

Raptors on a roll



Summer tour in Europe

During three weeks 8-28 August 2018, 12 Lockheed F-22 Raptors made a deployment to the United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) airbase of Spangdahlem in Germany. On this deployment to Europe, came the F-22s of the 95th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Wing, home based at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, USA.

As part of this 'Flying Training Deployment', the F-22 fighters also made visits to Norway, Greece, Spain, Romania and Poland. Some visits were for just one day, taking-off in the early morning and returning late in the afternoon, while others lasted for several days.

During their visits in Europe, the F-22s were accompanied by Boeing KC-135 tanker aircraft for air-air refueling during flight to the destination, while aircraft maintainers flew onboard for ground maintenance during debriefing of the pilots after morning missions.

Besides these visits, there were many air-air battles ('dogfights') fought overhead western Europe with and against the Spangdahlem-based USAFE F-16s, the European NATO partners Germany (Eurofighters), France (Mirages), Belgium

(F-16s) and the Netherlands (F-16s) in order to maximise training opportunities while "strengthening the NATO alliance and deterring regional aggression."

In Europe, aim of the aircraft and airman was to train with allies and other US Air Force aircraft as well as forward deploy to European NATO bases. As part of the

European Deterrence Initiative, these training deployments are to assure allies and further demonstrate the commitment to regional security and stability. In addition, these training deployments help demonstrate and exercise the capabilities of the aircraft in various environments, enhancing integration between the US and its allies.

