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A Royal Air Force Aeromedical Evacuation team has deployed on exercise with A400M Atlas for the first time.

The medics from Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) and three RAF Reserve squadrons are in the US to participate in Mobility Guardian, the largest exercise of its type involving over 50 transport and air-refuelling aircraft, paratroopers, Force Protection and Aeromed personnel.



Flight Lieutenant Scott Fitzgerald, a Flight Commander on TMW based at RAF Brize Norton, explained the aim of the exercise. He said: "The focus for the aeromedical part of this exercise is to simulate the evacuation of up to 300 hospital patients in a humanitarian effort from a displaced area in a war torn environment.

"We're doing that by working closely with other aeromedical teams from other countries. We're mixing those teams to understand what qualifications, capabilities and skill sets are required in order to function on various aircraft from other countries and that combination of doctor, nurse and medical teams."



The scale of the exercise has enabled a medical evacuation process which replicates closely what the RAF personnel have experienced previously on coalition operations. Two separate patient preparation areas have been established over 350 miles apart. The RAF teams fly out to the humanitarian area to evacuate patients originating from a US Army Role 2 Hospital.

"We receive hand over of those casualties and evacuate them back" explained Flt Lt Fitzgerald. "We sometimes simulate an intra-theatre transfer which involves a 40 minute flight, or when we have a C-CAST on board,

which is the critical care aspect of our aeromedical team, we simulate the 3-4 hour evacuation as if we were for example returning patients to Birmingham.”



The UK Aeromedical Team on the exercise have brought Flight Nurses who are emergency qualified, including four Reservists from three different squadrons.

The A400M, which can carry up to 66 stretcher patients, was recently used for the first time on a real aeromed mission for operational reasons. Mobility Guardian is however the first time it has been used on exercise in the role.

Flt Lt Fitzgerald: “All the personnel we have brought with us have never flown A400 previously so this is new for us. It’s a new capability, we can carry up to 66 stretchers on board the A400 which is our aircraft for the future.”

Editor: Wg Cdr Dylan Eklund

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[RAF Explosive Ordnance Disposal team train alongside Romanians](#)

RAF Explosive Ordnance Disposal team train alongside Romanians

Personnel from RAF Wittering based 5131 Bomb Disposal Squadron have conducted joint training with their counterparts from the Romanian Army at Ramnicu Valcea in central Romania.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) detachment from RAF Wittering is supporting 135 Expeditionary Air Wing currently deployed at Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase on the Black Sea coast of Romania and conducting enhanced air policing of NATO airspace.

The Officer

Commanding EOD, Flight Lieutenant Rob Cornford said: "The role I have as a bomb disposal officer is ensuring that any incidents with munitions are dealt with if they need to be by explosive ordnance disposal. I provide 24/7 crash cover for making safe munitions, flares or ejection systems that may be damaged."



Major Adrian Enache of the Romanian Army's 1st EOD Group welcomed RAF personnel Cpl Greg Cheeseman and Flt Lt Rob Cornford with a tour of the bespoke training facilities and demonstration of equipment. He invited them to a parade to celebrate 20 years since the inception of the Romanian EOD unit. He said: "Interoperability is a question of attitude. If we work together here, we can work together wherever we want."

On the training range, Major Enache's team demonstrated novel techniques to counter Improvised Explosive Devices and rendering safe Romanian Air Force rockets. Bries, the ten year old German Shepherd and veteran of Afghanistan was also given the opportunity to show her prowess in detecting different types of explosives.



Flt Lt Cornford summed up the value of this, saying: "We've been doing some training on Romanian Air Force weapons, looking at how the Romanians operate and we've showed them our procedures for disposing of different types of munitions. They've also demonstrated some of their counter-Improvised Explosive Device (c-IED) capability with 3D printed C-IED weapons; it's a pretty cost effective solution for disposing of IEDs."

He added: "It's been good to see how the two nations work together, and how they work their different equipment. It's really good to train with our NATO partners. It's something we can look forward to doing in the future."

