

Defending the Eastern Flank



Photo: NATO Air Command

With the return of seven CF-18 Hornets of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) to Bagotville, QC early December 2022, Air Task Force-Romania ended after four months securing the Romanian skies and training with other NATO allies.

Enhanced Air Policing

Operation Reassurance is Canada's contribution to NATO assurance and deterrence measures, which demonstrates Canada's ability and willingness to react rapidly to international crises and to work side by side with its NATO Allies to reinforce the alliance's collective security. Air Task Force-Romania (ATF-R) is the name of the Air component of this mission. "After four months here at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base we have had the opportunity to work alongside our Romanian colleagues and several

Allies conducting interoperability training enhancing NATO's collective assurance and deterrence on the southeastern flank," stated ATF-R detachment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Latwaitis, a CF-18 pilot with 2400 jet flying hours under this belt. "We were on stand-by to launch quick reaction alert sorties when directed by the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) at Torrejón in Spain, and controlled by the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) in Bucharest. For this we had liaison officers embedded in the CRC that worked daily with their Romanian counterparts".

Since 2014, the enhanced Air Policing mission has assured Allied populations of NATO's enduring commitment to collective deterrence and defence. It demonstrates the Alliance is capable and willing to sustain a strong and robust posture along the entire Eastern flank of Europe.

SEVEN

Canadian fighter detachments have been a regular sight in the skies above the city of Constanța on the shores of the Black Sea. LCol Latwaitis, "Since 2014 with the beginning of NATO's enhanced Air Policing in Romania, Canada has consistently supported this mission and showcased the strong transatlantic bond within the Alliance and our commitment to collective security." This is the seventh time the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) have deployed an ATF to Romania on Operation Reassurance. The first time was in 2014 at a base in Northwestern Romania but with an absence in 2015 and 2016 the detachment moved to the current Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base in 2017 and has called 'MK' home ever since with a yearly Task Force. "This is our seventh time in Romania, meaning the bonds between our two forces run deep. While every ATF mission since 2014 has