

# NATO Tiger Meet 2011

## Cambrai, France

Article and Photos  
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This year the NATO Tiger Meet (NTM) was held at BA 103 Cambrai AB/Epinoy in France. The Escadron de Chasse (EC) 01.012 with its Mirage 2000C RDI hosted the event from May 9th onwards. The NTM itself doesn't need an introduction. It is a worldwide benchmark for units and spotters alike and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The celebration is a bittersweet one however, as Cambrai AB will close next year and EC 01.012 will stand down as a result of the current budget

cuts sweeping through military organizations all over the western world. The recent NATO action in Libya caused several units to cancel their planned participation. Tiger Meet was not the only exercise effected - several other major exercises in Europe were cancelled because the participants were not able to sent jets due to operational commitments.

This year the NTM organization decided to hold three spotter days, allowing 1,500 spotters on base each time. Unfortunately

ly the experience at the second spotter day on May 16th started out poorly. More than 150 spotters were held up for over an hour at the main gate with growing discontent. The fact that the weather was grayish only made things worse. However, these frustrations were rapidly forgotten once we were finally on base. More than 50 jets were on the flight line and there was enough space for everybody to do his or her spotting thing, whether it was number crunching, video, photography or







meeting friends.

The plan was for two waves of aircraft that would go out for a mission, then come back in. The first wave was to leave between 10:00 and 12:00 and the second between 14:00 and 16:00. However, from 8:30 onwards a continuing stream of jets passed along on the taxiway and took off. The aircraft present included F-16s from Belgium, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Turkey; Austrian Air Force

some sort of Tiger paint scheme. These special schemes ranged from subtle to extremely over the top. The German Air Force took to the occasion with two new and one old "tigered" Tornados to show off. The pilots were more than happy to show off their aircraft with occasional stops in front of the crowd, giving everyone time to get a good shot. My personal favorite this year, a very difficult choice I might add, was

Some of them gave us a nice flyby to say goodbye as they departed.

Another nice bonus during the day was the coming and going support aircraft. This day's catch was a Spanish CASA C295, a Swiss Beech 1900, a French Transall C-160R and a Polish C-130E Hercules. The Polish Hercules delivered a new F100 engine. The Transall crew got bonus points for their very impressive takeoff. A civilian Learjet 36 was also around to de-



Saab OE105s, Saab JAS-39 Gripens from the Czech Republic, German Tornado IDS and ECRs, first timer MiG-29 Fulcrums from Slovakia, Swiss F/A-18 Hornets and French Mirage 2000-5Fs. There were also several helicopters present; Czech Mi-35 Hinds, Italian AB212s, a British Royal Navy AW101 Merlin HM1 and French SA330B Pumas and AC665 Tigre HAPs.

the Mirage 2000-5F 118-EQ / 44 of ECE-5.330. A number of jets who were there because of an airshow held at Cambrai-Niergnies the weekend before, along with the Tiger squadrons that only attended during the weekend left in the morning. This gave us a great chance to see Spanish Mirage F-1Ms, a German EADS EF2000 Eurofighter, French Alphajet Es, including Patrouille de France, and Rafale Cs.

