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Welcome home!

Photos by Andrea Hohenforst

By SHAPE Public Affairs

After more than 1,240 missions and 12,240 flying hours, the AWACS fleet is finally home. On Sept. 25, 2014, the last AWACS returned to its home base in Geilenkirchen, Germany, from Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan.

NATO has determined that AWACS aircraft will not be required for the Resolute Support Mission that stands-up on Jan. 1, 2015, as the new mission will focus on train and assist. The overall impact for the future will be minimal, as air traffic control for military aircraft over Afghan airspace will be managed by the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) in Al Udeid, Qatar, coordinated with the responsible civilian air traffic authorities.

"The men and women who have conducted this vital mission since January 2011 have made a tremendous difference to our forces in Afghanistan," said Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Gen. Philip M. Breedlove. "They provided the 'eyes in the sky' for countless troops who have relied upon them for critical information supporting thousands of missions."

In Afghanistan, the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&CF) performed unique and valuable roles for the Alliance by conducting air surveillance, tactical battle management functions such as support and control of friendly aircraft involved in offensive and defensive counter air operations, close air support, battlefield air interdiction, combat search and rescue, reconnaissance, and tactical air transport.

"I want to congratulate the entire NATO E-3A Component on over 3 years of sustained operations in Afghanistan," said Maj. Gen. Andrew Mueller, Component commander. "You did something never imagined by those who created the Component over 35 years ago, demonstrating that the E-3A Component remains a ready, reliable and relevant capability for NATO Commanders today."

Operation Afghan Assist

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Operation Afghan Assist

Last week, the JFC Brunnsum Commander, Gen. Lothar Domröse, the Mayors from Geilenkirchen, Mr. Thomas Fiedler and Brunsumm, Mr Luc Winants, and the Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Jochen Both, welcomed home the last aircrew deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Afghan Assist.

While the NATO mission in Afghanistan is not complete, returning the E-3A aircraft and the aircrews is an important milestone towards concluding the most complex mission in the history of the E-3A Component.

The operational accomplishments highlighted in the ceremony on Sept. 25 are significant indeed. When the Component started flying in 1981 no one could have envisioned deploying our aircraft and personnel to Afghanistan and sustaining an operational mission for three years from an austere operating base.

Yet this is exactly what our team did and the mission success demonstrates the E-3A Component remains a ready, reliable and relevant force 33 years later. While it is easy to focus on the accomplishments achieved through our forward element deployed in Afghanistan, be certain, the success realized over the 48 aircrew rotations to Afghanistan was only possible with the focused efforts of every member of the E-3A Component.

Like every milestone in the history of the E-3A Component, the mission success in Afghanistan reflects the effort and contributions of all of us working together. I want to thank each of you for more than 1,600 days of hard work to ensure the success of Operation Afghan Assist. I hope you are proud of what the E-3A Component accomplished and realize the important contribution you continue to make to the success of our one-of-a-kind team!

OAA highlights commitment of everyone at the Component

By Col. Arturo Di Martino

At the end of September, after more than three years of continuous operation from a deployed location 5,000 km from the Main Operating Base, Geilenkirchen, in support of the International Security Assistance Force, our crews will returned from Afghanistan, putting an end to Operation Afghan Assist (OAA).

Looking back at the time the E-3A Component has been flying in Afghanistan, there are several numbers we will talk about to help understand the huge effort that was sustained: the number of days of deployment, the number of sorties and the flying hours flown to fulfill the mission.

But today, I don't want to focus on this data. I want to highlight the great professionalism and the outstanding commitment of our people in regard to OAA. The Component has gone well beyond the traditional mission assigned to the NAEW&C Force when it was first established during the Cold War period to safeguard NATO countries mainly from Soviet threat.

With this operational activity in Afghanistan, it is indeed the first time that NATO AWACS has been employed in this region of the world. It is also the first time that NATO AWACS has been employed from such a remote location and for such a long period.

OAA gave support to air and ground forces that were facing every day the so-called "asymmetric" threat generated by the insurgents in their attempt to undermine peace and stability in such a fragile country as Afghanistan.

If I look back at the number of crews and, more broadly, at the number of Component personnel who have been trained and deployed several times to sustain this operation during these past years, I can't hide the pride in being part of this wonderful team of people who have been able to fulfill this extremely difficult task.

This continuous support was provided with the inner intent of actively participating in saving the lives of our comrades on the ground, some of who given their lives in the line of duty during the 13 years of operations in Afghanistan.

