

## The NATO DACCC – UK Personnel Supporting NATO's Deployable Air Command and Control Centre Capability from Northern Italy



Are you looking for a new challenge? A break from the norm? Or perhaps want to learn a new language, experience new cultures and explore new horizons? Do you like AT and FD? Do you want to broaden your qualifications and enrich your military experience? Are you career focused and wanting an operationally challenging job, but nervous about the potential impact of a NATO tour? There is certainly one place where you can have it all...

NATO's Deployable Air Command and Control Centre (DACCC), based at Poggio Renatico in Northern Italy, consists of two distinct sub-units that together provide NATO's capability for deployable Surveillance and Control of Alliance Air Operations. The DACCC mission is,

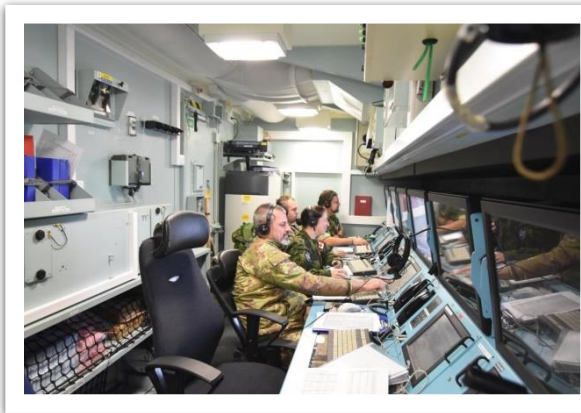
*'to prepare for worldwide operational deployment and, together with the Combined Air Operations Centres, to deliver well-trained Air C2 subject matter experts to supplement the NATO Command Structure Joint Force Air Component during Allied operations and exercises'.*

Sixteen NATO nations currently contribute to the DACCC's 295 peacetime establishment positions, and whilst UK personnel are employed in just 26 of these roles, their experience, and often unique skill sets, provide a valuable and extremely influential contribution to NATO Air C2 capabilities in support of NATO's core tasks of Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security.

The DACCC comprises of four functional pillars: two deployable elements utilised in operations and exercises and two that provide all of the necessary support functions for the deployable elements, either when they are deployed, or when they are in garrison. NATO defines these pillars as:



*Staff to conduct expeditionary air operations. The UK has 6 RAF posts within the DAOC; five Sqn Ldrs and one Gp Capt.*



***The Deployable Air Control Centre, Recognized Air Picture Production Centre and Sensor Fusion Post (DARS).*** *The DARS is NATO's deployable air surveillance and control capability. Much like the UK's No 1 Air Control Centre (No 1 ACC), the DARS is responsible for the control of air missions including surface-to-air missiles, air traffic*

*management and weapons control, area air surveillance, production of a recognized air picture and other tactical control functions. It regularly exercises its proficiency to rapidly deploy from Poggio Renatico and seamlessly integrate into the existing NATO Air Command and Control structure. The UK has 11 RAF posts within DARS ranging from SAC to Wg Cdr.*

***The Training & Exercise Division (TRES).*** *TRES is responsible for the training and preparation of the Deployable Air Operations Centre's personnel for their supplementation role in NATO's Joint Force Air Component and to provide initial and continuation training for all Allied Air Command personnel assigned to the Joint Force Air Component. The UK has a single Sqn Ldr post within the TRES Division.*



***The Combat Service Support Division (CSSD).*** *CSSD is responsible for providing personnel and administrative support, Logistic Support Agreements, Local Force Protection Services, agreements with NATO Support and Procurement Organization, Deployment Support, and support in garrison. The Division also coordinates Control and Reporting*

*Centre activities, Communication and Information Systems, Capabilities Package Implementation as well as deployable sensors, engineering services and Health and Safety. When deployed, these essential support elements of any tactical level Air C2 Unit combine with the DARS to form 'DARS-Deployed', and CSSD personnel fall under the command of the DARS Director. The UK has 7 RAF posts and 1 Army post in the CSSD ranging from SAC to WO.*

