958 Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force (4ATAF) was the Alliance headquarters located at Ramstein. On 28 June 1974 Ramstein became the location of NATO's Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE).

Under the policy of détente and with the troop reductions after 1990, planning began for a comprehensive reorganisation of the Alliance's Command and Control Structures. On 1 July 1993, the Ramstein NATO command was renamed Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AIRCENT). On 1 January 1994, the AIRCENT area of responsibility was expanded to include Denmark and parts of northern Germany. Danish soldiers joined their German, American, British, Dutch, Belgian, French and Canadian colleagues in the HQ staff.

In March 2000 changes to NATO's command structure caused a reduction in the number of HQs and the deletion of an entire command level. Ramstein was the beneficiary of this restructuring as HQ Allied Air Forces Northern Europe (AIRNORTH) was established. The HQ assumed tasks from the disbanded locations at High Wycombe in the UK and others in Denmark and Norway. The area of responsibility of the Ramstein HQ was doubled when the airspace of the United Kingdom, Norway, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea was added to the skies over Germany, the Benelux countries, Denmark, Poland and the Czech Republic.

March 2004 saw the accession of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia as well as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia to NATO. The Baltic States and Slovakia were assigned to the command area of the Ramstein HQ.

On 1 July 2004 HQ AIRNORTH was renamed Component Command Air Headquarters Ramstein, in short CC-Air HQ Ramstein. The chief mission of the HQ is to coordinate Air Policing across all of Northern Europe. From mid-2006 on, Ramstein will assume command over the air force component of NATO's newly established response force, the NRF. CC-Air HQ Ramstein is also responsible for the command and control of the air task component under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) established by virtue of United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

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In the aftermath of the expansion of the area of responsibility and NATO's enlargement into Eastern Europe, military personnel from Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and Spain have joined the CC-Air HQ Ramstein staff. The HQ is subordinate to the Headquarters Joint Force Command (JFC) at Brunssum, the Netherlands, which in turn reports directly to the strategic Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Casteau, Belgium.

On 5 December 2005 the US Air Force Four-Star General William T. Hobbins took over command of CC-Air Ramstein. He is dual-hatted as the Commander United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) with headquarters also in Ramstein.

A new NATO HQ Building

The new NATO HQ building at Ramstein Air Base was inaugurated on 7 October 2005. The cost for the four-floor building complex was some EUR 40 million. Previously the HQ staff had been scattered around twelve different locations all over the air base. Now they are all accommodated in one single building. Among others the military and civilian staff can use conference and representative facilities as well as office space incorporating modern information and communication technology. Additional features of the new NATO centre are an auditorium seating 300 persons, a dining facility, a spacious lobby and a multi-storey car park for 600 vehicles.

The terrain in the east of the air base stretches over some 40,000 square metres, the enclosed space totals 100,000 cubic metres and the building floor space is some 14,000 square metres. 20 different NATO countries contribute to the total workforce of 550; some nations are represented by just one member. Originally the building had been intended for a staff of 800, however, changes to the NATO structure reduced the number of posts. The security and safety technology in the building is state-of-the-art. Access is via a separate entrance gate inside the air base and an electronic barrier right behind the main entrance to the building.