If I think of all the wonderful people, who because of their effort and personal sacrifice have made the realization of this task possible, I can't forget the hidden sacrifice of all the family members of our Component personnel. It's them, who "behind the curtains", have significantly sustained our people during the long periods of deployments. This unweaving support came despite the difficulties of having a father or a mother away from home for an extended period of time, sometimes hiding some tears, as not to worry them while they are so far away from their loved ones.

In conclusion, it is to all of you, past and present Component members and to your families, that I want to say "well done!" I am proud to be a part of this Component and I want to express the feelings of gratitude from all the Nations that we represent.

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Component receives pennant for Operation Unified Protector

The Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Jochen Both, awarded the Operation Unified Protector (OUP) pennant to the E-3A Component Sept. 25, 2014, after a ceremony welcoming NATO AWACS home from Afghanistan.

"OUP clearly demonstrated NATO's advanced air capabilities and highlighted the significance of air power in modern conflicts," General Both said. "Between the end of March and the end of October 2011, E-3A aircraft conducted nearly 250 sorties, all of them with great mission success, totalling more than 2,100 flight hours. This is a testament to the responsiveness, adaptability and especially the professionalism, leadership, and team spirit of the men and women working at Force Command and the E-3A component."

NATO took control of all military operations for Libya under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1970 & 1973 on March 31, 2011. The aim of OUP was to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under attack or threat of attack.

The mission comprised of three elements: an arms embargo, a no-fly-zone and actions to protect civilians from attack or the threat of attack.

On Oct. 28, 2011, after 211 days, the North Atlantic Council took the formal decision to end the operation at 2359 hours on the Oct. 31, 2011, the operation lasted a total of 214 days.

NATO fully complied with the historic mandate of the United Nations to protect the people of Libya, to enforce the no-fly zone and the arms embargo. Unified Protector is one of the most successful operations in NATO history.

Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

The Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Jochen Both, awards the Operation Unified Protector pennant to the E-3A Component Sept. 25, 2014, during a ceremony at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.

The Component has previously earned four other Allied Command Operations campaign pennants for support of Operation Anchor Guard, Konya Turkey in 1990; NATO relief efforts following the devastating earthquake in Pakistan in 2005; support of NATO operations in Kosovo in 1999; and support of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

New 'King of the Jungle' at Squadron Two

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Leadership, Flying Squadron Two personnel and other members of the E-3A Component witnessed a change-of-command ceremony Sept. 4, 2014, at the E-3A Club on NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany.

Col. Arturo Di Martino, Operations Wing and Training Wing commander, presided over the ceremony as Lt. Col. Jose L. Romero relinquished command of Squadron Two and Lt. Col. Andrea Franzese assumed command of the 'Lions.'

"Being a squadron commander is a difficult task, especially when we are operating from five different locations," Colonel Di Martino said. "We are losing a very experienced and qualified leader, but Italy has given us one of its best officers to fill this position."

Colonel Romero severed as the leader of Squadron Two for approximately two years, but before relinquishing control, he offered some words of advice for the new commander.

"You can't teach them," he explained. "They know this business better than both of us; all you have to do is manage them. As commander, just be honest with them and they will be loyal."

Shortly after Colonel Romero's speech ended, the crowd observed the passing of the guidon, a symbolic gesture that signifies the transition of command from one officer to another. By accepting the guidon, Colonel Franzese took responsibility of Squadron Two and became the unit's 17th commander.

"This is a very prestigious and rewarding assignment," Colonel Franzese said. "Taking command of this outstanding group is a source of pride for me." He went to explain that this a "time full of challenges and changes" for the Component but he expects "active, enthusiastic and determined participation" from every 'Lion' in Squadron Two.

Photo by Wiel Borghans

Lt. Col. Andrea Franzese accepts the Squadron Two guidon from Col. Arturo Di Martino, signifying his assumption of command.

"I know I can count on you," Colonel Franzese said. "I'll always be here for you and I'll always be by your side.

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Ribbon-cutting ceremony marks opening of new flightline

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

The E-3A Component held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 22, 2014, at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany, to signify the completion of its runway restoration project.

The ceremony marks the end of a project that started at the beginning of May to resurface the top portion of the Component's 30 year-old runway with 30 centimeters of asphalt.

"Today is a very special day for the Component because we completed something that has never been done here before," said Col. Frank Samuelson, the Component's Logistics Wing commander. "We've built new buildings; we've upgrade our aircraft, but we've never restored our runway."

The original runway was constructed in the early 1980s and was only expected to last about 20 years. Patch-work was completed to extend the life of the runway, but the time had come for a complete resurfacing. The restoration project eliminated the concrete surface which had started to deteriorate over the past several years.

