

TOUR REPORT



One trip to find every year in the Ian Allan Aviation Tours calendar is the NATO Tiger Meet. Held in a different country each year and hosted by the national "Tiger" unit, 2017 was the turn of the French Navy at Landivisiau, a base in Brittany not far from the Atlantic coast.

With no convenient airline serving the area from the UK the tour began in the centre of London with a UK-based coach company. We collect the first group of passengers in Victoria, then on to Hatton Cross at Heathrow Airport for more and finishing with the last four photographers boarding the coach at the ferry terminal in Portsmouth. We then embarked on the

huge Brittany Ferries ship for an overnight crossing to St Malo: all tucked up in our cabins on what was quite a choppy crossing.

From St Malo we went straight to Landivisiau and were in time to see many of the fast jets at the meeting as they came into land.

At the end of flying we made the short journey to our hotel – appropriately named L'Albatross - located on the outskirts of the very pretty town of Morlaix. For the next 4 nights everyone enjoyed the excellent and very sociable dinners fuelled by lots of wine that was included for free in the set meals! The one thing we can always say about France is the food is outstanding!



The third morning, following a very good continental breakfast and a stop at a supermarket for midday snacks, was spent at the end of runway 26 for the morning and afternoon waves to land.

Types seen included Dutch and Belgian F-16s, Swiss F-18s, Czech Gripens, Austrian Saab 105s, Italian Eurofighter Typhoons and UH-1s, French Air Force Rafales and an Alfa Jet, French Navy Rafales, E-2 Hawkeye and Falcon 10, and French Army Gazelles. Many of the aircraft wore special, very colourful 'tiger themed' markings.

From the UK a Fleet Air Arm Sea King AEW: not the usual noisy, heavy-metal type! Sadly 74 squadron, the RAF's "tiger" unit and one of the original three founders of the NATO Tiger Meet, is no longer operational.

Day four was the official "Spotter's Day" and we rolled up at the main gate, had our passports checked, security delved into our camera bags - and on to the base we went: voila!

Arrivals today included the Germans with a mixed Tornado and Eurofighter fleet. As well as entry to the base we were given a 'goody bag' with a t-shirt, a high-viz vest, pen, patch and bag tag. Being France, food was not far from our host's mind as a large well stocked lunch bag was given to each person.



The last day was again spent on the approach to

runway 26 and new arrivals included a pair of Norwegian F-16s and a Czech Air Force Challenger, whilst overhead flew a French Air Force KC-135.

An early start on day five took us first to Cherbourg for the fast ferry to Portsmouth; then to the drop off points of Hatton Cross and Victoria.

Upon arrival in the centre of London we were greeted with the sight of a mass naked bike ride – something that none of us will forget for a long time!

NOTE: see you in May next year when Poland will be hosting the 2018 NATO Tiger Meet on Poznan AB. We currently plan for the tour to be for one week and visits have been requested to those Polish Air Force bases which still operate classic Soviet-era jets!

