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10
YEAR
ANNIVERSARY

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE D-DAY LANDINGS IN SAINTE-MÈRE-ÉGLISE

REPORT BY JORIS VAN BOVEN
AND ALEX VAN NOYE WITH
PHOTOS BY JORIS VAN BOVEN



On Sunday, June 9th, 2019, the D-Day activities in Normandy were closed with a parajump near Sainte-Mère-Église. Around 900 paratroopers were dropped from aircraft from the United States, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Romania. Just as the C-47 *Dakotas* had their own "Daks over Normandy", these transport aircraft almost had their own "Herky over Normandy". In addition to a French C-160 *Transall*, the formation consisted of various C-130 *Hercules* aircraft.

The aircraft were based on Base Aérienne Evreux and Airport Cherbourg, the paratroopers all boarded the aircraft in Cherbourg. The first wave of aircraft departed in the morning at around ten o'clock and

then waited for an hour in the holding until the second wave of aircraft flew from Evreux to Cherbourg to take the remaining paratroopers on board. After this, a "racetrack" was flown above the drop zone and each aircraft delivered the paratroopers. Due to an accident with a parachutist, the dropping was stopped for fifteen minutes, after which the last parachutists jumped down.

The contribution of the USAFE was special because the current 37th Airlift Squadron (part of the 86th Airlift Wing with the Lockheed C-130J *Hercules* at Ramstein Air Base, Germany), participated in the invasion by dropping parachutists at Sainte-Mère-Église on June 6th, 1944. Flying at that time with the Douglas C-47

Dakota was the 37th Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS), with the squadron code 'W7' painted on the C-47s.

Sainte-Mère-Église is known for the parachutist at the church tower. Parachutist John Steele came to hang with his parachute at the church tower at night and remained silent there for several hours. Later in the day, he was freed from his predicament. This is remembered by attaching a doll and a parachute to the church tower.

Participants

C-130s from USAF Europe, USAF ANG, USAF Reserve, Royal Netherlands Air Force, Belgian Air Force, French Air Force and a C-160 of the French Air Force.



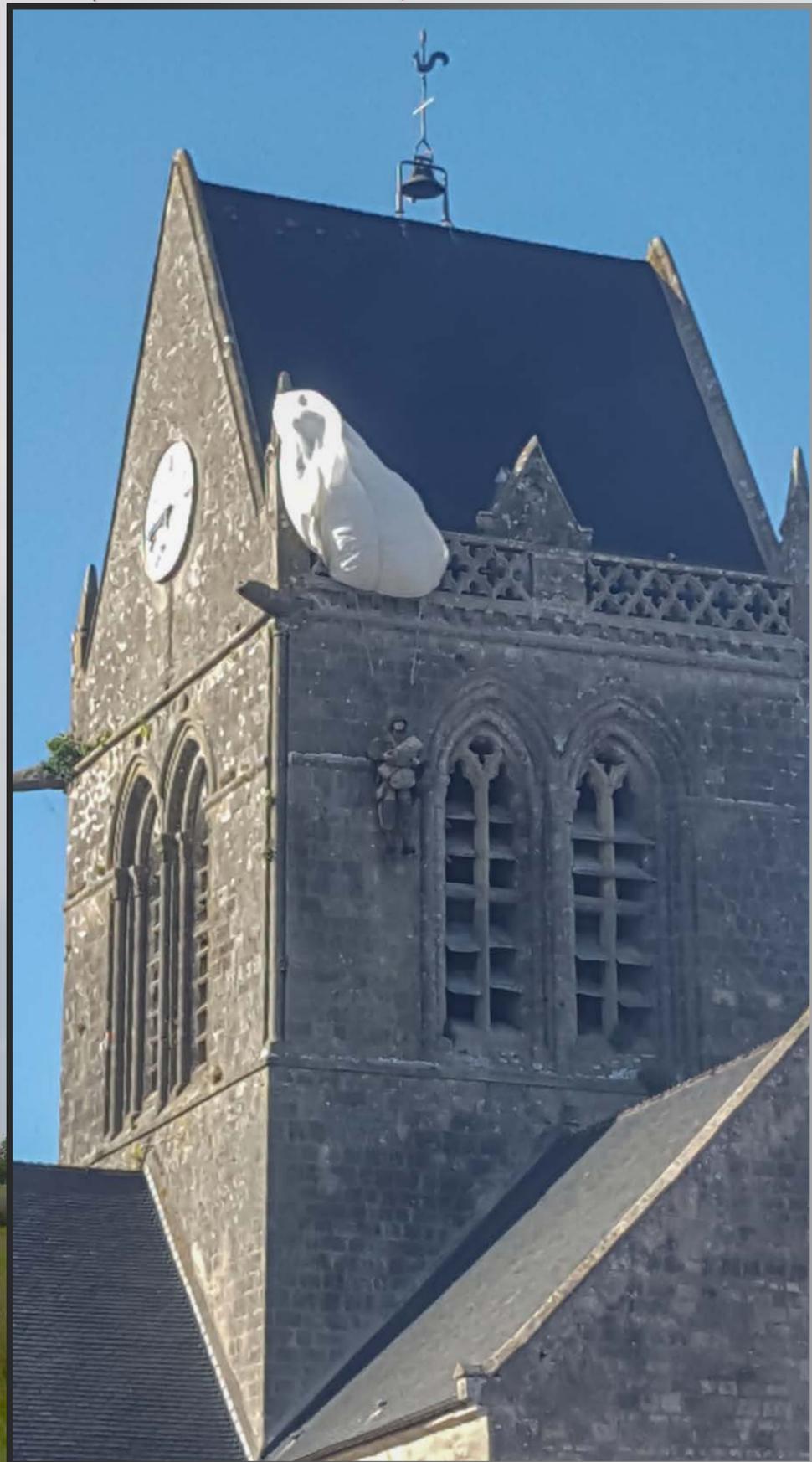
An U.S. Air Force C-130J *Hercules* from the 37th Airlift Squadron drops paratroopers over the town of Sainte-Mère-Église