Col. Frank Samuelson (third from the right), Lt. Col Uwe Schulz (third from the left) and other key personnel in the runway restoration project cut a ribbon Sept. 22, 2014, during a ceremony to mark the completion of the project.

In total, resurfacing the 3,048 meter runway took approximately 125,000 tons of asphalt, more than 19,000 tons of subsoil and over six kilometers of drainage.

"With the completion of this project, it is expected that the Component can safely operate out of Geilenkirchen for at least another 20 years," Colonel Samuelson said.

The runway restoration project was completed by using work cycles consisting of 11 work days and three fly days.

"We couldn't simple close our runway for six months and that made this project very challenging for everyone involved," Colonel Samuelson said. "I can assure you there were serious concerns about the feasibility of the project phase schedule."

The colonel explained that the construction company, Bunte, was very helpful. "There were no major show stoppers," he said. "In fact, the two words we heard from them the most were kein Problem."

Runway Restoration Completed – Thank You!

By Leon Koolen

After four and a half months of intensive work, the restoration of our runway has been completed. With this project accomplished, it is expected the E-3A Component can safely operate out of Geilenkirchen for at least another 20 years.

Obviously, a project of this magnitude is only possible with the commitment and support of many people. I therefore offer a big "Thank You" to ...

- Mr. Renze, the management and personnel of the Bunte company for their impressive achievement of putting into place some 125,000 tons of asphalt, over 19,000 tons of subsoil and over 6 km of drainage.
- Mr. Götza of the Bunte company for supervising the set-up and operation of the mobile asphalt mixing unit and for keeping it running throughout the project.
- The BLB project managers (Mr. Tholen and Mrs. Naschberger) for their excellent liaison between the company, the engineering agencies, the Host Nation and the Component.
- The BLB staff for putting together all the bidding documents and handling the security clearance requests.
- The members of the Security Branch in Bldg. 1 who dealt with all the base and restricted area access requests.
- The members of the IMP and Civil Guard who provided security at the gates and safeguarded the construction site throughout the project.
- The members of the ACCI office for liaising with the local police forces.
- The Component project manager (Mr. Wahl) and the members of the Infrastructure Division for their tremendous coordination effort throughout this project, including the years when it was being prepared and awaiting approval.
- The members of the Component team for carefully addressing every aspect that could adversely impact the project.
- The members of the Motorpool Branch who provided all the transportation to and from Liège Airport because our runway was closed, and in particular the drivers who safely shuttled the crews at any time of the day or night.
- The members of the Special Vehicles Section who swept the runway and taxiways very thoroughly after every construction phase.
- The cargo handlers in Hangar IV who supported all the cargo movements required as a result of the runway restoration.
- The members of the Visual Media Branch who were out on the runway so many times to document the project with photos and videos.
- The members of the Component Meteorology Office for their excellent support which greatly aided in the planning of the construction work.
- The planners on the Ops and Log side for their creative scheduling of all the aircraft movements while taking account of the numerous limiting factors.
- The IT Wing members who enhanced the IT capabilities at the FOBs/FOL and supported the activation of the Extranet portal.
- The web designers for providing their expertise to set-up all the functionality on the SharePoint Portal.
- The members of the Component Public Affairs Office who kept the outside world posted on the progress of the runway restoration work.
- The aircrews, maintainers and support personnel who had to put in long working days wherever and whenever necessary, including travel to and from the deployment locations to support the operations in Afghanistan, the Ukrainian Ops and the deployments to the FOBs/FOL because the runway was closed.
- Any Component members who were required to put in extra hours to make all of this happen.
- The FOBs/FOL for their outstanding support in hosting the additional aircraft and crews.
- Our counterparts at Force Command who supported us throughout this difficult challenge.
- The mayors and elected representatives of the local communities for understanding and respecting the operational importance of this project.
- Any inhabitants of the surrounding communities who were inconvenienced by the additional traffic caused by the constant flow of delivery trucks.
- Last but not least: a big thank you to Component members and their families who had to spend less time together as a result of the deployments required by the runway closure.

OPERATION AFGHAN COMES TO AN END

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

For 1,340 days, the E-3A Component and its flagship aircraft, the NATO AWACS, have provided 24-hour support to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The first Operation Afghan Assist mission took place on Jan. 15, 2011, and the last operational OAA mission was completed on Sept. 21, 2014.

"The Component flew its last operational sortie over Afghanistan," said Maj. Gen. Andrew M. Mueller, the Component commander. "Our focus now is on starting the re-deployment process from Mazar-e Sharif (MeS) and returning the aircrew, maintenance personnel and aircraft to our main operating base. However, I want to congratulate the entire team on more than three years of sustained operations in Afghanistan. NATO AWACS did something that was never imagined by those who created the Component over 35 years ago."

