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NORAD News



CONR to fly air defense exercise in preparation for NATO Summit

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TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Region fighters will be active prior to the NATO Summit preparing to protect the skies around Chicago.

Exercise Amalgam Virgo 12-NATO, a NORAD air defense exercise, will be held Friday in the greater Chicago area to allow interagency partners an opportunity to work collaboratively in this environment.

The Amalgam Virgo exercise comprises a series of training flights held in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Coast Guard, the NATO Summit Joint Operations Center and the Continental U.S. NORAD Region's Eastern Air Defense Sector.

Residents in the Chicago area can expect flights to begin around 9 a.m. (CST), Friday, and continue for approximately two hours. Exercise Amalgam Virgo is designed to hone NORAD's intercept and identification operations. Civil Air Patrol aircraft, Air National Guard C-21 aircraft, Air Force KC-135 tanker, Air Force F-16s, and a Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopter will participate in the exercise.

"Providing the air defense for special security events like this year's NATO Summit is a part of our day-to-day mission," said Lt. Gen. Sid Clarke, Continental U.S. NORAD Region commander. "Our interagency partnerships are a key component to the air defense shield for events like this and the Amalgam Virgo exercise is an excellent opportunity for us to hone our air defense skills with all our interagency partners."

These exercises are carefully planned and closely controlled to ensure the Continental U.S. NORAD Region's rapid response capability. The Continental U.S. NORAD Region has conducted exercise flights of this nature throughout the U.S. since the start of Operation Noble Eagle, the command's response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

During the NATO Summit, Air Force fighter jets will be on alert to enforce the Federal Aviation Administration's Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) zone during the summit. Officials advise all aviators to check the Notices to Airmen (NOTAMS) as required with a special focus on TFRs.