- U.S. Air Force Reserve Command C-130H *Hercules* from the 731st Airlift Squadron at Peterson AFB, Colorado (inset top left)
- U.S. Airforce C-130J *Hercules* from the 41st Airlift Squadron at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas (inset top right)
- French Air Force Transall C-160R from ET00.064 at BA 105 Evreux (inset bottom left)
- Belgian Air Force C-130H from 20th Squadron at Bruxelles Airport (inset bottom right)
- Royal Netherlands Air Force C-130H *Hercules* from 336th Squadron at Eindhoven AB following the Belgian Air Force C-130H (main image)



Nineteen aircraft from multiple nations and parachute jumpers from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, United Kingdom and the United States dropped civilians and soldiers in front of thousands of spectators



■ The doll with the parachute is to remember the parachutist John Steele who came to hang with his parachute at the church tower in the town of Sainte-Mère-Église when landing at night (inset left)

■ Douglas C-47B built in 1943 | N47SJ (inset top right)

■ Douglas C-47 "Placid Lassie" built in 1942 | N74589 (inset bottom right)

■ Paratroopers landing at the perimeter of Sainte-Mère-Église (main image, U.S. AirForce photo by Airman 1st Class Jennifer Zima)

MARKET GARDEN AND FALCON LEAP

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORIS VAN BOVEN AND ALEX VAN NOYE



Operation Market Garden was an Allied offensive against the Germans in the Netherlands in September 1944. This operation was the main operation which took place in the Netherlands during the Second World War. Operation Market Garden was for the biggest part a failure because the last bridge in Arnhem could not be occupied. The result of this failure was a famine in the northern part of the Netherlands. Operation Market Garden consisted of two large operations which both played a key role. The first operation was a large airborne landing behind the German lines called Market. The second operation was a ground offensive from Belgium to the Netherlands under the name Garden. The British, American and Polish airborne troops would occupy the important bridges over the Dutch rivers; the ground force would come quickly from Belgium to the IJsselmeer. The German troops in the Netherlands would therefore be cut off from Germany and the route to the east would be opened. This way, the Ruhr River in Germany would quickly be invaded. This was very important because this area was the industrial heart of the Germans. Operation Market Garden was seen as a failure by the Allied High Command. The most crucial objective was the bridge at Arnhem. This bridge could not be taken because the landing troops were dropped too far from Arnhem. By missing this bridge, the road was not open to the Ruhr and the war lasted at least half a year longer than expected. However, securing the sector Antwerp was achieved during this operation. Safeguarding the port of Antwerp was an important milestone during the operation because from here, the troops would be spread during the following campaign in Germany.