From the beginning until the end, NATO AWACS provided air command and control, airspace deconfliction, communications relay and radar coverage in the Afghan airspace, aerial refuelling flow management and civil/military aircraft deconfliction.

Furthermore, the AWACS enhanced situational awareness for air and ground commanders as well as enabling control of close air support assets, surveillance and communications support to ground operations including medical evacuation operations and personnel recovery. "NATO AWACS has been a decisive enabler for air to surface integration in theatre," said Maj. Gen. Jochen Both, NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force commander.

The E-3A's contributions to ISAF were recognised at the highest level of NATO. "Their crews have flawlessly and consistently provided critical mission contributions often in direct support of land forces engaged in contact or conducting medical evacuation operations," said Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. "However, it was the whole Component team that maintained excellence while watching over the skies of Afghanistan."

With more than 1,240 missions and beyond 12,240 flying hours, the Component supported over 530 combat operations and controlled nearly 20,000 aircraft, which helped ensure no critical air or ground related incidents. "Given the challenges and complexities of operating our aircraft in Afghanistan, this mission success rate is a truly astonishing testament to the professionalism and dedication of the Component as well as the tremendous support from their families and loved ones," said General Both.

It all started when Col. John Backstrom, the first Force Element Commander (FEC) for ROTO 0 of OAA, and his team deployed to MeS and prepared the site with airfield services, operational spaces, maintenance spaces and accommodations. "To be completely honest, I was then, and still am, extremely proud of the outstanding efforts and accomplishments of everyone with whom I was deployed, as well as those who supported us from Geilenkirchen and the Force Command Headquarters," Colonel Backstrom said during an interview in 2012 on the one year anniversary of OAA.

In the beginning, the Component would launch the OAA mission out of Forward Operating Base Konya, Turkey. The jet would be recovered in MeS and flown back shortly after by another crew.

"MeS became synonymous with long mission from Turkey to Afghanistan and back, after only a few days on the ground," explained Capt. Peter Verlande. "Unavailability of accommodation and the lack of aircraft parking space at MeS were some of the reason for the long missions."

That changed as the Component was able to upgrade its footprint at MeS to a more permanent one. The crews were finally able to deploy to and operate straight out of MeS. This was historic for the Component because it was the first time in NATO AWACS history it engaged in operational flying from a location outside of NATO territory and was stationed right in the middle of the crisis area.

"In many ways, it was everyone assigned to the Component over the past few years that are responsible for the remarkable OAA achievements," said General Both. "The Component stands as an excellent example of the capability which can be delivered through cooperation among airmen from 16 nations working as a team under the umbrella of the NATO Alliance."

The Component's drive and determination to accomplish this mission was noticeable throughout the entire operation, even on the very last flight.

"The crew's morale was very high; although somewhat reserved because they recognized the significance of the moment and the fact that more than three years they had the honour to close out the E-3As contribution to ISAF," explained Lt. Col. Jose Romero. "The crews were extremely proud of their contribution to NATO's success in Afghanistan and they're looking forward to getting home and, if necessary, preparing for NATO AWACS' next challenge."

N ASSIST

▲ *The last operational flight over Afghanistan: mission number 1273.*

◀ *The last NATO AWACS at MeS takes-off.*

▼ *The last aircraft and air crew deployed to MeS returns to MOB Geilenkirchen.*

Design: Visual Media Services

DUK hosts 32nd Annual Geilenkirchen Oktoberfest

Photos by Andrea Hohenforst

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

The German NCO Association (the Deutsche Unteroffizierkameradschaft or DUK) held the 32nd Annual Geilenkirchen Oktoberfest during the last weekend of September in Hangar II at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany.

The event began in 1982 and had a mere 300 guests. Fast forward to 2014, the event has grown into one of the biggest Oktoberfest celebrations in the region.

After the doors opened on Sept. 27, 2014, the hangar filled with more than 3,000 people, who enjoyed an evening of delicious food, live entertainment and special 'Festbier,' of which some 10,000 liters was served.

The celebration formally started when the E-3A Component Commander, Maj. Gen. Andrew M. Mueller, tapped the first "official" barrel of beer and announced "O' zapft is".

An addition of a wine bar, shooting gallery and a candy stall had the hangar set-up with a typical Oktoberfest atmosphere. With drinks flowing and live music playing, the party lasted until 0300 a.m. After eight hours, the hangar was open again on Sept. 28, 2014, for the traditional 'Frühschoppen,' which featured plenty of entertainment for the children.

While having a good time is what the Oktoberfest celebration is all about, the money raised by the DUK during the event is donated to help needy families in "uncomfortable" situations and to support associations near the base.

