

Stories from IRT

MAJ Jeremy Tomaino



I hope this message finds you well! As the inaugural contributor to the "Stories from IRT" series, I am thrilled to extend an invitation for your future contributions to our newsletter. The unique IRT experience is the cornerstone of FAO training, and I am excited to support the association's determination to shine a spotlight on it. Our vision is to create a repository of captivating IRT trip reports, anecdotes, and insights from your travels while on IRT. Through your contribution, you will have the opportunity to connect our Army Foreign Area Officer community through the captivating world of travel experiences that provide each and every one of us with the regional insights imperative for understanding the strategic context of our field. I look forward to seeing your future contributions and reading some exciting stories! See you soon! -Jeremy

IRT & JUSTIFIED ACCORD 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya



Each IRT trip serves not only as an adventure but also as a profound opportunity for personal and professional development. Recently, I had the privilege of meeting one of my early IRT objectives by participating in a major exercise, **JUSTIFIED ACCORD**. This experience allowed me to develop regional and cultural understanding while honing my skills in a JIIM environment. Notably, since the little “f” in FAO stands for “family,” they accompany me on every occasion, and Nairobi, Kenya, the home of the “Lion King,” was no exception to the rule. Spending two weeks in Kenya provided ample opportunity to multitask between preparing and executing responsibilities to support JA24 and exploring Nairobi as a family. The highlight of our trip was visiting the world-famous **Elephant Nursery** located within Nairobi National Park. There, we witnessed the incredible bond between the baby elephants and their keepers. Open for only a short period each day for public feeding sessions, we had the chance to pet and help feed the baby elephants. One of them, named “Raha,” which means “Joy” in Swahili, particularly captured our hearts. Sharing the same name as our daughter, Joy, this baby elephant was born in September 2022, rescued, and brought to the orphanage only very recently. We have been on plenty of safaris and game drives, where we've seen many baby elephants in the wild, but this was the first time we ever got to touch one! During JA24, I helped as the site lead for activities taking place at the **Humanitarian Peace Support School** for the Observer Day and Distinguished Visitor Day programs. This experience provided me with an opportunity to gain firsthand understanding of what goes into preparing and managing such events, while also gaining insights into SETAF-AF staff coordination and planning. Although I only played a small role in both programs, I was fortunate to meet and connect with the three foreign military observers from Armenia and Turkey who came to Kenya to witness what JA24 had to offer.

I am very grateful for having the opportunity to travel in support of JA24, especially with my family. I strongly recommend that IRT FAOs seize every opportunity to consider visiting Kenya as an integral part of their professional and regional development.

About the Author: MAJ Jeremy Tomaino is a 48J currently conducting IRT in Gaborone, Botswana. Jeremy studied French at DLI in D.C., completed ACS and ILE requirements at NPS,

and is projected to be assigned as A/ARMA, Republic of Chad. You can find all of Jeremy's IRT reports on the FAO 48J IRT pages on [MilSuite](#) or [MS Teams](#).