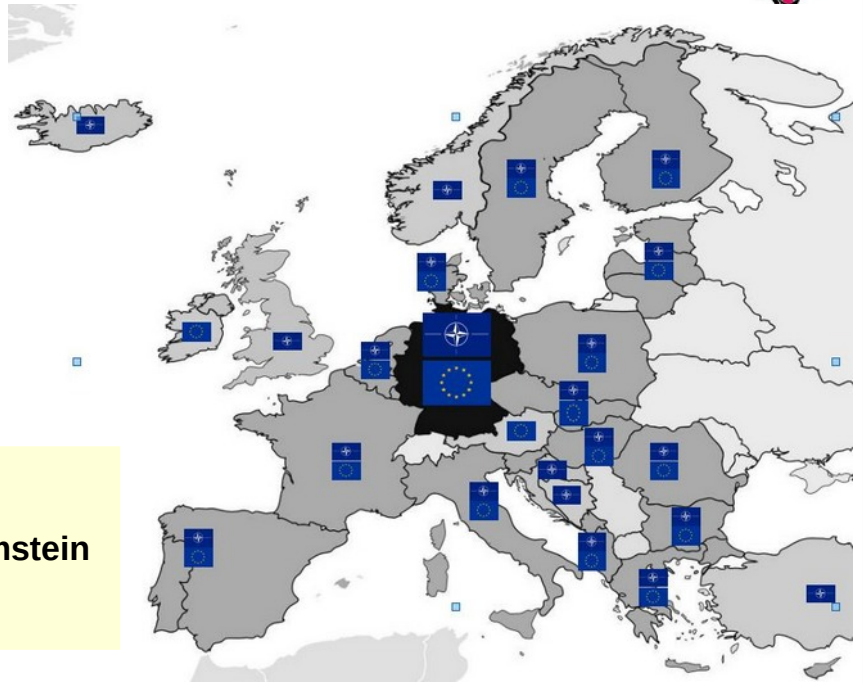


U.S. Military Bases in Europe – an overview



- U.S. military presence in Europe
- Short history since 1990
- Main U.S. locations in Germany
- Countries with strong US expansion
- Local resistance



by **Karl-Heinz Peil**

from the campaign **Stopp Air Base Ramstein**
Contact: khpeil@gmx.de

1

I would like to provide a brief overview of how the most important US military activities in Europe are structured and what role Germany plays as a hub and main stationing location.

The graphic on the first slide shows that NATO membership in Europe is almost matching with the European Union, which has played a decisive role in NATO's eastward expansion in recent decades.

See also:

Military bases in Germany – an overview

by Karl-Heinz Peil

http://files.visualbases.org/pdf/2018-06_MilitaryBases_Booklet_Web.pdf#page=14

Included in:

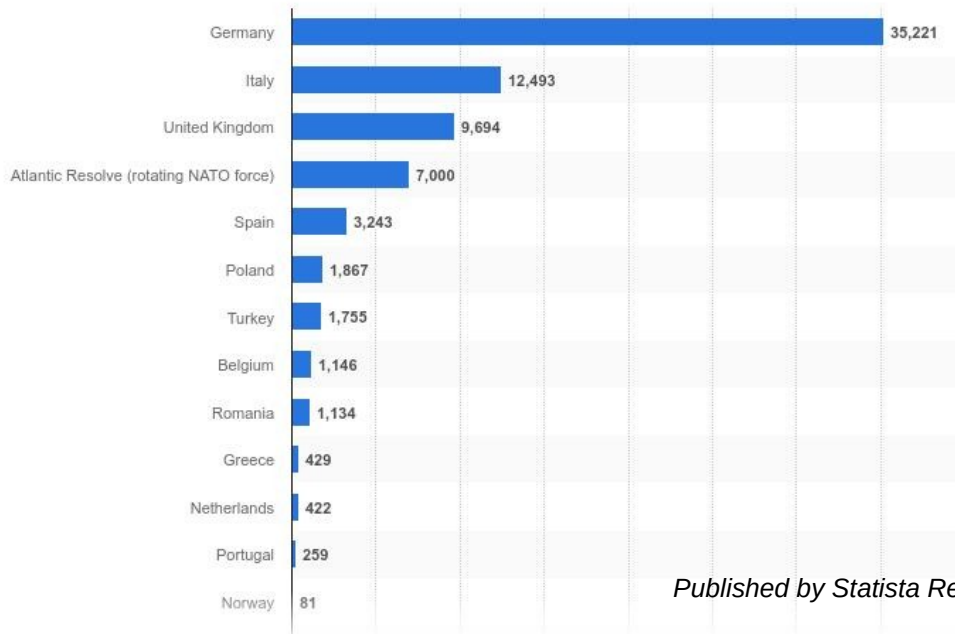
Resistance against Military Bases

Booklet with contributions to the "International Congress on Military Bases and their Importance for Global Wars" in Kaiserslautern, Germany, 8-9 September 2017