The major aircraft during the landings of Operation Market Garden was the Douglas C-47 *Skytrain*. The *Skytrain* was the military version of the Douglas DC-3 *Dakota*. The big difference between the civilian and military variant is the large cargo door on the left side of the *Skytrain*. Also, the *Skytrain* has a reinforced floor for transporting heavy loads. Many Allied countries used the C-47 *Skytrain* during the Second World War for carrying heavy loads and transporting troops and wounded. More than 10,000 aircraft of this type were produced at the Douglas plant in Santa Monica, California and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The plant in Oklahoma has built over 5,354 Skytrains between March 1943 and August 1945. The C-47 was a perfect aircraft for dropping paratroopers. The aircraft was commonly used during several major actions in the Second World War such as the dropping of paratroopers during the Normandy landings in France and Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands. The aircraft played a key role during these actions when thousands of paratroopers were dropped behind the German lines.

These forces often had the task to capture various bridges and other strategic points; they had to occupy these points until the main Allied forces would arrive. The C-47 was also able to pull gliders which could land silently behind enemy lines. The C-47 also played an important role during the Berlin Airlift after the Second World War. The *Skytrain* served in the United States Air Force until 1967. After the Second World War, most planes of the *Skytrain* fleet entered service at civilian companies where the aircraft would serve as cargo plane.

The second important aircraft type during the landings around the bridges were the British Airspeed Horsa gliders. The Horsa consisted of three versions, namely the AS51 Horsa 1, the AS52 and the AS58 Horsa 2. A total of 3,750 units of this type of glider were built. All aircraft were literally lost during the various airborne operations. The aircraft were built to land only once behind enemy lines with the element of surprise as the best. The specimens



drawn up at museums after the since the design drawings are two pilots aboard the Horsa were able to fly along.

The operation was started with the Dutch cities on September 17, 1944. dropped around Eindhoven and the in Nijmegen. The 101st was dropped They were tasked to capture the bridges at St. Oedenrode and the Zuidwillemsvaart capture the bridge at Grave over the river of the bridges over the Maas-Waal canal at according to plan. Simultaneously with the troops of the 1st Airborne Division were dropped The British unit would receive support from the

Second World War are well-built replicas still available for this type. There were gliders and a total of 25 equipped soldiers

dropping of parachutists above three major The American 101st Airborne Division was American 82nd Airborne Division was dropped at Eindhoven, Best, St. Oedenrode and Veghel. over the River Aa at Best, the Wilhelmina Canal (canal) at Veghel. The task of the 82nd was to Maas, the bridge over the river Waal and one Nijmegen. This part of the operation went all droppings around Eindhoven and Nijmegen, British near Arnhem in Wolfheez, Ede and Oosterbeek. Polish Independent Airborne Division.



Royal Air Force Hercules C4, 24/47 Sqn



U.S. Air Force C-130J, 37th AS



The British 30th Corps had to come from Lommel (Belgium) via the route over the captured bridges. The British units during the Garden Operation consisted of over 50,000 men and over 22,000 vehicles. The whole caravan was forced to move to Arnhem via one road making it vulnerable to enemy forces. Due to the fierce fighting, it was named "Hell's Highway". In order to protect the flanks, two army corps were deployed to protect the vehicles in the caravan. The ground troops were able to advance within the specified times and to reinforce the paratroopers who had taken a position at the bridges, except for the bridge at Arnhem. The Germans had concentrated themselves near the bridge in the city of Arnhem; the bridge was eventually not being taken. The troops that made the advance from the south came across two German armored divisions which had buried themselves on the route just before Arnhem near Elst. The ground troops were unable to force a passage to Arnhem. The troops who occupied the bridge were caught up and soon ran out of ammunition due to German opposition. They had to withdraw from Arnhem after a few days despite the support of the Polish Forces who had arrived in the meantime. At the end of September 1944, the Allied advance in the southern part of the Netherlands stranded. The result was a long hunger winter in the northern and western part of the Netherlands, where the Second World War lasted until May 1945.

A total of 1,800 British and Polish soldiers died in the Arnhem area and over 2,300 escaped via a crossing over the Rhine during Operation Pegasus.

