



# CC-Air HQ Ramstein

Allied Air Component Command  
Headquarters Ramstein

Public Affairs Office



## Air Policing

### CC-AIR HQ Ramstein and its fundamental contribution to safe European skies



It did not take the events of September 11, 2001 to make the public aware of the fundamental importance of Air Policing and the requirement to have air defence assets available at short notice. For this purpose NATO has at its disposal a comprehensive system of air surveillance and airspace management means as well as Quick Reaction Alert assets for intercepts (QRA(I)). By means of radar sites, remote data transmission and central command and control centres the Alliance ensures constant control of its entire airspace from the

north of Norway to the eastern tip of Turkey. 365 days a year, NATO exploits these facilities to react within seconds to air traffic incidents in the Allies' airspace. This structure of weapon systems, control centres and procedures is referred to as the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS).

Within this architecture, CC-Air HQ Ramstein has a central task to accomplish in the north of Europe. The headquarters' assigned area of responsibility is subdivided into two so-called Air Policing Areas, each of which is controlled by a multinational Combined Air Operation Centre or CAOC. This is where all data from the air monitoring centres collated and combined with the data from the civilian air traffic authorities to provide a permanently current air picture, which shows all the flight activities in the area of responsibility.

If any situations occur that are not in compliance with regulations and rules stipulated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Commander of a CAOC, a two- or three-star general, is authorized to initiate a scramble of the QRA(I) aircraft assigned to NATO by the member nation in whose airspace the incident takes place. In cases of two NATO member states agreeing a respective convention, the QRA(I) aircraft are also permitted to cross boundary to fulfil their mission.

Reasons for possible incidents may be a disruption of radio communications between the aircraft and the air traffic control or that aircraft alter the pre-established route, altitude or speed. In these instances the QRA(I) approaches the aircraft that caused the incident from astern to obtain the information needed. The constant high readiness posture of associated radar sites, command posts and QRA(I) aircraft has so far ensured that no serious disruption to international air traffic has occurred in the CC-Air HQ Ramstein area of responsibility.

EDITORIAL STAFF:

CC-Air HQ Ramstein  
Public Affairs Office  
Ramstein Air Base , Bldg 313  
66877 Ramstein – Miesenbach  
[www.airramstein.nato.int](http://www.airramstein.nato.int)

Tel.: 0049 (0)6371/40-2060 /2063  
Fax: 0049 (0)6371/40-1093  
Email: [pio@airramstein.nato.int](mailto:pio@airramstein.nato.int)