

Defence secretary announces new maritime patrol aircraft squadrons

DEFENCE SECRETARY ANNOUNCES NEW MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT SQUADRONS

The Defence Secretary announced the numbers of the UK's two new Maritime Patrol Aircraft squadrons and the first commanding officer on Thursday, 13 July 2017.

Nine new P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft will be operated by number 120 Squadron and number 201 Squadron from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray.

120 Squadron was the RAF's highest scoring anti-submarine unit in the Second World War with 14 kills. 201 Squadron can trace its origins back to the formation of No 1 Squadron, Royal Naval Air Service in 1914. Wing Commander James Hanson will oversee the formation of 120 Squadron from April 2018. 201 Squadron will form in 2021.

The aircraft's key role will be to help protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers.

The UK Government is investing £3 billion over the next decade in its Maritime Patrol Aircraft capability.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

"Our nine new Poseidon aircraft are part of our plan to monitor and deal with increased threats to our country. They can operate at long range without refuelling and have the endurance to carry out high and low-level airborne maritime and overland surveillance for extended periods, helping keep us safe. The P-8A aircraft will allow us to work more closely with our allies, improve our surveillance coverage and will provide value for taxpayers' money."

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

"Today is an important milestone in the P-8A Poseidon programme which will bring to the Royal Air Force an unrivalled maritime patrol capability. The advanced state-of-the-art sensors aboard the P-8A will provide global protection to UK, NATO and our Allies' submarines and warships, and enhance and complement the UK's standing search and rescue responsibilities.

"It is also a great pleasure to welcome back 120 and 201 Squadrons. Both have long and distinguished records serving in the maritime role and together they will help forge the next generation Royal Air Force."

Poseidon will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities and is designed to conduct anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering. They can carry torpedoes and anti-shipping missiles.

As a leading members of NATO, the UK Ministry of Defence has already signed agreements with the US and Norwegian militaries to cooperate closely on operating their P-8A aircraft across the North Atlantic.

With the first aircraft due to arrive in the UK in 2020, the RAF has maintained its Maritime Patrol Aircraft skills by embedding aircrew within MPA squadrons of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Poseidon will bring wider economic benefits with an additional 400+ service personnel to be located at RAF Lossiemouth, where £400m is also being invested in new support infrastructure for the aircraft.

As the Poseidon P-8A is based on the Boeing 737, it will help support several hundred direct UK jobs, and create opportunities for UK firms to bid for training and support contracts.

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[Romanian President Visits Royal Air Force Air Policing at Constanta](#)

ROMANIAN PRESIDENT VISITS ROYAL AIR FORCE AIR POLICING AT CONSTANTA

The President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis has met members of the Royal Air Force 135 Expeditionary Air Wing based in Eastern Romania.

After speaking with the pilots and ground crew, President Iohannis said : "I'm impressed because in my opinion everything that is going on here has a very high professional standard and, I'm most impressed because everybody and I mean absolutely everybody told me all of you work very well together and this really makes me proud of the teams we have here."



The Royal Air Force has four Typhoon aircraft deployed at Mihail Kogalniceanu for four

months to enhance air policing capability as part of the NATO Assurance Measures introduced in 2014.

The

President added: "Of course I want to tell you that what you do here is very important. It is not only important for Romania, it is important for NATO, it

is important obviously for our partners and allies and I think it is very important for the people in the region because I think it gives them the feeling of safety and knowing that we are protected is probably the most important thing nowadays"



The

President witnessed a pair of Typhoons take-off for a training sortie, and saw

how their impressive performance climb capability in gaining altitude makes them such a potent force when scrambled.



The

President finished his visit by saying: "

"Security and safety and certainty are important key words, and your contribution here is very important. So thank you all."

One

hundred and forty three personnel from the Royal Air Force, forming 135 Expeditionary Air Wing are based at Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase supporting four

Typhoon aircraft from 3(F) Squadron to enhance the NATO Southern Air Policing

mission led by the Romanian Air Force.

Editor: Flight Lieutenant Cameron Rennie

Images: Cpl Jimmy Wise

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[Identity of F-35 Lightning Training Squadron Announced](#)

Identity of F-35 Lightning Training Squadron Announced

The squadron which will train future Royal Air Force and Royal Navy F-35B Lightning pilots at RAF Marham has been announced as 207 Squadron.

The announcement was made during a visit to RAF Marham by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, to view the progress being made to prepare for the arrival of the fifth generation fighter at the Norfolk base next summer.



Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

“I am very pleased to announce that the Operational Conversion Unit for the UK’s F-35B Lightning fleet will be 207 Squadron. The squadron has a proud and distinguished history, not only as an RAF squadron but as one of the earliest squadrons of the Royal Naval Air Service which, with the Royal Flying Corps, came together to form the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918.

“Preparations for the arrival of the first UK Lightnings next year are progressing well. The investment of £250m in infrastructure here at RAF Marham will ensure the station has the facilities to match this world-class aircraft when it arrives next year. As the home of the UK Lightning Force the station will be at the heart of UK airpower for decades to come.”



Admiral Sir Philip Jones First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff said:

“207 Squadron will play an important part in the future of both the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, and rightly reflects our shared aviation heritage. I was in the United States earlier this month to meet some of the pilots and maintainers who are getting to grips with the F-35B. They’re working brilliantly together and today I’ve seen the same sense of purpose from those readying RAF Marham for their arrival.