75th commemoration in 2019

The Market Garden Memorial was set up largely this year by the organization because this famous airborne operation took place exactly 75 years ago. More than 1,100 Red Barrettes from eight different countries would follow in the footsteps of their predecessors on Saturday, September 21st. Airborne soldiers can be recognized worldwide by the red Barrett they wear. On September 17th in 1944, more than 75 years ago, the largest airborne operation of history took place under the name Market Garden. The mission began to recapture the Netherlands from the Germans and push through to the Ruhr area. Every year, people in this area, especially on the Gelderse Ginkelse Heide near Ede and Arnhem, pay attention to this major airborne operation. During the commemoration, there is a drop of paratroopers on various days at various locations (often in Gelderland and North Brabant). Prior to the Operation Market Garden, the Falcon Leap exercise was held. This exercise is an international parachutist exercise that takes place in the Netherlands annually. During the two weeks in September, different facets of the modern deployment of "airborne" troops are central. The last days of this major exercise are dominated by the Operation Market Garden during the commemorations at Groesbeek, Ede and Arnhem. The Market Garden Memorial is the final part of this international exercise. The Falcon Leap exercise is mainly aimed at the airborne troops who actually perform the parachute jump and the associated crews of the transport aircraft. The main objective of the exercise is international cooperation and learning from each other's tactics and procedures during this type of operation.

The aircraft that would bring all paratroopers to their target areas would fly during the Falcon Leap and Market Garden exercise from the Eindhoven Air Base in Eindhoven. These missions were led by the American command. A total of eight large military transport aircraft were to fly during the Market Garden Memorial. The participating aircraft came from the Netherlands (two C-130 *Hercules*), Belgium (one C-130 *Hercules*), Germany (one C-160 *Transall*), Great Britain (one C-130 *Hercules*), Italy (one C-130 *Hercules*) and the United States (two C-130 *Hercules*). The Poles also flew separate missions with a single CASA C-295M that would often fly together with two German An-28s of the German army. Finally, an authentic C-47 Skytrain also flew along. This aircraft is an original plane that has actually occurred during the invasion of Normandy and the air landings during Market Garden. In addition to the planes that flew during the dropping, paratroopers from all over the world were also present at Eindhoven. The dropping of the paratroopers would be led by the Dutch soldiers of the 11 Airmobile Brigade from Schaarsbergen. The participating paratroopers came from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United States, Great Britain, Poland, the Czech Republic and South Africa. In a large hanger at Eindhoven air base, the paratroopers were prepared for their jump in separate sections. When the aircraft was ready, the parachutists were guided in a column to their aircraft to board the transport planes.

The first major dropping in the context of Operation Market Garden was on Wednesday September 18th, in Groesbeek. A total of more than 1,000 paratroopers would land near the village at the Den Heuvel Estate in Gelderland. In September, it is exactly 75 years ago that paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne division landed in Groesbeek as part of the Operation Market Garden. On Wednesday, September 18th, 2019, more than 1,000 paratroopers once again set foot at Groesbeek during the annual commemoration. The paratroopers were dropped in this area during multiple waves between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The second major dropping which was commemorated was the dropping of the troops near Arnhem who were dropped on the Ginkelse Heide in 1944. The commemoration of this dropping was visited by many people. On Saturday, September 21st, more than 100,000 people were present at the Ginkelse Heide. Visitors were transported from and to stations and parking places by shuttle buses. The organization had great difficulty transporting so many people because the weather played ball during this anniversary edition. It was also very busy. A total of three waves were flown in which more than 1,000 paratroopers were dropped. Unfortunately, not all paratroopers were dropped during the morning wave. Due to the strong wind above the Veluwe, not all paratroopers were dropped from the aircraft during the

first wave. These paratroopers returned to Eindhoven Air Base somewhat disappointed. During the second wave, the wind had subsided and all paratroopers were dropped. The paratroopers were welcomed and applauded by the general public at the Ginkelse Heide.