Published by the campaign "Stopp Air Base Ramstein"

June 2018, edited by Karl-Heinz Peil

Number of U.S. military personnel in Europe 2022



Number have increased significant until now.

Published by Statista Research Department, Dec 5, 2023

Germany's role becomes particularly clear when you look at the official figures for military personnel stationed in the respective countries. Worldwide, only Japan has more US military personnel than Germany.

Published by Statista Research Department, Dec 5, 2023

As of February 2022, there were estimated to be approximately 35,221 active-duty United States military personnel in Germany, the highest of any European country. In response to the Russian military build-up prior to Russia invading Ukraine, the United States increased its military presence in countries such as Poland and Romania, where there are approximately 1,867 and 1,134 troops stationed respectively.

History of U.S. military presence in Europe



- Since 1990: General reduction of foreign forces after the end of the cold war
- 1997: NATO-Russia Founding Act and several additional agreements with main statement: **No permanent deployment of NATO forces in Eastern Europe**
- Since 2015: Military training of NATO troops in Poland and Baltic states
- 2016: Opening of the first site of NATO missile defense system in Romania
- 2017: NATO's four multinational battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland fully operational – based on periodical rotation
- Since 2019: U.S. military facilities and permanent deployment of NATO forces in Eastern Europe



3

To understand the current shifts in the US military presence in Europe, let's take a brief look at recent history.

In 1997, it was agreed in the NATO-Russia Founding Act that there would be no permanent deployment of NATO troops in Eastern Europe. Since the crisis in Ukraine and the integration of Crimea into Russia in 2014, this principle has been gradually undermined. Although permanent deployment in Eastern Europe was officially dispensed with in the years that followed, military maneuvers with military contingents rotating periodically, usually after six months, became increasingly frequent.

Since 2019, however, US military bases have been established in Eastern Europe.

History of U.S. military presence in Germany

- 1990: 200.000 U.S. soldiers in Western Germany reduced to 70.000 until 2000 (Eastern Germany: 400.000 Sowjet soldiers)
- 2002 – 2005: Strong reduction of total number of bases and concentration to region Rhineland-Palatinate with focus on Kaiserslautern and Ramstein
- 2012: Relocation of US Army HQ Europe and Africa from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden
- 2024: official 38.000 military staff - Total US persons with family members, civil employees, service providers, NSA and CIA approx. additional 40.000



Source: Wikipedia

The total number of US forces stationed in Germany has been reduced in several steps since 1990, resulting in a concentration on just a few locations, which have been further expanded in recent years. The focus is now on the Rhineland-Palatinate region, particularly Kaiserslautern and Ramstein, and increasingly also Wiesbaden.

Actual U.S. military presence in Germany

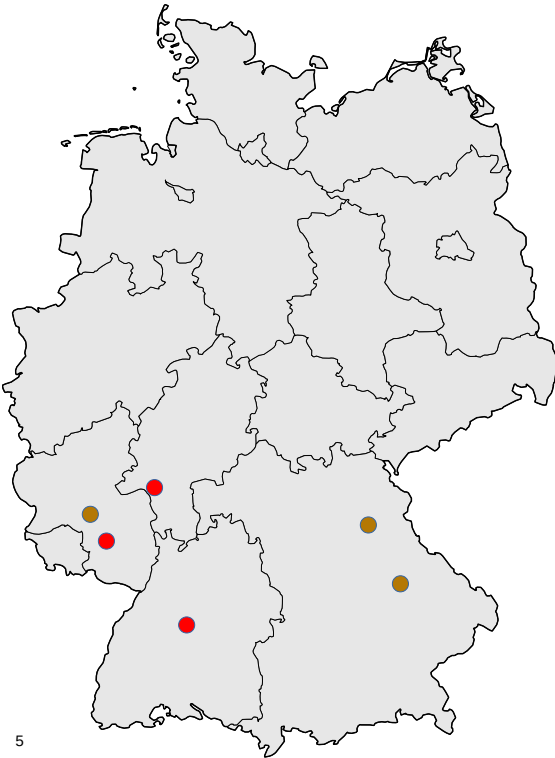


Main distribution

- US **Garrison Rhineland-Palatinate** (incl. Mannheim) - approx. 50.000 persons in total
- US Army **Garrison Wiesbaden**: approx. 20.000 persons in total
- approx. 70 single locations

