

# The transformation of **The Royal Norwegian Air Force** ... in the post-Cold War era

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Disclaimer: this is not the official view of the Royal Norwegian Air Force

1. The security policy discourse shaping the transformation of the Norwegian Air Force
2. The key transformational process within the RNoAF: The evolution of the F-16 community
3. The status of the transformational process today and in the near future: Time for the RNoAF to approach the operational level of war?

(1)

The security policy discourse shaping  
the transformation of the RNoAF











Europe



Focus for more than 40 years:  
Norway as the "northern flank" of NATO  
would stop or at least halt the "Red Army"  
in this area until NATO reinforcements arrived









*The normal logic of ends and means within military strategy does not apply [to Norway] (...)*

*Our contribution will never have any significant influence on the [military end] result – it is not the reason we are there.*

*It is the security political gains of the contribution that matter.*



(2)

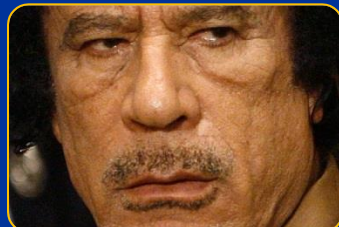
The key transformational process  
within the RNoAF:

The evolution of the F-16 community

# Libya, 2011

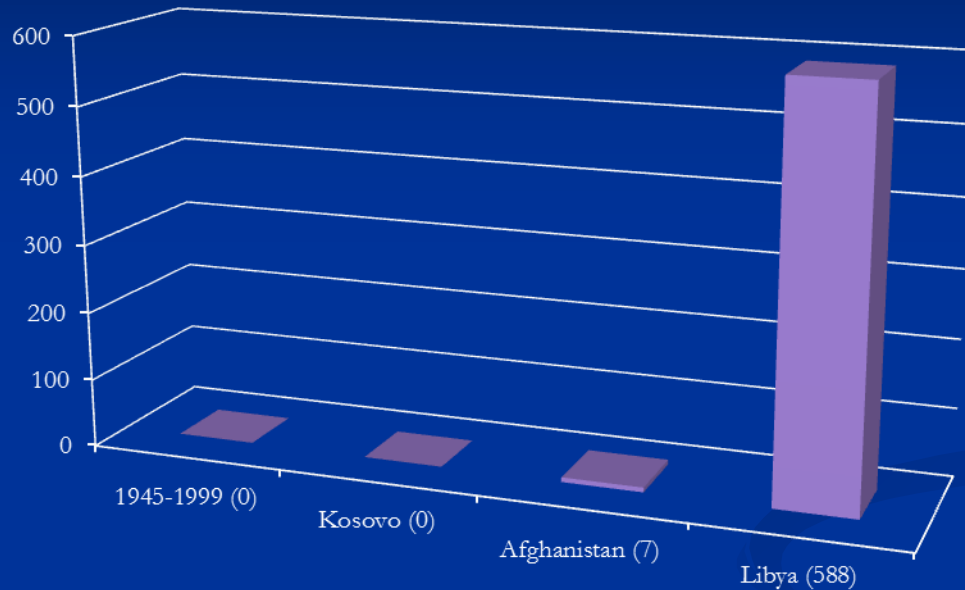


*You have to be  
one unpopular world leader  
to have the Norwegians attacking you ...*





# Bombs dropped from Norwegian fighters since WWII



Kosovo 1999



Afghanistan 2002-03



Afghanistan 2006



Libya 2011

## Lt Col Arent Arntzen

Squadron commander for the Norwegian F-16 squadron during OAF.