During the commemoration of the operation, some prominent figures from the Dutch and British royal family were also present. For example, the British crown prince Prince Charles was present in a military uniform. On behalf of the Netherlands, the ceremony was attended by Princess Beatrix. Both royalties laid floral wreaths at the Airborne Monument and gave a speech. Ten veterans still alive were present at the ceremony. Veteran John Jeffries also laid a floral wreath on behalf of the survivors. For the second time in his life, the 97-year-old veteran Sandy Cortmann jumped over the Ginkelse Heide in Ede under the guidance of The Red Devils Army Parachute Display Team from the United Kingdom. This time, he did not land in hostile circumstances. He was not fired at all, but instead there was loud applause for him. In addition to the parachute landings, there was also a display of the modern Dutch Airmobile Brigade which are nowadays often used with the helicopters of the Defense Helicopter Command at Gilze Rijen Air Base. The 11th Air Maneuver Brigade demonstrated with helicopters and the military how tactical airborne operations of this kind are currently being conducted. There was also plenty to do on the ground because many enthusiastic hobbyists have been maintaining the old military vehicles from this period of the Second World War for years. Dressed in the uniforms of the time and equipped with the equipment of the time, the part of Operation Garden was shown extensively. Throughout this spectacle, the 75th anniversary of the largest airborne landing in history was appropriately commemorated by young and old. Let's not forget.



Paratroopers lining up behind a U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J, ready to go on board the aircraft



Paratroopers jumping out of a Royal Netherlands Air Force C-1310H Hercules of the 336 Squadron



This Douglas C-47, civil registration N473DC, was built in 1942





- German Air Force C-160D, LTG 63 (top left)
- Royal Netherlands Air Force C-130H, 336 Sqn (top right)
- Polish Air Force C295M, 8.BLTr /13.el (bottom left)
- U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J, VMGR-252 (bottom right)
- A C-130 taking-off into the sunset (main image)

PARIS NATIONAL MILITARY PARADE

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JORIS VAN BOVEN AND
ALEX VAN NOYE UNLESS
NOTED OTHERWISE

Every year on July 14th, the National Military Parade ("défilé") is held in the French capital Paris to commemorate the beginning of the French Revolution. On July 14th, 1789, the Bastille prison was raided by the people of Paris, an event that started the French Revolution. A military parade is held on the ground on the Champs Elysees with foot-soldiers, trucks and tanks; while aircraft and helicopters make a flyby over Paris in the air parade ("défilé aérien"). The theme of this year was European Cooperation, with many aircraft and helicopters cooperating with the French armed forces.

Air Bases

The flying participants flew from various air bases, sometimes from their home bases: C-130 *Hercules* and A400M *Atlas* from Base Aérienne (BA) Orleans, E-3F AWACS from BA Avord, C-135F from BA Istres, Navy Rafales out of BAN Landivisiau, and Navy support aircraft used BAN Lahn-Bihoue. If fuel was an important factor, air bases close to Paris were used: BA Evreux (north-west of Paris) for fighters and transporters, BA Villacoublay (south of Paris) for the Patrouille de France, and BA Creil (north of Paris) for all helicopters.

Base Aérienne Evreux

In the morning of the 14th at BA Evreux, there was a photo-moment to witness the flight-preparations and take-offs of most fighters. The participating Rafales, Mirage 2000s and foreign visitors (Spanish and British Eurofighters, German Tornado, Belgian F-16) took off from runway 04 to fly over Paris while the spare aircraft did their flight-preparations but only left BA Evreux after the parade was over. All French aircraft returned directly to their home base afterwards while the foreign jets returned to BA Evreux. A Dutch F-16 flew directly from its home base Volkel AB and returned home immediately after the parade. From BA Evreux, a local C-160G Transall *Gabriel* and a CASA CN235 flew in the parade while a visiting Spanish C-130 *Hercules* landed afterwards. For the C-160G Transall *Gabriel*, it was the last time as the two remaining C-160G's will be retired soon.



Every July 14th, several Air Force squadrons have the privilege to fly over the Champs Elysees (photo: Armée de l'air)



- French Air Force Mirage 2000D, EC02.003 (above)
- French Air Force Mirage 2000-5F, GC01.002 (below)





Participants of the aircraft parade

Patrouille de France

- 9 x AlphaJets (with the french colours red, white, blue)

Permanent posture of European security

- 1 x E-3F AWACS (EDCA 00.036)
- 2 x M2000-5 (2e escadre de Chasse)
- 1 x Typhoon (Spain)
- 1 x Typhoon (United Kingdom)

Opération Chammal (the fight against IS/ISIS/DAECH in Syria/Iraq)

- 1 x C-135F (GRV 2/91 Bretagne)
- 1 x Rafale C (30e escadre de Chasse)
- 1 x Rafale B (4e escadre de Chasse)
- 1 x Tornado (Germany)
- 1 x F-16 (the Netherlands)
- 2 x Rafale B (4e escadre de Chasse)
- 1 x F-16 (Belgium)