Main functional Structure

- **Command centres:** **Stuttgart** (EUCOM, AFRICOM), **Wiesbaden** (HQ US Army Europe and Africa), **Ramstein** (NATO, AIRCOM, US Air and Space Operations Center)
- **Training areas:** **Hohenfels**, **Grafenwöhr**, **Baumholder**
- **Military logistic:** Kaiserslauten (with Ramstein, Miesau, Mannheim)



5

Three locations contain command centers. These are Stuttgart, primarily with EUCOM and AFRICOM, Wiesbaden as the headquarters of the US Army Europe and Africa, and Ramstein with various command centers.

In Bavaria, the Grafenwoehr tank training area is of particular importance.

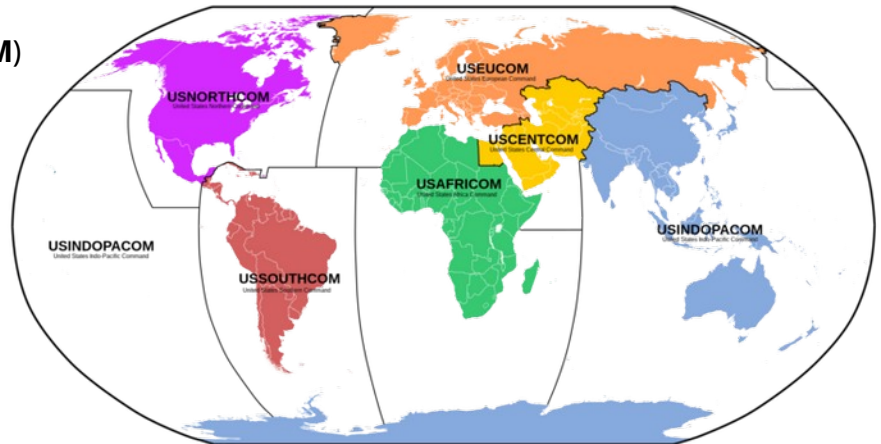
The Baumholder site in Rhineland-Palatinate is primarily used for exercises by US special forces, such as the Navy Seals. Both military training areas and US logistics centers in Germany have become particularly important in recent years due to the training of Ukrainian soldiers and the supply of ammunition to Ukraine.

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart



Main locations in Stuttgart (Germany)

- Patch Barracks:
 - US European Command (**EUCOM**)
 - Special Operations Command (SOCEUR)
 - all special units in Europe
 - National Security Agency (NSA)
 - European Centre
- Kelley Barracks:
 - US Africa Command (**AFRICOM**)
 - since 2007



6

Stuttgart is above all the headquarter of EUCOM and AFRICOM. The fact that AFRICOM is not located in Africa but in Europe has a special significance, which my colleague Heike Hänsel will discuss in her contribution.

See also:

AFRICOM: US-Headquarter for illegal warfare - by Norman Solomon (USA)

http://files.visualbases.org/pdf/2018-06_MilitaryBases_Booklet_Web.pdf#page=24

Included in:

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U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden: Headquarters of the U.S. Army in Europe and Africa



- **Security Assistance Group Ukraine unit** is to be expanded into a NATO headquarters called **NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine**
- **Multi-Domain Task Force** (MDTF) stationed in Wiesbaden since the end of 2021 would become the operations center for the new cruise missiles
- **56th Artillery Command** (part of MDTF) in the Mainz-Kastel district of Wiesbaden is intended to be the command center for the scheduled Dark Eagle, Tomahawks and SM-6



7

The Wiesbaden site has been greatly expanded over the last 15 years, primarily by moving the headquarters of the U.S. Army in Europe and Africa from Heidelberg to this location. This is currently supplemented by several operational units for the planned stationing of new U.S. medium-range missiles in Germany.

The Security Assistance Group Ukraine unit, which has been in place since the end of 2022, is to be expanded into a NATO headquarters called NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine and reinforced by 400 additional military personnel.

