

£274-million training boost for RAF

Awarded for the next 19 years, the contract with Boeing Defence UK will provide unique synthetic training courses for RAF personnel who operate the aircraft until 2040 and will support around 30 UK jobs at the International Training Centre (ITC) in Farnborough.

Alongside the continued training for pilots on the interactive C-17 flight simulators, from 2023 RAF trainees will also benefit from two new pieces of equipment in a purpose-built facility. Maintainers will be provided with engineering training so they can diagnose faults and practice repairs without having to work on the live aircraft.

This multi-million pound investment is supported by the £24 billion uplift on defence spending over the next four years, announced by the Prime Minister in November. With a focus on synthetic training, the contract also builds on the commitment outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper and utilises the latest technology to simulate a range of scenarios and deliver unparalleled training.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

Ensuring we have a modernised Armed Forces capable of tackling future threats begins with access to world-class training for all of our personnel.

This £274 million investment will allow our air crews to operate this aircraft to its highest capability and maintain critical defence outputs and will extend our use of modern synthetic training techniques.

The C-17 aircraft plays a vital role in transporting personnel and cargo around the world and to undertake this activity safely air crews are required to undergo comprehensive training, best delivered in a synthetic environment. The simulation training is based on real-life scenarios in a secure setting, enabling personnel to experience situations that can't easily be replicated when training on live aircraft.

By moving training away from live aircraft, they can be freed up to deliver outputs essential to defence operations and also reduces emissions as live flying exercises are no longer required.

Director Air Support DE&S Richard Murray said:

The new contract will deliver world class training and associated equipment for RAF personnel operating C-17 over the next 19 years.

This will provide those personnel with the knowledge and skills needed to get the very best out of the aircraft for UK Defence.

The RAF is leading the way in the use of synthetic training across defence and is already undertaking approximately 50% of all Combat Air training on synthetic devices. By 2040, the RAF expects to conduct 80% of all training synthetically.

Air Mobility Force Commander, Air Commodore David Manning:

This new synthetic training service will provide assured aircrew and maintainer training through to the out of service date of the C-17. The training service will support C-17 global operations, increasing fleet availability and enhancing the training delivered to our personnel through the introduction of cutting-edge synthetic training equipment.

With this service, the RAF will enter a new phase of UK optimised C-17 training, while working with our industry partner to promote UK prosperity and the generation of UK based jobs.

Recently celebrating 20 years in RAF service, the expected out-of-service date of the C-17 is 2040, for which this contract with Boeing Defence UK will see through to the end.

Forming part of the RAF's contribution to Integrated Force 2030, the C-17 is capable of carrying large and complex pieces of equipment, including a Chinook helicopter – easily transporting over 45,000kg of freight more than 8,300km.