



## PITSS.CON Success Story

### *NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force is assisted by PITSS.CON for the journey into the future of IT*

### *PITSS delivers a swift, economically advan- tageous solution for Oracle migration in record time*

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*Paul J. MacKenzie, Lieutenant Colonel (RCAF),  
Chief of the IT Wing A6 Staff, NAEW&CF E-3A  
Component*

**NATO is a very special organization, but no different than any other when it comes to having a tight IT budget and scarce resources for software development. An organization financed by the budgets of the 28 participating nations, NATO is particularly obliged to make the most of the funds entrusted to it by the coalition members. Decisions regarding IT solutions must reflect not only the best solution, but also cost-effectiveness.**

The E3A Component, host to NATO’s Fleet of 17 AWACS aircraft, and NATO’s first integrated, multi-national flying unit, was in dire need of an upgrade from Oracle Forms 5 and Oracle Forms 9i to Oracle Forms 11g. The offer by the PITSS group of companies, Oracle Gold Partner and the only Oracle Forms Migration Partner for automated migrations worldwide, not only offered considerable cost savings compared with other solutions, the upgrade of 26 applications was performed within a record time of two months and was virtually problem-free.

No wonder Gerry P.W. Van Tol, the Chief of the Mission Support Branch of the Information Technology Wing, is completely satisfied: “We were eagerly awaiting the Go-Live for our applications. There were hardly any problems, and the few that did occur were able to be repaired in the shortest period of time. A result that was not only impressive for the IT and users, but also our management team.”

*The PITSS offer was financially between 30 and 40% lower than a manual changeover, even though it already included all the PITSS.CON licenses which are to be used further, after the migration.*

## Obstacles on the journey into the future of IT

During the Migration Project, the IT team in Geilenkirchen was confronted with complex and demanding challenges, both technically and of an organizational nature; increasingly scarce IT resources while simultaneously more projects being introduced.

The challenge, 26 applications based on Oracle Technology were to be gradually shifted onto advanced technology platforms. These applications facilitate organizational administration processes and are necessary for successful planning and realization of operations. Therefore, they represent a critical success capability of the NATO AWACS Fleet in Geilenkirchen.

The initial position for the planned Architecture-Redesign was problematic. The base technology for the applications - Oracle Forms 5 and mainly Oracle Forms 9i – was no longer supported by the manufacturer. More than 800 Form Objects, more than 300 Reports, as well as numerous Libraries were outdated and not compatible nor interoperable with the current technology. Various development tools, initially Oracle Designer 2, Forms 5 and finally Designer 9i, were put into use but there was no universal, relevant and technology oriented documentation. The upgrade to Oracle Forms 11g was a vital first step in order to successfully approach Redesign.

A project of such magnitude had an impact on practically all IT users across the organization, in one way or another, from administration to operational planning, creating pressure on all parties involved. As one can imagine, since this is a multinational, military flying unit, the organization differs from “normal” business enterprises. The User-Community on site is tremendously complex. There are military and non-military employees from a total of 17 NATO countries active in Geilenkirchen. Many members are posted to the Base for a period of only three to four years. The classic “Key user” with a long-term service in the company is rather rare.

The Requirement-, Solution-, Funding - and Contracting/Acquisition- approval processes are multi-tiered and quite regulated, creating a lengthy decision-making process. All these factors, and the fact it was such an extensive project, represented a considerable risk to the Unit. The Unit’s IT Team along with PITSS.COM distinguished themselves for their rapid deployment, without any significant impact to operations.

### IT Support Tool ensures greater efficiency

The changeover of database, forms and reports, as well as the WebLogic server turned out to be very costly, as initial attempts and tests proved. It became apparent to those responsible, that such a task could not be completed with the current manpower without impacting day-to-day business. One had to depend on external support in order to make prompt progress. The question was how: automated or manual? In the course of searching for qualified service providers to relieve the resource bottleneck, the automated option very quickly gained the upper hand.