Opération Barkhane (the fight against IS/ISIS/DAECH in central Africa)

- 3 x M2000 D (3e escadre de Chasse)
- 2 x M2000 C (2e escadre de Chasse)

Nuclear Deterrence

- 1 x Airbus A330 (Phenix)
- 2 x M2000-5 (2e escadre de Chasse)
- 4 x Rafale (4e escadre de Chasse)

Preparation for the future

- 2 x Rafale B (ETR 3/4 Aquitaine)
- 2 x Alphajet (Ee 3/8 Côte d'Or)
- 1 x Fokker 100 (DGA-CEV, first appearance)

Returned from deployment/ upgrade to standard F3R

- 4 x Rafale M (Marine Nationale)

Training formation

- 2 x Alphajet (EAC)
- 2 x PC21 (EPAA, first appearance)
- 3 x TB30 EPSILON (EPAA, last appearance)

Intel

- 1 x C-160 Transall Gabriel

Support flight

- 1 x FALCON (ET 60)
- 1 x CN-235 CASA (ET 64)
- 1 x Atlantique 2 (Marine Nationale)
- 1 x Falcon 50 M (Marine Nationale)

Operational commitment

- 1 x A400M (61e Escadre)
- 1 x C-160 H FS
- 1 x CASA CN-235 (portugal)

European Cooperation

- 1 x C-130J (ET 2/61 Franche-Comté)
- 1 x C-130 (Spain)
- 1 x A400M (Atlas, Germany)

Sécurité civile

- 1 x Canadair CL415
- 2 x Dash Q400 MR

French Air Force Mirage 2000D taxiing to the runway for take-off



German Air Force Tornado IDS, TaktLwG 33 (above)
Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4, 29 Sqn (below)



Belgian Air Force F-16AM, 2 Wing (above)
Spanish Air Force EF2000(T), Ala 14 (below)





Participants of the helicopter parade

Attack Helicopters

- 1 x Gazelle HF-v
- 2 x Tigre
- 1 x Tigre (Spain)
- 1 x Tigre (Germany)

Assault helicopters

- 2 x NH90 Caïman
- 2 x Cougar
- 1 x NH90 Caïman (Spain)
- 1 x NH90 Caïman (Germany)
- 2 x CH-47 (United Kingdom)

Special Forces

- 1 x Tigre HAP
- 1 x Gazelle
- 1 x Cougar

IMEX Module

- 1 x Puma PC
- 1 x Tigre
- 1 x Cougar

French-German helicopter school (EFA)

- 1 x Tigre
- 1 x Tigre (Spain)
- 1 x Tigre (Germany)

Joint NH90 training centre (CFIA NH90)

- 1 x NH90 Caïman
- 1 x NH90 Caïman (Spain)
- 1 x NH90 Caïman (Germany)

Territory protection and external intervention

- 1 x Caracal (1/67 Pyrénées)
- 2 x Fennec (3/67 Parisis)

Naval Combat and Rescue

- 1 x NH90 Caïman (31F)
- 1 x Panther
- 2 x Lynx
- 2 x Dauphin ESHE

Gendarmerie nationale

- 1 x EC145
- 2 x EC135

Sécurité civile

- 2 x EC145

French Air Force Rafale C of EC03.030 taking off towards Paris



French Air Force C-160G, EEA00.054 (above)
Spanish Air Force KC-130H, Ala 31 (below)



French Air Force C-160G, EEA00.054 (above)
French Air Force CN235-200, ET01.062 (below)



EXERCISE GARUDA 2019

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JORIS VAN BOVEN & ALEX VAN NOYE



The Garuda VI exercise is a bi-national recurring exercise of the French and Indian Air Forces that is held every 3-4 years in alternating countries. In 2019, it was organized at Base Aérienne 118 "Colonel Rozanoff" Mont-de-Marsan in southern France. The training is part of the French relationship with the Indo-Pacific region. It aims to improve the level of interoperability of French and Indian crews in air defense and ground attack missions. The exercise scenarios were jointly developed by the two nations. The French and Indian crews had to prepare their missions together and then focus on mixed patrol work. The objective is to bring French and Indian crews together to prepare their missions and use their respective aircraft in realistic complex

tactical situations.