From 2026, new US Tomahawks and SM-6 cruise missiles as well as Dark Eagle hypersonic missiles, some of which can also be equipped with nuclear warheads, are to be stationed in Germany. All of these systems can reach targets in Russia.

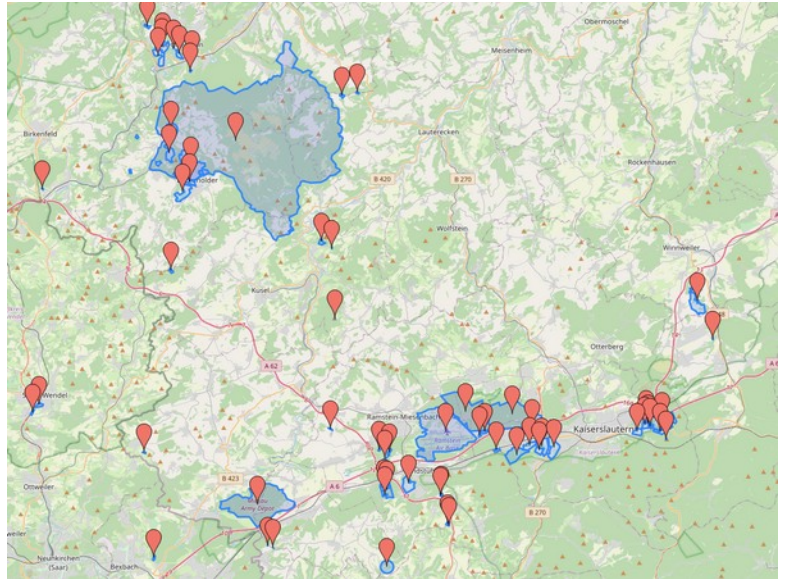
The Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) stationed in Wiesbaden since the end of 2021 would become the operations center for the new cruise missiles.

The 56th Artillery Command in the Mainz-Kastel district of Wiesbaden, which has also been in existence (or reactivated) since the end of 2021, is intended to be the command center for the Dark Eagle and, as part of the MDTF, is also responsible for the planned Tomahawks and SM-6.

US Garrison Rhineland-Palatinate



- **Kaiserslautern:**
couple of facilities US Army und US Air Force
- **Landstuhl Regional Medical Center:**
largest hospital of US Army outside USA, new hospital Weilerbach next to Air Base
- **Miesau Army Depot:**
largest ammunition depot of US-Army outside USA
- **Training area Baumholder:**
i.e. training of Ukraine soldiers



Source: Openstreetbrowser with military layer

The largest concentration of US military facilities can be found in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Ramstein: Headquarter of US Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa



Responsible for planning, operation and support of Air Force operation in Europe and Africa, including:

- Five main bases in UK and Germany (Ramstein, Spandahlem) an Italy
- 80 further facilities in Europe and Incirlik (Turkey)



9

Ramstein Air Base is considered the most important U.S. air base outside the USA. Ramstein is primarily a logistical hub, but is also home to several command centers.

See also:

Ramstein in Germany: Hub for global US drone war

by Norman Solomon, USA

http://files.visualbases.org/pdf/2018-06_MilitaryBases_Booklet_Web.pdf#page=18

Global U.S. drone war via Distributed Command Ground System



Below: Air Base Ramstein 2017

Right: Air Base Sigonella (Italy / Sicilia) 2017

Right below: Sigonella 2020

All images: Google Earth



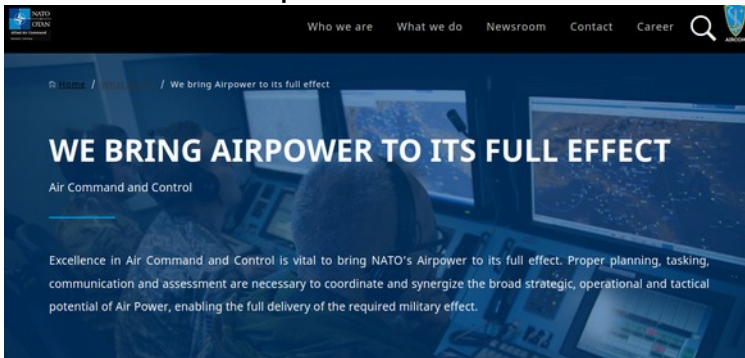
There has been continuous protest against Ramstein Air Base since 2015 due to its role in the global drone war, which was uncovered by whistleblowers and is only possible via technical ground stations for satellite communication in Europe.