“Everything suggested a migration with the help of PITSS.CON, in terms of both cost effectiveness and result efficiency”, remembers Ioannis Kosmas, Senior Systems Engineer, IT Wing. “The Business Case was clear. PITSS offered the best price-performance ratio overall and the available migration project results using PITSS.CON in other organizations was convincing for our management.”

The PITSS offer was financially between 30 and 40% lower than a manual changeover, even though it already included all the PITSS.CON licenses which are to be



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Chief, Mission Support  
Branch, IT Wing, NAEW&CF  
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used further, after the migration. Furthermore, one was convinced that the quality of the results would fulfill the NATO Team expectations.

"The first pre-sales appointment already indicated this", says Ioannis Kosmas. "On this morning, we confronted the PITSS technical employees with an application problem which we up until now had not been able to solve internally. Before the lunch break, PITSS.CON had already found a solution and therefore passed this practical test."

### **Beyond the figures: The human factor decisive for success**

The technical migration of all applications was concluded within only two months. The NATO core team consisted of 4 employees, with a total of 7 people involved, which were supported by PITSS during the installation and conversion; this is not insignificant.

Lieutenant-Colonel (RCAF) Paul J. MacKenzie, Chief of the A6 Staff, explained a the trustful partnership and cooperation developed with the PITSS employees who demonstrated a great deal of flexibility: "In a multinational sphere such as NATO, willingness to co-operate and adaptability are indispensable. The goodwill and high degree of commitment by the PITSS employees ensured the project did not falter. The PITSS professional project management also impressed us."

No significant problems arose during the subsequent acceptance test performed by the users and the very few inconsistencies were quickly rectified. The excellent result was repeated during 'Go-Live' on 2 September 2013; the Component Chief of Staff himself was very pleased by the achievements of the team.

Gerry van Tol summarized the results: "99% of what PITSS promised us was realized. And the missing 1% can be traced back to the human factor. PITSS.CON and PITSS have definitely fulfilled our expectations. Any organization considering an extensive migration project should by no means disregard an engagement by PITSS.CON."

### **Exhaust added value – eliminate other obstacles on the way**

A positive side effect for having decided on a tool-supported migration, are the options which available to NATO by making further use of PITSS.CON. The investment for the tools has paid off several fold.

It is already planned to use PITSS.CON as a configuration management solution in the future, whereby the various Baseline versions of the applications are controlled. Therefore, other employees would be trained for the use of the tools.

Of course PITSS.CON could also be used for the already foreseeable application consolidation and future migrations to latest Oracle Forms versions.

The résumé by Paul J. MacKenzie is therefore accordingly positive: "With thanks to PITSS.CON, we have made a large step on our way to a modern IT architecture and I am confident that the tools on the way will also be of use to others."



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### About NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force

In the early 1970's, studies directed by NATO's major military commanders showed that an airborne early warning (AEW) radar system would significantly enhance the Alliance's air defence capability. In December 1978 NATO's Defence Planning Committee (DPC) signed a memorandum of understanding to buy and operate a NATO-owned AEW system. With this decision, the member nations embarked on NATO's largest commonly funded acquisition program.

The NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&CF) was established in January 1980. Today the NAEW&C Force consists of two operational elements called Components: The multi-national NATO E-3A Component at Geilenkirchen, Germany and the RAF E-3D Component at Waddington in the UK.



PITSS is the leading provider of software & services for modernizing and effectively managing Oracle applications. The PITSS Group was established in 1999 and has gained international recognition with over 1,000 customers and a multitude of successful Oracle projects. PITSS is an Oracle Gold partner and, as a member of the Oracle Modernization Alliance (OMA), is the only Oracle Forms Migration partner for automated migrations. With sites in Stuttgart (HQ), Wolfratshausen near Munich, Bielefeld (Germany), Milton Keynes (UK) and Troy (USA) as well as certified international partners, the company successfully provides support for IT projects of medium sized companies, large enterprises and public contractors across the globe.

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