

UK Eagles Nest

Photos by Jim Haseltine

RAF Lakenheath is home to high-demand USAF combat power, including Europe's only F-15s.





RAF Lakenheath, UK, is home to the only F-15 fighter wing in Europe. USAF's 48th Fighter Wing, with its famous Statue of Liberty patch, is tasked with air dominance, rescue, and ground attack to protect allies in Europe or wherever it may be called to action. In November, Lakenheath sent six F-15Es and six F-15s to Incirlik AB, Turkey, to help strike ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria and protect Turkish airspace. In addition to the F-15s, Lakenheath hosts rescue squadrons for combat search and rescue.

Here, two F-15Cs from Lakenheath's 493rd Fighter Squadron accompany an A-10 from Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., on approach to the base in England. The Warthog was on a theater security package deployment to Europe when it stopped in to train with the F-15s.



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[1] An HH-60G Pave Hawk from the 56th Rescue Squadron at Lakenheath flies a training mission on the east coast of England in March 2015. The 56th RQS has deployed for combat search and rescue in Iraq and Afghanistan. [2] Capt. Aaron Stevens, top, breaks off in an F-15 from a two-ship formation with Capt. Brian Davis as they return from a training mission at Lakenheath. The base has three fighter squadrons, two flying the F-15E and one flying F-15C/D aircraft. [3] SSgt. James Coppess

and SSgt. Benjamin Hewitt work on an F-15E's hydraulic system. [4] TSgt. Michael Delucy aligns a GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munition on an F-15E. Strike Eagles have flown air strikes for Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria, on top of regular training deployments. [5] Then-1st Lt. Matt McQueeney looks through paperwork during a preflight check. [6] Maj. Chris Troyer prepares for an F-15E training mission.



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[1] The flagship of the 48th Fighter Wing leads F-15Es from the 492nd Fighter Squadron and 494th Fighter Squadron and an F-15C (bottom of photo) from the 493rd Fighter Squadron on a flight over England's east coast. The Eagles and Strike Eagles of the three fighter squadrons routinely train together in air-to-air and air-to-ground exercises. [2] Lt. Col. Jason O'Brien and SrA. Bryan Garza review aircraft paperwork before a training sortie. [3] SrA. Earl Harris, an F-15E maintainer with the

494th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, carries out a postflight inspection on a Strike Eagle. [4] Delucy (left) secures a GBU-31 JDAM before the bomb is loaded onto an F-15E. SrA. Brittney Jones operates the bomb loader "Jammer." [5] An HH-60G Pave Hawk gunner with the 56th RQS checks the ammunition for the helicopter's .50-caliber gun before a training mission. [6] F-15E Strike Eagles assigned to the 492nd Fighter Squadron are lined up on Lakenheath's flight line.







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[1] Pararescuemen from the 57th Rescue Squadron are hoisted into a Pave Hawk from the 56th Rescue Squadron during training. The 57th RQS activated at Lakenheath in February 2015, splitting the base's rescue airmen into two squadrons. In November 2015, the Air Force announced that the two units will leave the base in England and relocate to Aviano AB, Italy, in 2017. [2] Three F-15Es and one F-15C—at top left—fly past the White Cliffs of Dover on the southern shore of England. [3] An RAF Spitfire is on display at Lakenheath's Battle of Britain Memorial. The RAF built the base in the early years of World War II and stationed bomber units there. USAF bombers arrived in 1948 and administrative control was transferred from

the RAF to USAFE in 1951. [4] SrA. Nathan Lee (left) and SSgt. Joseph Carranza check on a 492nd FS F-15E's avionics during maintenance. [5] SrA. Jordan Hughes (left) and Troyer attend to paperwork for an F-15E before a preflight walkaround. [6] The 48th Fighter Wing's Statue of Liberty patch.

RAF Lakenheath is an invaluable resource for USAF and the US. USAF has had a continuing presence at the base since World War II. Although USAF in 2015 announced plans to close RAF Mildenhall, Lakenheath's future looks secure. ★