A redundant facility of this type has been built at Sigonella Air Base in recent years.

NATO Allied Air Command (AIRCOM)



- since 1974 in Ramstein: NATO Air Force HQ
- Since 2004: Airspace surveillance in the Baltic States
- Since 2019: NATO missile defense in eastern Europe

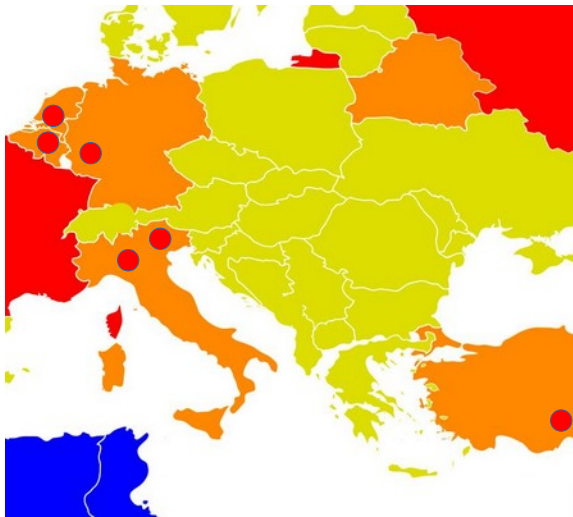


Ramstein is even more important as the home of the NATO Allied Air Command. This has become even more important following the stationing of missile defense systems in Eastern Europe.

Nuclear Sharing of U.S. weapons in NATO countries



- National military bases shared with U.S. military staff



Weapons provided for nuclear sharing in NATO by the United States (2021)^[2]






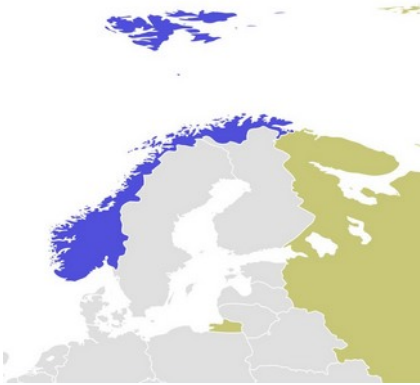
Country	Base	Estimated
 Belgium	Kleine Brogel	20
 Germany	Büchel	20
 Italy	Aviano	20
 Italy	Ghedi	
 Netherlands	Volkel	20
 Turkey	Incirlik	20
		100

Image and table: Wikipedia

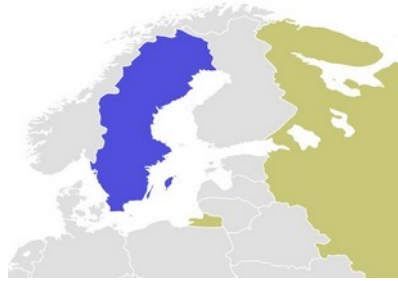
In addition to the U.S. military sites, national air force military bases of NATO states are also important because of the U.S. nuclear weapons located there.

For many years, the German site in Büchel was a central location for protests by the peace movement. The site is currently virtually closed because of construction extensions for nuclear-certified F-35 fighter jets, which are to be stationed here.

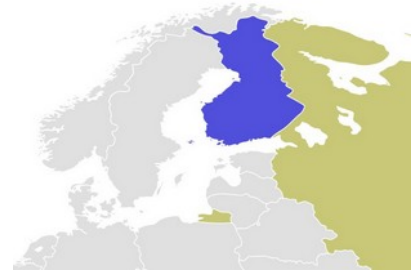
U.S. military presence in Northern Europe



Norway April 2021:
Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement
to give access to three
air bases and one naval
station.



Sweden Dec. 2023:
Agreement to give
control to 17 military
bases



Finland July 2024:
Agreement to give US
control over (at least) 15
military bases

The biggest leap in the U.S. military's territorial presence is currently taking place in Northern Europe through contractual access to a large number of military locations.

