

# Germany's Luftwaffe and Britain's RAF Join Forces in Afghanistan

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A Luftwaffe navigator has flown into combat in the same plane as an RAF pilot for the very first time.

Sixty-five years after the end of the Second World War, the navigator climbed into a Tornado GR4 ground attack aircraft at Kandahar airbase in southern Afghanistan to provide air support for troops in Helmand province.

While some RAF colleagues did "mention the war", as Basil Fawlty put it, they only did so in jest, according to sources.

However, what has upset British aircrew is the fact that their German counterparts in Afghanistan are earning up to £3,000 a month more for performing the same job.

The unnamed German navigator flew a series of missions with 31 Squadron during a six-week tour in December and January.

The pair's Tornado was armed with 500lb Paveway air-to-ground bombs, Brimstone missiles and a 27mm cannon.

A British source told the Sunday Times: "No one actually said, 'Achtung, he's behind you!' but all the old jokes about the war came out and there were a few laughs among the aircrew."

However, the German navigator had "proved himself" in the job, he said.

But another source said that the Luftwaffe's more generous pay arrangements for those serving in Afghanistan had caused "a fair amount of grumbling".

German aircrew receive £100 a day more than their British equivalents when on tour, he said.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman confirmed the German officer had flown with 31 Squadron as part of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission.

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