In the past 32 years, the DUK has donated more than 250 thousand euros to schools, kindergartens, military-social associations, sport clubs and charity organizations in the Geilenkirchen and Heinsberg area.

In the end, this year's party was yet another success and it brought a German tradition to the E-3A Component's international community. This wonderful accomplishment was made possible by the more than 250 people who stepped up and volunteered their time.

History of Oktoberfest

Crown Prince Ludwig, later to become King Ludwig I, was married to Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen on Oct. 12, 1810. The citizens of Munich were invited to attend the festivities held on the fields in front of the city gates to celebrate the happy royal event. The fields have been named Theresienwiese ("Theresa's fields") in honor of the Crown Princess ever since, although the locals have since abbreviated the name simply to the "Wies'n".

Horse races in the presence of the Royal Family marked the close of the event that was celebrated as a festival for the whole of Bavaria. The decision to repeat the horse races in the subsequent year gave rise to the tradition of the Oktoberfest.

In 1811, an added feature to the horse races was the first Agricultural Show, designed to boost Bavarian agriculture. The horse races, which were the oldest and - at one time - the most popular event of the festival are no longer held today. But the Agricultural Show is still held every three years during the Oktoberfest on the southern part of the festival grounds.

In the first few decades, the choice of amusements was sparse. The first carousel and two swings were set up in 1818. Visitors were able to quench their thirst at small beer stands which grew rapidly in number. In 1896, the beer stands were replaced by the first beer tents and halls set up by enterprising landlords with the backing of the breweries.

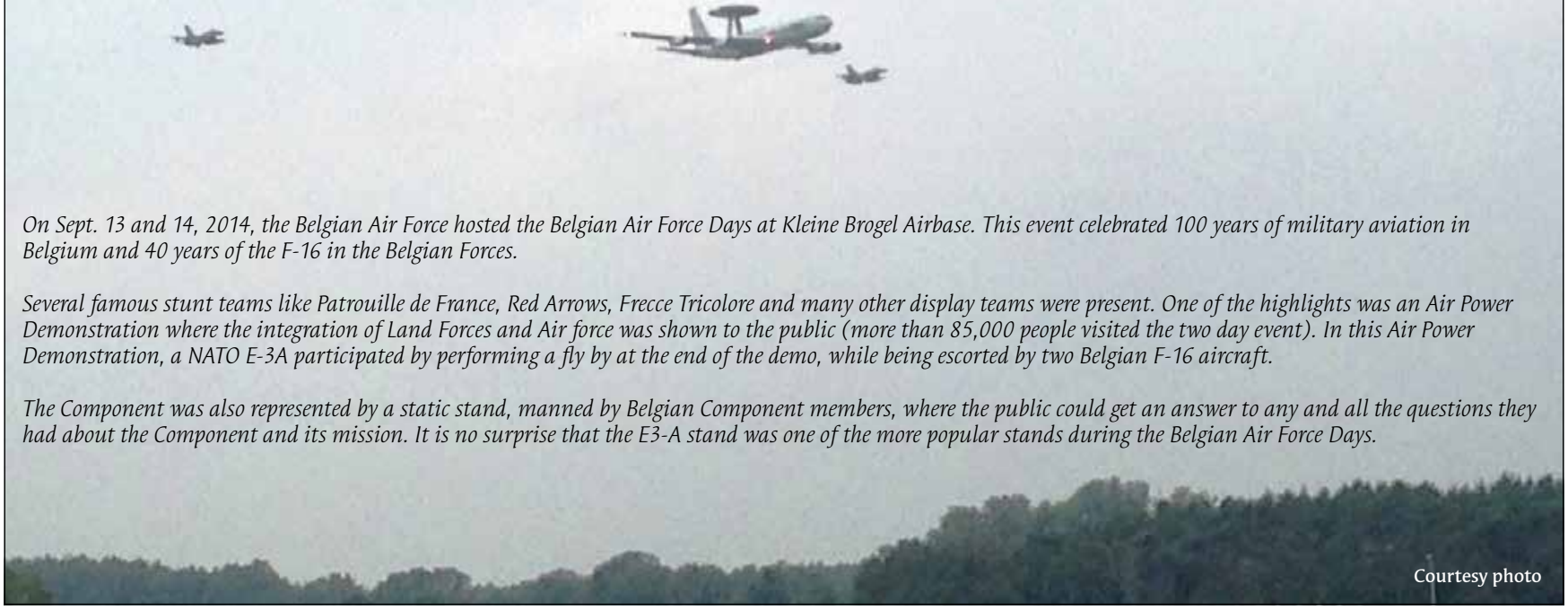
The remainder of the festival site was taken up by a fun-fair. The range of carousels etc. on offer was already increasing rapidly in the 1870s as the fairground trade continued to grow and develop in Germany.