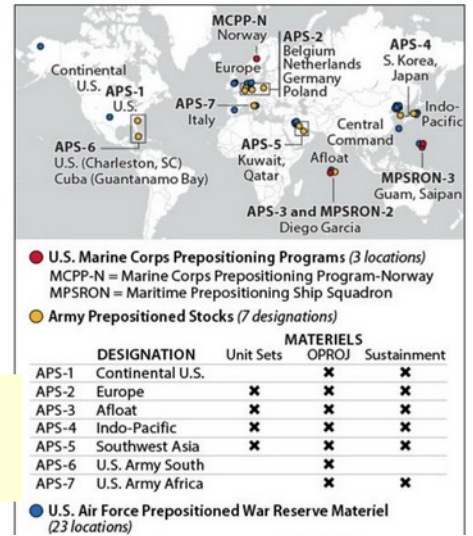
Sweden: <https://visualbases.org/usa-swedish-bases/>

Finland: <https://infobrics.org/post/41589/>

Look also: *The Nordic region from peace zone to war zone*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LahVN_wmftU

U.S. military presence in Poland

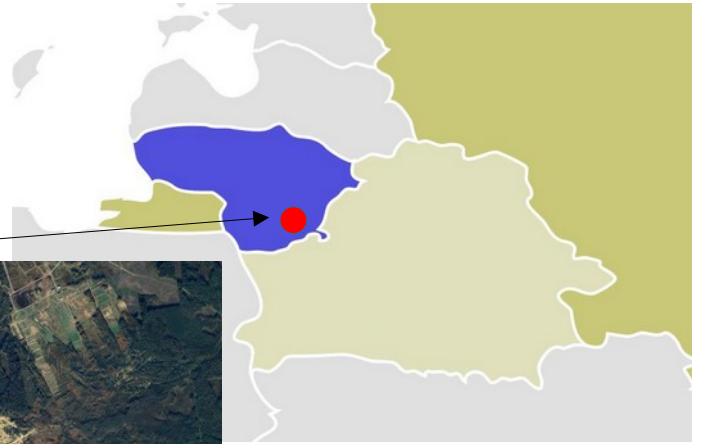


Poland has a number of military training areas and is increasingly becoming a logistics hub for US war material, which is currently leading to a major expansion of the Powidz logistics center.

Expansion of NATO in the Baltic States: Lithuania



- First foreign military base of **German Bundeswehr** in Lithuania with tank brigade scheduled to operate in 2026
- Construction works started in 2024 as an extension to training area **Rudninkai**
- Full operational end of 2027 with 5.000 people in residence (military staff and families)



15

It is not only the US military that is increasing its presence in the Baltic States. Germany is also currently playing a leading role in this with the establishment of its first military base abroad since the Second World War for an armored brigade.

Visualbases: <https://visualbases.org/rudninkai-litauen/>

U.S. Army in the Baltic States



Rotational U.S. battalions changed over at the Pabradė Training Area

2024-05-28

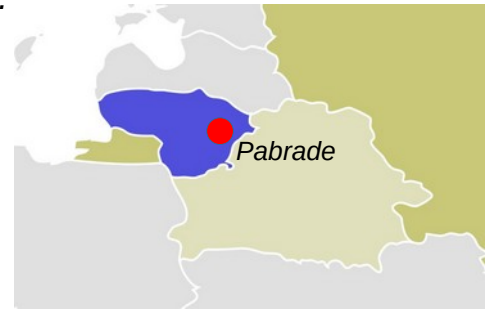


On May 28 Colors of the 3-67 armor and the 1-9 field artillery battalions were cased at Camp Herkus and replaced with the colors of the 2-8 cavalry and 1-82 field artillery battalions, the latest U.S. rotational presence in Lithuania, at the hand over-take over of the rotational U.S. battalions ceremony in Pabradė.

Stars & Stripes, Jan. 5, 2021:

The Army has, since 2019, been sending a battalion-sized element to Lithuania for most of their nine-month deployments, adding fire power near the heavily militarized Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which is wedged between Lithuania and its southern neighbor, Poland.

[...] The majority of the regiment's force is anchored in Poland, but smaller elements are spread out along NATO's eastern flank.



The US military already has an even stronger presence in the Baltic states. At present, there are reportedly more than 10,000 US troops at the central base in Pabrade, Lithuania, near the border with Belarus.

U.S. Air Force Expansion at Constanța in Romania



- In terms of area, the **Mihail Kogălniceanu base** will be 50% larger than Ramstein and become the largest NATO military base in Europe.
- Around 11,900 military personnel will be relocated from Germany, almost 5,600 will be transferred to other NATO countries and 6,400 will return to the USA (for rotating missions)
- A total of 2.7 billion US dollars has been budgeted



More info:

<https://visualbases.org/mihail-kogalniceanu-constanta/>

17

The largest expansion is currently taking place in Romania near Constanța, where the largest US military base in Europe is to be built.

