

The flying branch

Category : Flying branch

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Objectives



->to improve the tactical leadership skills and flying capability of front line fighter mission commanders.

->to improve the tactical interoperability of NATO Air Forces through exposure to other Air Forces tactics and capabilities.

->to provide a flying laboratory for tactical employment concepts.



Organisation

The Flying Branch is headed by a Lieutenant Colonel drawn in rotation from France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States. Some 16 officers, from 8 nations make up the two Sections of the Flying Branch; Air-to-Ground and Air-to-Air. All the aircrew have recently completed front line flying tours and all return to their home units, outside of the flying courses, to maintain flying currency. The majority have also participated in the TLP flying course at some stage of their flying careers and many have operational experience in the Middle East and Balkans theatres. The staff

are responsible for coordinating the mission scenarios, briefing and debriefing the participants, assessing the results and bringing out the lessons learned from each of the missions.



The Flying Course

Six TLP Flying Courses, each of four weeks duration, are held every year with up to 24 aircraft and crews participating in each course. Each unit deploying to TLP for a Flying Course normally deploys with two aircraft, crews and an engineering detachment of up to 30 personnel. Consequently, the participating aircrafts for each course include a wide selection of all tactical aircrafts available in the NATO inventory today.

Flying Course Objectives

The objectives of the course are to provide realistic training for everybody involved in air warfare, within the limits of the peacetime regulations. Participants are presented with a new scenario each day. The scenarios, which cover all aspects of modern air warfare, are challenging and aimed to trigger the imagination of the participants. This is often achieved by confronting them with situations not normally encountered during routine training missions at home. A further objective of the course is to facilitate a free exchange of information on weapons, tactics and capabilities between the participating nations. By providing an environment that encourages the discussion and development of multi-national tactics, participants find the best way to employ to full advantage the differing aircraft capabilities of the multi-national forces in Composite Air Operations (COMAOs). During each course, a building block approach is used to progress the crews through 15 carefully structured sorties. These sorties are aimed at challenging the participants to develop the tactical leadership skills necessary to plan, brief, fly, and debrief fully integrated multi-national formations. Each day a different crew leads the others through all phases of missions that grow in complexity during the course.



Three times a year TLP includes Night Operations within the flying course programme. The objective is to practice COMAO operations at night and experience the different challenges that planning and operating at night presents to aircrew. Always keen to be at the forefront of developing tactics, techniques and procedures for the NATO Air Forces, TLP courses have developed to include a wide range of mission profiles. New scenarios are developed and tested on each course with the aim of keeping abreast of developments around the world.