OAF was not the war the RNoAF had trained for.  
The RNoAF came with the wrong product  
(air-to-air instead of air-to-ground),  
and there was not enough tactical flexibility



## Espen Barth Eide

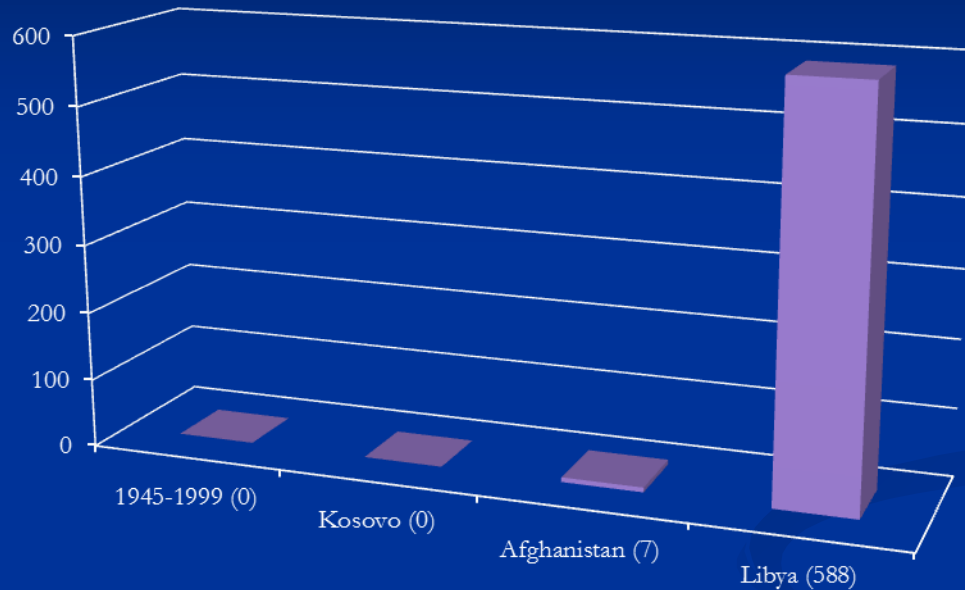
Norwegian Minister of Defense (2011-2012) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012-2013)



In total, the Air Force proved to lack  
the security policy relevance we sought (...)  
The experiences from Kosovo were an important catalyst  
for the reorganization of the Norwegian Defense Forces  
that were initiated shortly thereafter.

*RNoAF Academy, annual Air Power Conference, 31. January 2012*

# Bombs dropped from Norwegian fighters since WWII



Kosovo 1999



Afghanistan 2002-03



Afghanistan 2006



Libya 2011



## Lt Col Hans Ole Sandnes

Former Squadron Commander 338-squadron; Detachment Commander Libya (2011)



We entered the Close Air Support role  
in Operation Enduring Freedom (2002-03)  
almost 100 percent backwards

*RNoAF Academy Papers, Vol. 27, 2012, p.117.*





(3)

The status of the transformational process  
today and in the near future:  
Time for the RNoAF to approach  
the operational level of war?

**Lt Col Hans Jørgen Nordskog**  
First Norwegian «Red Card Holder» in Libya (2011)

Distinction and proportionality, CDE – Collateral Damage Estimate – was something we had to adjust to very quickly. This was something we had not done very much of back home in Norway. Something I believe the superiors in Norway who made these decisions were not too familiar with. We were lucky, and had a man at Ramstein who was a qualified CDE-analyst and could give us a crash course [upon arrival].

**Lt Col Hans Jørgen Nordskog**  
First Norwegian «Red Card Holder» in Libya (2011)

We didn't have any caveats.

During Odyssey Dawn, for example, it was,  
according to the ROEs, permitted to drop weapons  
into a neighboring country if necessary.

I am fairly sure that someone [back home]  
would not have been too pleased if we [Norway] had done this.

*RNoAF Academy, annual Air Power Conference, 1. February 2012*





# Summing-up

The RNoAF is largely a product of the Norwegian strategic outlook.

The 1999 Kosovo War became the key catalyst for change, a transformational process that continued in Afghanistan.

The tactical transformation of the F-16 community, as the dominant community in the RNoAF, culminated in a successful force contribution in Libya.

Further transformation of the RNoAF should logically involve the operational level of war – but its weak tradition at this level will likely prevail for years