Further information:

<https://balkaninsight.com/2024/03/21/romania-to-host-largest-nato-military-base-in-europe/>

Resistance against US Air Base Ramstein



Continous weeks of actions **from 2015** until now including *International Congress against Military Bases*



More info: <https://stoppramstein.de>



18

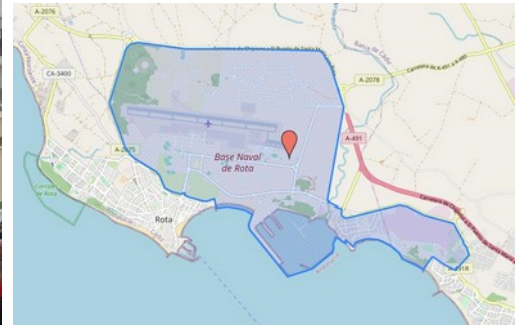
Finally, some pictures of protest actions. The German campaign “Stop Ramstein Air Base” has been active since 2015 with action weeks that include a peace camp, events and protest actions in front of the air base.

More information:

<https://www.stoppramstein.de/>

<https://visualbases.org/bases/ibc2021/>

Restistance against Spanish-U.S. Naval Station Rota



Protests since 1985
Image: Annual march (No. 23)

Since 1985 various groups have staged annual marches to protest the presence of U.S. forces and Spanish war materiel in the port.

Source: Wikipedia (ES – transl.)

NoMuOS: Resistance in Niscemi (Italy / Sicily)



The M.U.O.S. (Mobile User Objective System) is a military telecommunication system of the USA Navy.

The scope of this complex infrastructure is the control and coordination of USA military systems around the world.

More info:
<https://visualbases.org/niscemi-radar-station-muos/>

20

The NOMUOS movement in Italy, which has been protesting for many years against the environmental pollution caused by satellite stations with extremely high levels of radiowaves, is internationally known.

See also:

Sicilian Struggle to protect Environment and Peace

http://files.visualbases.org/pdf/2018-06_MilitaryBases_Booklet_Web.pdf#page=37

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The screenshot displays the VisualBases website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Visualisation', 'Data Allocation', 'Bases and Campaigns', 'Impressum', and 'Deutsch'. Below this is a header section with the 'VisualBases' logo, the tagline 'Uncover and Watch Foreign Military Bases!', and several logos including 'STOPP AIR BASE RAINSTEIN' and 'EuropeanLEFT'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Country, Location or Term:** A search bar and a list of countries/locations including 'DEU | Landstuhl: US-Hospital' and 'ITA | Sicilia: Niscemi Radar Station'.
- Location Search in OpenStreetBrowser with Military Layer:** A search bar and a list of locations including 'AFG | Kabul ISAF', 'ALB | Kucova', 'ARG | Ushuaia Base Naval', 'AUS | East Chapman Australian Defence Satellite Comm. Station', 'AUS | Ghan Joint Defence Facility, Pine Gap', 'AUS | Naval Comm. Station Holt, Northwest Cape Exmouth', and 'AUS | Robertson Barracks, Northern Territory'.
- Region, Kind of Location and Facilities:** A section for selecting categories.
- List of Locations:** A list of locations with links to Google Earth 2018 and 2013.
- Wikipedia EN:** A link to the Wikipedia entry for 'Naval Radio Transmitter Facility (NRTF)'. The URL is: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Radio_Transmitter_Facility_\(NRTF\)_N](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Radio_Transmitter_Facility_(NRTF)_N). The Italian version is also linked: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stazione_di_trasmissione_radio_navale.
- Campaign info (IT):** A link to <https://www.nomuos.info/>.
- Environmental issues:** A section titled 'Environmental issues: Exp waves, destruction of the Niscemi Radar Station'.
- Images from Resistance:** A section for images related to the campaign.

On the right side, there is a Google Earth Pro window showing a satellite view of Sicily. A red pin is placed on the island, and a pop-up window displays information about 'Sigonella Navy Active Support 1'. The map also shows other locations like 'Niscemi Radar Station' and 'Sigonella Air Base'.

More info: <https://visualbases.org>

Finally, a reference to the Visualbases homepage that I created. This is an extensive database on foreign military bases with references to further visual sources using the OpenstreetBrowser tool and a link to Google Earth. It also contains other freely accessible sources of information on military bases, which can be accessed primarily via Wikipedia entries