“HMS Queen Elizabeth is the first carrier in the world designed from the outset to operate a fifth generation combat aircraft. Crucially, a second ship – HMS Prince of Wales – is on its way, which will give the UK a continuous Carrier Strike capability. I have every expectation that, in time, this combination of carriers and jets will represent a powerful and important strategic conventional deterrent.”



The new infrastructure currently being built at RAF Marham includes vertical landing pads, the renewal of runways and taxiways and new technical and training facilities, offices and hangars.

The first Lightnings will arrive at RAF Marham in summer next year when the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy pilots currently training in the United States, will return as 617 Squadron, the Dambusters. The Lightning OCU will

stand up as 207 Squadron on 1 July 2019.

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Record year for Armed Forces Day 2017

Record year for Armed Forces Day.

The RAF made a full show of force with multiple displays, performances and public engagement at the Armed Forces Day 2017 National Event. Hosted by the City of Liverpool, the event led the nation in the annual opportunity for members of the public to say thank you to the entire Armed Forces community for the outstanding work they do. All three Services were represented along with reserve and cadet forces plus members of the veteran community.



This year was a record Armed Forces Day with over 300 events being held across the UK and overseas. In Liverpool the Lord Mayor highlighted during his closing address that an estimated 200,000 people had visited the Armed Forces National Event over the weekend. This level of support from the public shows their appreciation for those serving personnel who dedicate their lives to defending our country and keeping British people safe. It also demonstrates the public's gratitude to the veterans who in their turn gave so much.



In Liverpool more than 300 RAF personnel were involved with the event. The Queen's Colour Squadron marched in the grand parade accompanied by the Band of the RAF Regiment and flypasts were performed by the Typhoon, the Red Arrows and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. On the ground the 'RAF Military Village' was sited in a prime location on the Pier Head in front of Liverpool's three iconic buildings and was visited by the Earl of Wessex, the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, VCDS along with the Lord Mayor of Liverpool and many other local dignitaries. The RAF Village, manned by 90 personnel, was an extremely vibrant place to be and here visitors could get a close look at the equipment currently used by the RAF plus the

public also had the chance to talk to serving men and women from the RAF and RAuxAF.



Wing Commander Chris Lindsay, the RAF lead for the National Event, said "I am so proud of everyone who took part. The people of Liverpool have made us all feel very welcome and valued for what we do".

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[Grave of brave Nottingham born WW2 Airman finally rededicated](#)

Grave of brave Nottingham born WW2 Airman finally rededicated

Flight Sergeant (Flt Sgt) Frank Edward Reed's final resting place has been identified after his aircraft, RAF Stirling Bomber EH945, part of 620 Squadron, was shot down in Germany on 27 September 1943. To honour the bravery and sacrifice of Flt Sgt Reed, a rededication service was held on 20 June 2017 at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Hanover War Cemetery, Germany.



Flt Sgt Frank Edward Reed

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by The Reverend Father (Flight Lieutenant) James Mealy, Station Chaplain RAF Coningsby.

Flt Sgt Reed was a Flight Engineer and part of a seven man crew onboard the Bomber aircraft which took off from RAF Chedburgh in Suffolk at 19:55 hours on 27 September 1943. Research undertaken by JCCC and Air Historical Branch showed that Stirling EH975 was shot down and crashed later that evening. Subsequent reports stated that some of the crew were taken as prisoners of war, including Flt Sgt Reed who was badly injured; others were unfortunately killed during the crash. Flt Sgt Reed was taken to a hospital in Hanover where it is unclear how he died but most probably from his wounds.

Flt Sgt Reed was just one month short of his 21st birthday when he was killed.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

“This has been an incredibly rewarding case to work on and to be able to bring closure after such a long search for answers by Frank’s son, Nigel, who has travelled from New Zealand to be with us today, is a real privilege.

“Unfortunately we may never know exactly how Flt Sgt Reed died but we know he ultimately lost his life serving his Country. Now finally, his grave can bear his name and we’re very lucky to have his son and members of his RAF family here with us today.”



Nigel Reed

Rev. Fr (Flt Lt) James Mealy said:

“By God’s grace it is right and proper that we gathered today in prayer and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Flt Sgt Reed. It was a privilege for me as an RAF Padre to lead this rededication service for the family and representatives today.

“This is the first rededication service I have had the honour of leading and I will remember this day for the rest of my life.”

Flt Sgt Reed’s son, Nigel Reed, said:

“Today has opened up a new chapter in my relationship with my father whom I now feel a real connection and closeness to. I would like to thank all those who made this ceremony, and the one held in Chedburgh, possible, it has meant so very much to me.”



The moving ceremony rededicating the new headstone bearing Flt Sgt Reed’s name, as provided by the CWGC, was held in the cemetery in Hanover near to where the crash site was.

To further honour Flt Sgt Reed’s memory a simultaneous ceremony was held in Chedburgh, Suffolk (where 620 Squadron was based). It was organised by former members of The Blues and Royals, Nigel’s former regiment and attended by his regimental brothers.

**For more information, please contact Andy Eden, MOD JCCC Media Officer;
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