Today, the Oktoberfest is the largest festival in the world; some 6 million visitors from all around the world converge on the Oktoberfest each year.

And since the Oktoberfest is still held on the Theresienwiese, the locals refer to the event simply as the "Wies'n". So "welcome to the Wies'n" means nothing other than "welcome to the Oktoberfest"!

Editor's Note: Text for the History of Oktoberfest was retrieved from http://www.muenchen.de/int/en/events/oktoberfest/history.html.

NATO AWACS participates at the Belgian Air Force Days



On Sept. 13 and 14, 2014, the Belgian Air Force hosted the Belgian Air Force Days at Kleine Brogel Airbase. This event celebrated 100 years of military aviation in Belgium and 40 years of the F-16 in the Belgian Forces.

Several famous stunt teams like Patrouille de France, Red Arrows, Frecce Tricolore and many other display teams were present. One of the highlights was an Air Power Demonstration where the integration of Land Forces and Air force was shown to the public (more than 85,000 people visited the two day event). In this Air Power Demonstration, a NATO E-3A participated by performing a fly by at the end of the demo, while being escorted by two Belgian F-16 aircraft.

The Component was also represented by a static stand, manned by Belgian Component members, where the public could get an answer to any and all the questions they had about the Component and its mission. It is no surprise that the E3-A stand was one of the more popular stands during the Belgian Air Force Days.

Courtesy photo

Component represents NATO at Laage and Berlin

By Senior Master Sgt. Ingo Senft and Chief Master Sgt. Michael Möller

The E-3A Component was invited to take part in the "LAAGE OPEN DAY 2014," an Airshow and Wing Jubilee of the Tactical Fighter Wing 72 in Laage, Germany, on Aug. 23, 2014.

Even though an E-3A could not be deployed, Component members were warmly welcomed and the presence and the representation of the Component were highly appreciated by the visitors and by the project management.

Due to the high interest, uncountable questions about the aircraft and the system had to be answered at the E-3A information point. The Component crew provided information about the NATO Airborne Early Warning System and visitors had the opportunity to get handouts, posters and other material about the AWACS and the Component.

Around 100,000 visitors came to find out more about the Germen Bundeswehr and many other aircrafts from different Nations on static and flying displays.

Many different aerial demonstrations were performed by the Polish Air Force Mig 29 demo team, the Czech Saab Gripen demo team and the Red Bull BO105 demo team.

The German Air Force showed on various flying displays with different aircraft types an overlook of all their capacities.

The most asked question was of course about our aircraft and when there will be a chance to see it. Many of the visitors are hoping for a participation of the AWACS in future air shows to get a closer look and maybe have a chance for a walk through.

Two weeks later members of the Component took part with the display truck in the Berlin Gatow Military History Museum Open Days 2014 and the Flugplatzfest.

Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Michael Möller

Courtesy photo

Photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Tops In Blue performs live at GK

The United States Air Force's Tops In Blue performed live in front of more than 400 people Sept. 17, 2014, at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany.

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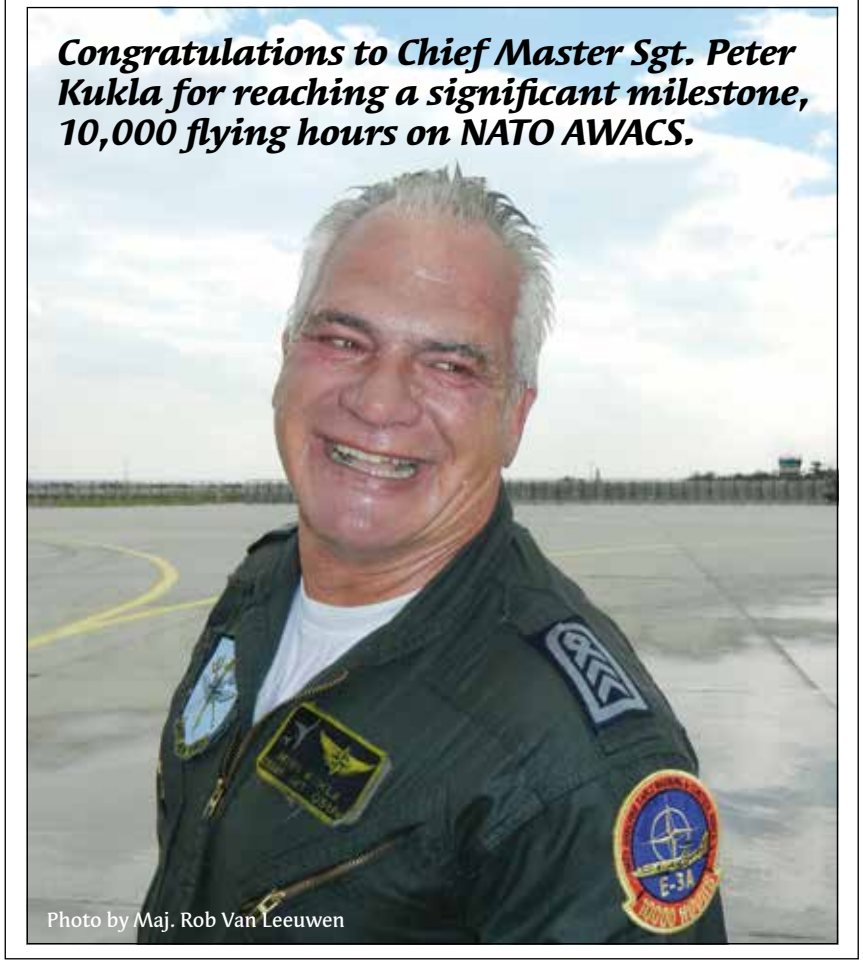