This 2019 edition included the participation of a large number of aircraft of the French Air Force during the second week of the exercise

- Dassault Rafale
- Alphajet
- Dassault Mirage 2000 C/D
- Boeing C-135F tanker aircraft
- Boeing E-3F AWACS
- Lockheed C-130 medium transport aircraft
- CASA-235 light transport aircraft

The Indian Air Force brought

- four Sukhoi SU-30 MKI

- one Ilyushin-78 tanker aircraft
- two Boeing C-17 heavy transport aircraft to bring personnel and supplies to and from India.

The Indian Sukhoi SU-30 MKI belong to the 24th Squadron "Hunting Hawks" at Bareilly Air Force Station (AFS) and the IL-78 tanker belongs to the 78th squadron "Battle-Cry" at Agra AFS, India. The Indian detachment left India on June 26th, with intermediate stops at the Arab Emirates and later in Egypt, and arrived in France on Friday 28th. Base Commander of Mont-de-Marsan Colonel Gaudillere welcomed the Indian Air Force contingent on arrival. The final exercise day was July 12th with the departure

back to India on Monday July 15th. For the Indian Air Force, the Garuda exercise was their largest exercise of the year. The Indian contingent consisted of some 110 personnel.

The French host was the 2nd squadron of the 30th Fighter Wing (Escadron de Chasse EC2/30) named 'Normandie-Niemen', flying the Dassault Rafale.

Future

The Indian Air Force ordered the Dassault Rafale for their inventory and this exercise gave the Indian pilots a chance to see their new planes real close. Early October this year, the Indian Defence Minister

Indian Air Force Su-30 MKI with the speed brake deployed to reduce the landing run



Rajnath Singh was in Paris to take delivery of the first Rafale. After some six months of training, testing and evaluation in France by Indian pilots, the aircraft will be flown to India for the formal acceptance in the Indian Air Force.

Preparations

The preparations for this exercise started some six months before the exercise with an initial planning session at BA Mont-de-Marsan, where the fighter planners and the tanker planners brainstormed about the Garuda exercise.

There, the duration of the exercise was decided, the number of missions, the build-up of the missions and the number of required aircraft was decided.

With this homework, the Indian planners returned to

discuss the scope of the exercise with the Indian Air Force staff and to make further plans

During a mid-term planning session, the final scope of the exercise was defined. The first week would start with familiarization flights to get familiar with the French flying environment and the French air traffic regulations.

Later in the first week, some basic fighting maneuvering exercises were planned: 1 versus 1, 1 versus 2 and 2 versus 2, etc.

During the second (and last week) the aim was to fly LFE (Large Force Engagements) with many aircraft of the "BLUE-AIR" country opposing the aircraft of the "RED-AIR" country.

Two missions per day were planned, whereby the Indian and French Air Force would alternate for the

role of mission leader.

Back in India, the workup phase was started to get the pilots acquainted to fly in large packages of dissimilar aircraft in a compact air space, especially for the younger pilots. Also air-air refueling was integrated in these exercise preparations.

For the air-air refuelers a very important objective was to plan the trip of the whole contingent for the flight to France and back to India. Flying a formation of military jets is definitely not the same as flying a commercial airplane from Mumbai (IN) to Paris (FR).

The pilots need a minimum level of being fully operational and at least a two-ship leader, in a mix of experienced and young pilots.

CDC

After the launch of the aircraft, the media was brought to the on-base Detection and Control Centre (Centre de Détection et de Contrôle (CDC) 04.930 de Mont-de-Marsan) with callsign 'MARINA' to watch the morning wave of the exercise. The 'MARINA' CDC is responsible for all flying activities in southwest France. Both are monitoring air traffic, controlling exercises and Air Defense QRA missions (Permanence Operationelle, PO) in that region. The control center cooperates closely with other regional CDCs and the centralized French CDC at the Lyon-Mont Verdun air base, callsign 'RAMBERT'.

At the Mont-de-Marsan CDC, French and Indian crews monitored and controlled the exercise.

