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United States Air Forces in Europe - Munitions Support Squadron [MUNSS]



Munitions Support Squadron [MUNSS] are geographically separated units (GSU) located throughout

Europe at Araxos AB Greece, Ghedi AB Italy, Buechel AB Germany, Volkel AB Netherlands, and Kleine-Brogel AB Belgium. They are co-located on other NATO main operating bases and work together with the host nation wing.

The mission of a munss is to maintain custody and control of US munitions assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The normal authorized manning at a MUNSS is approximately 125-150 personnel. The MUNSS is tasked to receive, store, maintain, and account for US munitions and to provide those munitions to the NATO strike wing commander when directed. The MUNSS mission is one of the most critical within the USAFE theater of operations.

Commanders are faced with one of the most difficult, yet interesting challenges of their career due to the complexity of the mission. The position includes a unique command opportunity to lead a diverse squadron of multifunctional afscs. Commanders typically operate a stand alone squadron with responsibilities for security, command and control, munitions maintenance/loading, communications and support personnel. Other requirements concerning nato plans, facility improvement, services, and host nation support are frequent issues.

Details of the Program of Agreements regarding nuclear deployments in NATO

Units

- [31st MUNS](#)
- [831st MUNSS](#)
- ~~[731st MUNSS, Araxos AS](#)~~













Base

- Ramstein AB, Germany

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are secret. Air-dropped bombs are managed through the Weapons Storage Security System, planned during the Cold War, which required co-locating the nuclear bombs with conventional weapons in hardened underground vaults equipped with time locks. The vaults are constructed in the floor of the hardened aircraft shelters, whereas the igloos previously used to store nuclear weapons were located separately from the aircraft. Work began in 1987 on the vaults, each of which holds one nuclear bomb. The weapon storage vaults installed in theater strike aircraft shelters allow co-storage of nuclear weapons and strike aircraft, greatly enhancing survivability and operational readiness.

In July 1986 the Pentagon released a list of 20 air bases in Europe and the Far East where nuclear-armed planes were maintained on alert, and which would be included in the new Weapons Storage Security System. The other were Buchel, West Germany; Hahn, West Germany; Menningen, West Germany; Norvenich, West Germany; Ramstein, West Germany; Erhac, Turkey; Eskishir, Turkey; Murted, Turkey; Balkesir, Turkey; Incirlik, Turkey; Aviano, Italy; Ghedi, Italy; Rimini, Italy; Lakenheath, England; Upper Heyford, England; Bentwaters, England; Keline Brogel, Belgium; Volk, the Netherlands; Araxos, Greece; and Kunsan, South Korea. Initially NATO planned 437 vaults at as many as 26 sites, though after the end of the Cold War the program was reduced 208 vaults.

Overall, the roughly 5,900 nuclear weapons stored on land in Europe in 1985 had been reduced by 85 percent by the mid-1990s. In 1999 the US was reportedly preparing the withdrawal of up to 200 B61 nuclear bombs from seven European countries. The B61-5 is a lightweight (350kg), low drag/parachute-retarded variable yield (10-500kT) tactical thermonuclear weapon.

Some nuclear weapons are stored are with US F-16 fighter-bombers at Ramstein, Germany, and with the US Air Force at Aviano, Italy. British RAF Tornados ceased carrying nuclear bombs in 1988. Nuclear weapons are under US control at three German Air Bases equipped with Tornados [Buechel, Memmigen and Norvenich], with Belgian F-16s [at Kleine Brogel Air Base], and Dutch F-16s [at Volk Air Base].

As of the mid-1980s nuclear weapons were deployed at Araxos Air Base in Greece, and Incirlik, Balikesir, and Murted Air Bases in Turkey. On 26 July 1996 the Bechtel National Inc. of San Francisco was awarded an \$11.6 million contract to construct six munitions-storage vaults at Araxos and another dozen vaults at two locations [Akinci Air Base, and Balikishir Air Base] in Turkey. The contract was expected to be completed in October 1997. In January 2001 it was reported that the US military had started to withdraw up to 25 nuclear bombs which had been stored at Araxos Air Base since 1974. The military equipment was transferred to the Aviano base in Italy.

- [Nuclear Futures - Western European options for nuclear risk reduction](#) Martin Butscher, Otfried Nassauer & Stephen Young BASIC-BITS Research Report 98.5.

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The 852nd Munitions Support Squadron, Buchel Air Base, Germany, received the USAFE **food** service small unit Hennessy Trophy nomination for 2001. The award is based on the entire scope of an installation's **food** service program, displaying excellence in management effectiveness, force readiness support, **food** quality, employee and customer relations, resource conservation, training, and safety awareness. The Hennessy trophy is an annual award presented to the Air Force installation having the best **food** service program in the Air Force.

Akinci Munition Storage Site	Incirlik, Turkey	Return
Balikesir MUNSS	Incirlik	Return

Two of the Air Force's virtual outposts quietly closed out nearly 30 years of service on 25 April 1996 as detachments at Balikesir and Akinci, Turkey served witness to the post Cold War era. The 39th Munitions Support Squadron at Balikesir Air Force Detachment and the 739th Munitions Support Squadron at Akinci Air Force Detachment maintained munitions for NATO requirements in the region since the mid 1960s -- the height of the Cold War. In April 1995, however, the United States Air Forces in Europe, dealing with a shrinking force resulting from that Cold War victory, announced the units closures. With the military drawdown, the detachments were no longer required and any future support can be provided by Incirlik alone. During normal operations, each unit boasted 110 military members. On the final day, the numbers dwindled to five people at Balikesir and three at Akinci.

Munitions Support Squadron

39th MUNSS, Balikesir AB, Turkey (9th Wing, F-16) X
 82nd MUNSS,
 52nd MUNSS, Kleine Brogel AB, Belgium (10th Wing, F-16)
 402nd MUNSS, Rimini AB, Italy; X
 616th MUNSS, Ghedi AB [Camp Darby], Italy (6th Wing, Tornado) ✓
 649th MUNSS,
 701st MUNSS, Rimini AB, Italy X
 716th MUNSS, Araxos AB, Greece (116th Wing, A-7) X
 731st MUNSS, Araxos AB, Greece (116th Wing, A-7) X
 739th MUNSS, Akinci AB, Turkey (4th Wing, F-16) X
 752nd MUNSS, Volkel AB, Netherlands (311/312 Sqn, F-16) ✓
 817th MUNSS, Buechel AB, Germany
 852nd MUNSS, Buchel AB, Germany (33rd Wing, Tornado) ✓ :
 7261st MUNSS, Memmingen AB, Germany X
 7391st MUNSS, Balikesir AB, Turkey X
 7392nd MUNSS, Eskisehir AB, Turkey X
 7393rd MUNSS, Murted AB, Turkey X
 7394th MUNSS, Erhac AB, Turkey X
 7401st MUNSS, Rimini AB, Italy X

Aviano X

The 7061 Munitions Support Squadron (MUNSS) was activated on 1 April 1972. As a result of USAF reorganizations, 7061 MUNSS was redesignated as the 761 MUNSS effective 01 June 1993, the 716 MUNSS effective 1 July 1994, and the 731 MUNSS effective 19 July 1995.



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