

RAF Lossiemouth's XV (Reserve) squadron disbands

RAF LOSSIEMOUTH'S XV(RESERVE) SQUADRON DISBANDS

XV(Reserve) Squadron, the final Royal Air Force Tornado squadron based in Scotland, disbanded on Friday 31 March 2017 with a private military ceremony at RAF Lossiemouth. The disbandment of XV(Reserve) Squadron marks the end of the Tornado era at RAF Lossiemouth. The Squadron completed their final sortie on Friday 17 March.



The last parade of the Squadron's standard before it is laid up marks the end of the 102 year old Squadron's history. 750 invited guests attended the event that saw members of the Squadron, led by their Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Paul Froome, carry out the emotional but precise military ceremony.

Led by the Band of the Royal Air Force College, the personnel marched in two flights into the hangar and formed up in front of their proud families and friends. The parade personnel were flanked in the hangar by two Tornados, one being MacRobert's Reply.

Parade Commander was Officer Commanding XV(Reserve) Squadron, Wing Commander Paul Froome. No. 1 Flight Commander was Squadron Leader Mark Swinton, whilst No. 2 Flight Commander was Squadron Leader Matt Smith (the Squadron's Senior Engineering Officer).



The Standard Bearer was Flight Lieutenant Sam Williams, the Standard Escort was Warrant Officer Tam McEwan. Chief Technician Si Guillou and Chief Technician Grant Hamilton were the armed escorts.

The parade Reviewing Officer was Chief of Defence Intelligence, Air Marshal Phil Osborn himself a Tornado navigator and a former Tornado squadron commanding officer.

With the precision expected of the UK Armed Forces, Wing Commander Froome and his Flight Commanders led

their troops through 131 orders to carry out the parade. Finally the Standard Party left the hangar to the haunting tune 'Sands of the Kuwait' played on the bagpipes by Chief Technician Al Sharp. The tune was written to commemorate the Gulf War, which fittingly was XV(Reserve) Squadron's final battle honour.



Following the parade Wing Commander Froome gave an emotional tribute to the members of his Squadron, he said:

"I am incredibly proud today – members of XV(Reserve) Squadron have provided a stirring finale to the Squadron's history. And to be able to share today with many past and present members of the Squadron, as well as our families, has been wonderful.

"The hours of dedicated work the Squadron engineers have provided to the Tornado Force over recent years has been replicated in their efforts today in this arena. It was an absolute honour to lead them through today's parade, and I will be sad to leave them and RAF Lossiemouth."

Following the event there was a flypast of the Station in the early afternoon by Tornados from RAF Marham.

The final Tornado aircraft will leave RAF Lossiemouth over the coming months for RAF Marham where the RAF Tornado fleet is now based. RAF Lossiemouth will see growth in the near future as a fourth Typhoon squadron is formed here and 9 P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft are based here. Currently the three Typhoon squadrons based at RAF Lossiemouth provide Quick Reaction Alert (Interceptor) North, or QRA as it is commonly called, protecting UK skies.



The final ab initio Tornado GR4 student XV(Reserve) Sqn in mid-February. Flight Lieutenant Nathan Shawyer completed his training as 'combat ready' and was posted to 31 Squadron, RAF Marham.

The future of the squadron number plate hasn't been decided at this time, therefore the Squadron's standard will be laid up in the rotunda at RAF College Cranwell, Lincolnshire in April.

Group Captain Paul Godfrey, Station Commander of RAF Lossiemouth, paid tribute to the hard work

of
the Squadron's personnel both in recent years and in creating a fitting end
to
the Squadron's history. He said:

"I'm extremely
honoured to have been the Station Commander of RAF Lossiemouth in the last
18
months of XV(Reserve) Squadron's time as a Tornado Operational Conversion
Unit
and it is a sad day to see the Squadron officially disband, ending over 23
years of Tornado presence in Moray.

"The Squadron's
output in terms of quality training that has provided the RAF with such
skilled
air crew has been second to none and has been fundamental to the success of
the
Tornado on operations. All of the Squadron's members on parade today have
made a huge contribution to past and current operations worldwide and are
highly regarded for their professionalism and skill. That same high
standard of output and effort has been shown again today in an excellent
parade, which was a fitting end to the Squadron's time here at RAF
Lossiemouth.

"I am extremely
pleased that many of the Squadron personnel will transfer to our Typhoon
squadrons here at RAF Lossiemouth to support the future growth of the
Station,
and I wish all members of the Squadron the very best of luck in their future
endeavours; every single one of them can have with a real sense of pride in
what they have achieved and it is obvious that they have maintained the very
highest of standards right to the very end."

Editor: Flt Lt Ian Smith

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