

# 'WARHAWKS' JOIN AMPLE

From the 3rd to the 14th of September 2018, international exercise Ample Strike 2018 was held in the Czech Republic. Rick Versteeg reports about the 'Warhawks' joining in.



# STRIKE 2018

TEXT - RICK VERSTEEG  
PHOTOS - RICK VERSTEEG & HANS DROST



*All ready for the next mission of the day at Ample Strike  
Photo by the authors*

## 'Warhawks' F-16s join Ample Strike

From the 3rd to the 14th of September 2018, international exercise Ample Strike 2018 was held in the Czech Republic. This annually recurring exercise is geared toward honing the skills of Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) teams in various types of combat situations, such as Close Air Support in built-up areas. Furthermore, as exercise director Colonel Zdeněk Gabriel states, "An integral part is also the development of the capabilities of our Army units to provide host country support for foreign units operating in the Czech Republic".

As many as 1,200 military personnel from 19 NATO member- and partnership countries participated in the exercise. Six F-16s from the Arizona Air National Guard's 195th Fighter Squadron 'Warhawks' joined the action.

### JTACs

A significant part of the exercise participants were members of JTAC teams. More than 20 teams were on the ground to train their skills, all day and into the night with different platforms including artillery. The task of JTACs is to direct combat aircraft engaged in close air support and other offensive air operations from a forward position on the ground. During Ample Strike, JTACs were in the field at a number of training ranges in the Czech Republic calling in airstrikes from fighter aircraft flying above.

### Objectives to defend

Main objectives to defend were Čáslav Airbase, Náměšť nad Oslavou Airbase and Pardubice Airport. Aircraft used for the training included Czech L-159 ALCA, JAS 39 Gripen, Mi-24/35 and Mi-171; German PC-9, Learjet and Tornado jets; Hungarian JAS 39 and Slovenian PC-9 planes, as well as two Lithuanian L-39Z Albatrosses.

Original plans called for the Polish Air Force to send four Su-22 Fitters to Náměšť AB, however, their participation had to be cancelled due to technical reasons of a flight safety nature.









*The ground crew are handling the F-16 after a mission at Ample Strike  
Photos by the authors*





## U.S. participation

The United States Air Force sent six F-16C/Ds to Náměšť Airbase. Additionally, a B-52H and a KC-135R Stratotanker took part in AMSE18. The BUFF operated out of RAF Fairford, UK, whereas the KC-135R flew tanker support missions from Pardubice.

Náměšť Airbase is known as the 22nd Helicopter Base Sedlec, and is located in Vícenice near Náměšť nad Oslavou in the Vysočina Region of the Czech Republic. The six Vipers belonged to the Arizona Air National Guard's 195th Fighter Squadron, aka Warhawks. Late August, they found their way to Náměšť AB. Even though the Arizona ANG's 195th FS is a Formal Training Unit whose main task is to qualify new pilots in the F-16C, they still get to participate in live flying exercises - all in order to keep their Instructor Pilots combat ready.

## Exercise first: Enstrom 480 B-G

An exercise first was the short participation of the ACR's newest helicopter, the Enstrom 480 B-G with serial number 0459. Operated by the Centrum Leteckého Výcviku (CLV - Flight Training Center) at Pardubice AB, it flew in formation with a Mi-24 to test communications systems over the military training area in Boletice.

"The Enstrom helicopter has tested its radio systems and coordination with other aircraft, in particular the Mi-24 helicopter. It was, of course, only training and testing the capabilities of this machine, on which the training of future military helicopter pilots will be carried out", according to a pilot of the 221st Helicopter Squadron.

The Enstrom 480 B-G replaces the aging Mil Mi-2 series of helicopters as the CLV's basic rotary wing training aircraft. At the time of writing this, only one Mi-2T Hoplite remains in service (snr 0711), but it's days are numbered as well.