Courtesy Photo

Celebrate Filipino-American History Month

The Geilenkirchen Fil-Am History Month committee would like to invite all Component members, their families, and friends to this year's celebration of the Filipino-American History month. The event will take place on October 17, 2014, in the Multi-Purpose Room, Bldg 298, from 1130 to 1330.

Join us for a short afternoon of live entertainment, free food tasting and display of various Philippine paraphernalia. We also invite you to give back to the local community by helping us raise funds for the Kreis Heinsberg Frauenhaus (Heinsberg Women's Shelter) and the Philippine Children Charities through CFC campaign.

Geilenkirchen's Team 5/6 continues Halloween Tradition

By Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Gonzalez and Tech. Sgt. Ladislav Kucera

"Trick or Treat!" It is October which means it's Halloween time!

Halloween's history goes back to the ancient religion of the Celtic tribes (circa 500 B.C.) from whom came the Britons, Scots and the Irish. Present day Britains, Scots, Welsh and Irish are all descendants from these ancient Celtic tribes. The Celts believed that at the end of summer, Samhain, the lord of death becomes powerful and overpowers the sun god. On October 31st, Samhain assembles all the evil spirits who had died the previous year and allows them to return home to visit the living.

On October 31st, after the harvest, the druid would meet under an oak grove or near large stone circles where they performed sacrifices. The priests would light great fires and offer sacrifices to Samhain to ensure that the sun returned after the winter. During the night all fires except the sacrificial one to Samhain were extinguished. The Vigil of Samhain, as it was called, would keep the sacrificial fire on through the night and the next day embers from this fire would be used to light the fire in each household.

Villagers would try to appease goblins and demons with offerings of food and nuts. They would leave little treats that the household had to offer, to satisfy the hunger of these demons. If the demon was satisfied with the treat, it was believed it would not trick the person or cast an evil spell. Therein remains the origin of the present day trick or treat.

Virtually all present Halloween traditions can be traced to the ancient Celtic day of the dead. To this day, witches, ghosts, and skeleton figures of the dead are among the favorite disguises and Halloween is becoming once again adult holiday or masquerade, like Mardi gras. Men and women in every disguise imaginable are taking to the streets of big American cities and parading past grinningly carved candlelit jack o 'lanterns, re- enacting customs with a lengthy pedigree. Their masked antics challenge, mock, tease, and appease the dread forces of the night, of the soul, and of the otherworld that becomes our world on this night of reversible possibilities, inverted roles, and transcendence.

The Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base's Team 5/6 upholds this tradition by yet again sponsoring an exhilarating celebration of a holy and magical evening this year at the JFC Brunssum International Conference Center (ICC) on the October 25th, starting at 2100 hours. Team 5/6 has a long tradition of sponsoring variety of events, such as the annual Halloween bash party that has taken place on the last Saturday of each October for the past few years.

This year's Halloween Bash will be filled with abundance of fun with free snacks, drinks for purchase, a professional DJ spinning a variety of tunes, a costume contest with prizes and other entertainment.

MWA INFORMATION

October

Visit the Services Branch WSS Web Page for the latest program information and upcoming events.

Upcoming Events & IYA Activities

(Open to all US and NATO identification card holders)

Points of contact: IYA Events: Mrs Neuhalfen, ext. 4954; Sports Events: Mr Stelten, ext. 4920; Food Services: Mr Peeters, ext. 4990.

