

Frisian Flag 2019



Fighter pilots from various countries trained in complex missions during the international exercise *Frisian Flag* in April 2019, some 50 aircraft operating from Leeuwarden airbase. During the exercise, air-to-air refueling was performed by tanker aircraft at Eindhoven airbase (NL), that flew in their own exercise (EART2019).

The Royal Netherlands Air Force participated with F-16s from Volkel and Leeuwarden, while the Polish Air Force brought their new F-16Cs. The US Air Force sent F-16C aircraft from the 148 Fighter Wing of the Minnesota Air National Guard, based at Duluth (MN) airbase, these F-16s being in special 'Have Glass' paint of dark grey colour.

The German Air Force participated with Eurofighters and the French Air Force contributed a number of Mirage 2000Ds from Nancy.

Special participants were the Swiss Air Force with F/A-18 Hornets, after some decades of absence. A Cobham DA-20 was deployed from the UK to disrupt communication of the fighter aircraft, which made their operations much more difficult. In addition, a number of air defence systems



contributed to making the scenario as realistic as possible. The new ground-based Multi Mission Radar (MMR) was also employed, to add to the complexity.

Current missions increasingly take place in a coalition context, which makes training in an international context necessary. Because the Leeuwarden airbase is close to large

exercise areas in the North Sea, the exercise is based at the Frisian location. Conducting the Exercise, Lieutenant Colonel Ronald van der Jagt was aware that Frisian Flag has an impact on the environment, yet he hoped for understanding. "One of the points of attention was to minimise unnecessary inconvenience. Fixed departure and landing