Indian Air Force Su-30 MKI taxiing to the runway for take-off



History

The Strategic Partnership between France and India was signed in January 1998 by President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, and then launched during Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's visit to Paris in September 1998. Strategic cooperation between France and India dates back to 1951, with the first agreement between the Indian and French Atomic Energy Commissions, and, ever since, has constantly developed and expanded in scope. Garuda is the name of the series of exercises jointly carried out by the air forces of India and France:

- Garuda I, 2003: in India at Gwalior AFB
- Garuda II, 2005: in France at BA Istres-Le Tubé
- Garuda III, 2007: in India at Kalaikunda AFB
- Garuda IV, 2010: in France at BA Istres-Le Tubé, tri-national exercise with Singapore F-16s temporarily based at BA Orange
- Garuda V, 2014: in India at Jodhpur AFB
- Garuda VI, 2019: in France at BA Mont-de-Marsan

Debriefing

After the morning mission landed, the debriefing took place in the afternoon, while the media could be present for 15 minutes, despite that phones and cameras were normally not allowed during briefings and debriefings.



As the large force also consisted of aircraft flying from their homebases in France, video connection was setup to connect to these participants as well. At first, the mission commander checked whether all participants were present and continued with the debriefing. The aim of the mission was to protect a slow moving transport aircraft delivering paratroopers to a DropZone (DZ) and the Indian Sukhoi (BLUE-AIR) were tasked to protect this transport aircraft



■ Indian Air Force Ilyushin Il-78MKI tanker (right)
 ■ Indian Air Force Su-30 MKI (below)

The Indian Ilyushin-78 tanker aircraft is comparable to the French KC-135, both equipped with four engines and three refueling points. There are plans to replace the aging Ilyushin tanker aircraft and during the first week of the exercise the Indian tanker crews were able to see the new french Airbus A330 MRTT tanker at BA Istres.





- French Air Force Alpha Jet E (left inset)
- French Air Force Mirage 2000D, ECE01.030 (right inset)
- French Air Force Rafale C, EC02.030 (main image)



The Indian VCAS Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria flew in a Rafale with LtCol Antoine Courty, Commanding Officer of the EC 2/30 Squadron.



Indian Air Force Su-30 MKI

EUROPEAN AIR REFUELING TRAINING 2019

REPORT AND IMAGES
BY JORIS VAN BOVEN
AND ALEX VAN NOYE



The European Air Refueling Training (EART) exercise runs in parallel to the exercise Frisian Flag that was held in the first two weeks of April 2019 at the Royal Netherlands Air Force air base Leeuwarden. Organized by the European Air Transport Command (EATC) at Eindhoven Air Base, EART provides tanker support for the aircraft participating in Frisian Flag. Up to five tanker aircraft operated out of Eindhoven air base: a Royal Netherlands Air Force McDonnell Douglas KDC-10, a German Air Force Airbus A310 MRTT, a Royal Air Force Airbus A330 *Voyager*, a

French Air Force Boeing C-135F and an U.S. Air Force Boeing KC-135R. However, the latter aircraft was only present at Eindhoven airbase for one day, the remaining missions were flown from its home base RAF Mildenhall in the United Kingdom. Besides the refueling of fighter jets, the exercise also focuses on operating both tankers and fighter jets in a small airspace.

According to EART "Exercise Director" Colonel A. Massucci (Italian Air Force), at present, the Euro-

pean countries heavily rely on the capacity of the U.S. Air Force. Accordingly, measures have been taken to become more independent from the U.S. Air Force. Therefore, among other things, the EATC acquired its first Airbus A330 MRTT tanker. The aircraft (M-1) is expected at Eindhoven AB in early 2020. Ultimately, a total of eight aircraft will be purchased, part of which will be located at Eindhoven Air Base and part at the German Cologne-Bonn Air Base.



GAF A310 MRTT (left), USAF KC-135R (middle) and FAF C-135 (right) at Eindhoven Air Base



French Air Force C-135FR of GRV02.091



Royal Air Force Voyager KC2 of 10/101 Sqn



German Air Force A310-304MRTT of FBS BMVg



U.S. Air Force KC-135R of 351st ARS



German Air Force EF2000 of the TaktLwG 31 "Boelcke" taking up fuel from a German Air Force A310MRTT



The pilot of a German Air Force EF2000 of the TaktLwG 31 "Boelcke" is flying alongside a German Air Force A310MRTT waiting until it's his turn to receive fuel



The pilot of a German Air Force EF2000 of the TaktLwG 31 "Boelcke" is still waiting until another EF2000 of the TaktLwG 31 has finished refueling at the A310MRTT