Important notices:
The Rotodome will be closed Oct. 3 due to a national holiday. The E-3A Club will be closed Oct. 3 due to a national holiday and Oct. 16 for a special function.

06 Oct: Start of Winter Schedule New Gym, Old Gym and Multipurpose Room

09 Oct: Volleyball Tournament
1300-1600 hrs. Register by contacting the Sports Department: email ofc-bpws@e3a.nato.int or call tel.ext. 4946.

11 Oct: IYA Trip to Kinderdijk Windmills and Delft
Saturday, 11 October, 0800-2000 hrs. Visit the 19 historic windmills of Kinderdijk lining a typical Dutch canal in pairs, one of the most famous and spectacular tourist sights in Holland.

We will take a boat along the canal, and explore the museum windmill and the historic pump station. Next stop is the beautiful old city of Delft with its medieval houses, tree-shadowed canals and blue pottery.

Relax in a typical Dutch style café, a trendy pub or restaurant, and do not forget to look around the many stores and markets. Optional: you can join the tour guide on an orientation walk across the historic center. Our luxury bus departs from outside the Main Gate.

Cost for guests without MWA-Card is € 42 for ages 13 and up, € 37 for ages 6 to 12, and € 20 for ages 5 and under; with your valid MWA-Card pay only € 28 for ages 13 and up, € 25 for ages 6 to 12 and € 14 for ages 5 and under, including entrance fees and boat fare at Kinderdijk.

15 Oct: Table Tennis Tournament
1200-1500 hrs, New Gym. Deadline Registration: 14 Oct. Register by contacting the Sports Department: Email ofc-bpws@e3a.nato.int or call tel.ext. 4946

23 Oct: Indoor Soccer Tournament
1100-1500 hrs, New Gym. Deadline Registration: 20 Oct. Register by contacting the Sports Department: email ofc-bpws@e3a.nato.int or call tel.ext. 4946.

29 Oct: Turkish Lunch at the Rotodome

31 Oct: Bavarian Breakfast at the Rotodome

07 Nov:International Cross Country Run
Registration starts on 01 Oct. Contact the Sports Dept: email: ofc-bpws@e3a.nato.int or call ext. 4946

Yoga @ the IYA under the certified instruction of Veerle Dandoy starts on 2 October: IYA Multi-purpose Room, Thursdays, 1630 – 1730, registration for new students at 1615. Classes for all levels are designed to build strength, flexibility and endurance. We focus on developing the essential yoga postures and sequences while honing proper technique and alignment. Intermediate and advanced modifications are available for experienced students. There is no cost, the instructor is volunteering her time.

IYA Dance Sensation for ages 4 and up under the experienced and certified instruction of Jacky Smeets: IYA Multi-purpose Room, Tuesdays, 1700-1745. Cost is € 20 per month. The first class is free.

International Spouses' Club Opening Night

By Rebecca Hendrickx

On Sept. 11, 2014, the International Spouses' Club kicked off its 2014/2015 season with a board organized evening at the E-3A Club, Geilenkirchen.

This year, the nationalities hosting our upcoming events were asked to create a table representing their country. Each nation provided a selection of traditional foods with some information and items that represented their country. When the doors opened at 1800 hours, ladies from many nationalities descended on the E-3A Club, many ready to join and others wishing to first experience what ISC has to offer. From here it was into the main room to purchase their raffle tickets and view the amazing selection of prizes provided by each nation.

Once all the ladies were signed in, forms and money collected and with drinks in hand, it was time for the board members to be presented by president Lindsey Schlicker. From here the ladies were invited to start sampling the food. There was plenty of excitement and curiosity with every table full of ladies sampling traditional delicacies. Allowing the ladies the chance to enjoy and savor their food, it was onto the raffle.

The excitement was tangible as the added surprise of spending 10€ on raffle tickets, they received an additional 5€ worth. The winning ladies were able to choose their own prize, a task some found hard as there was so many fun prizes on offer. To close out the evening, the board presented the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge five of the board members took part in.

Thank you to all the ladies who turned out in support of the International Spouses' Club's opening night and new season, and a special thank you to the ladies and hard workers who worked hard on the food, serving and clearing all the dishes. Without the collaboration of everyone, the night would not have been such a success.

Next month, on Oct.16, 2014, it will be the German ladies who will be hosting an Oktoberfest themed night at the E-3A club, doors open at 1800 hours, and we will be starting promptly at 1900 hours. Wear your dirndl's or lederhosen (optional) and come enjoy a fun Oktoberfest night out. Childcare will be provided for 4€ per child. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

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