UK personnel of all ranks (SAC to Gp Capt) play influential roles in each of these pillars, taking the lead in many key areas including Air C2 Operations/Exercise planning and execution, planning, scheduling and delivery of core NATO JFAC training courses, support to NATO concept and initiative development, and rewriting vital policy, doctrine and plans. UK personnel instruct, manage and shape the four essential training courses delivered by the DACCC:

- Initial Functional JFAC Training (IFJT) Course
- Missile Defence Planning Tool (MDPT) Course
- Specialised Heavy Air to Air Refuelling (SHARC) Course
- NATO Force Integration Training (NFIT)

With leading roles in all four courses, UK personnel provide huge influence on the way these courses are run at DACCC level, but also provide much wider influence across NATO with students attending from all NATO and Partner nations. At the DARS, we have representation across all operational roles, including Master Controller (MC), Fighter Allocator (FA), Weapons Controller (WC), Surveillance Director (SD), Identification Officer (IDO), and their assistants.

It is easy to underestimate the value of the experience gained by our UK personnel working on a daily basis alongside our NATO partners. Our personnel impart invaluable knowledge and experience gained over many years of operational campaigning, and can also learn important lessons from our NATO

allies. Therefore, it is encouraging to see so many personnel from Poggio Renatico being rewarded through promotions and future career opportunities.

The key to the UK's success is undoubtedly the quality of our people. In the past few years, our personnel have been rightly rewarded for the valuable contribution they are making within the NATO DACCC. Across the ranks, UK personnel on NATO assignments at Poggio Renatico have been recognised for their outstanding delivery and achievement with a significant number of promotions, awards and commendations across all ranks, and in all roles. So why is this happening more now than in the past? Over the last few years, UK commanders have increasingly recognised the key role that NATO has to play on the world stage, particularly following BREXIT, and have selected our highest calibre people to maintain a strong foothold in high profile NATO posts.

In the span of just 2 years, seven DACCC-based personnel have either been promoted in-situ, or promoted on completion of their NATO tour—these promotions have been across a broad rank range, from SAC (promoted to Corporal), up to Squadron Leader (promoted to Wing Commander). Importantly, when personnel have been promoted in post, career managers have engaged carefully to ensure full NATO postings can be achieved without disadvantaging the individual or their family. In addition to promotions, two officers were selected for high profile Sqn Ldr Command appointments on completion of their DACCC tour, and our Wg Cdr was selected for Advanced Command and Staff Training at Shrivenham. Most recently, one of our Corporals was selected for the RAF's Basic Engineering Scheme and commissioning as an Engineering Officer. And finally, while not British military, it is worthy of note that our Host Nation Liaison Officer (a locally employed Italian civilian) was recently awarded a 4\* VCDS commendation for his outstanding contribution to the UK detachment here in Poggio Renatico – it truly is a Whole Force effort.



A posting to Poggio Renatico is a fantastic experience for everyone regardless of their situation. Whether you are single or posted with your family, Poggio boasts the benefits of living in a small UK community, which is in turn situated within a larger, vibrant international community. Northern Italy is a hub for European travel with the outstanding beauty of the Dolomites all year round; Venice, Tuscany and Lake Garda are less than 2 hours away and more locally Bologna is renowned as

being the food capital of Italy. For the sporting enthusiast we have Ducati in Bologna, Lamborghini and Ferrari in Modena; football is celebrated in every corner; and skiing is within easy reach throughout winter. You will struggle to fit everything into a 3 year tour!

The highly motivated UK personnel based Poggio Renatico not only take advantage of the life here but also organise many trips from skiing and alpine training locally to sailing expeditions in the Mediterranean. Force Development opportunities abound, embracing the military history that surrounds us, offering a poignant reminder as to why we are able to enjoy such a fantastic posting. Social events are equally popular amongst military personnel and their families, celebrating British events such as Battle of Britain and Burns Night, as well as taking part in key celebrations of our NATO partners. A tour in Poggio Renatico is more than just a job; it is a life experience for our personnel and their families. All I ask of you is you keep it quiet... otherwise everyone will want to come!

So if you are you looking for a new, challenging and operationally focused overseas tour of duty, perhaps something that will broaden your horizons and enrich your military experience whilst at the same time remaining competitive for promotion then maybe the NATO DACCC is the place for you?