The Romanian military also lead the way in working as a 'whole force' with civilian staff formed up alongside the Army for the 20th anniversary parade. Major Enache said: "The civilians on this unit are participating and working side by side with the military. Everyone is doing their job in order to achieve the common goal."



The ability to

share lessons across services is eased by making personal connections.

Romanian

Air Force Sergeant Major Florin Monteanu, and Romanian Navy Petty Officer

Mares

Dragos were at the anniversary celebrations, the latter saying: "We all have different skills. When we work together we spread our skills and change each other. It's a good opportunity for us."

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[RAF trains alongside Royal Navy over the Black Sea](#)

ROYAL AIR FORCE TRAINS ALONGSIDE ROYAL NAVY OVER THE BLACK SEA

Typhoon

aircraft from the Royal Air Force currently based, in Eastern Romania have been testing the air defence capabilities of HMS Duncan, a Royal Navy Type 45

destroyer which is leading the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the Black Sea.

The Four

Typhoons from 3(F) Squadron were tasked to test the capability of HMS Duncan in

controlling air defence and anti-surface warfare. During the exercise the ship's crew had the

opportunity to control some of the jets to defend the destroyer from air attack

and at the same time practice launching an air attack on other surface ships.



HMS

Duncan's Senior Warfare Officer Lt Cdr Michael Waters said: "Opportunities for

Type 45 to work with the RAF Typhoons are few and far between, even in the UK.

The chance to operate with 135 EAW, and for HMS Duncan to control live aircraft

in the execution of both Air-Air and Air-Surface missions was invaluable and proved our interoperability while both were tasked to NATO in the Black Sea."

Flight

Lieutenant Brett Fusco, from 3(F) Squadron, co-ordinated 135 EAW's participation

and who flew during the exercise explained what happened. He said: "There were

two elements, their fighter controllers on board practiced controlling us against an air threat while one of us was acting as the threat and two of us were on Combat Air Patrol protecting the ship.

"The other

element was conducting Anti Surface Forces Air Operations (ASFAOs) using the fourth

jet. For Duncan it was a chance for them to concurrently have different elements of their crew defending against an air threat whilst controlling an anti-surface operation."



Following the

conclusion of the exercise there was an opportunity for an exchange with 18 RAF

personnel visiting HMS Duncan for a tour of the ship and 15 RN personnel being

hosted at MK Air base.

Flt Lt Gemma

Bean, the 135 EAW Detachment Administrative Officer said: "It was really interesting. It was the first time I've ever been on a RN ship. Just to see how

their lifestyle compares to ours was eye-opening. We saw everything from their helicopter, the operations centre to the bridge and the weapons systems."

She reflected on the similarities of

operations, adding: "They are also on NATO ops. It was interesting to see how

they conduct theirs working with different nations, liaising with host nations

and how everything fits together as a NATO package."



Petty

Officer Tim Rumble, from HMS Duncan said: "It was great to have the opportunity to visit an Expeditionary Air Wing deployed with NATO and offered a

fascinating insight into the way our RAF colleagues operate. I particularly enjoyed

seeing the aircraft up close as well as the unique facilities at MK Airbase."

The RAF has deployed 135 Expeditionary

Air Wing, from RAF Leeming with four Typhoon aircraft, from RAF Coningsby, to western Romania until the end of August as part of a four-month NATO mission to enhance air policing. At the same time the Portsmouth-based Type 45 Destroyer, HMS Duncan has been tasked in the Black Sea leading the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, providing reassurance and deterrence in the Black Sea, as well as commanding NATO's counter migration activity in the Aegean.

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[News story: New £48m contract for workboat fleet will support UK carriers and UK jobs, Defence Minister announces](#)

The fleet of up to 38 workboats will assist Royal Navy ships from UK bases and on operations all over the world.

With Britain's flagship [HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier set to enter her new home in Portsmouth in under two weeks time](#), tasks to be carried out by the boats will include transferring personnel to and from both of the UK's carriers. Able to carry up to 36 passengers at one time, the workboats can be stowed inside the Carriers and winched to and from the water using on-board lifting equipment, allowing them to support the enormous ships either in port or on operations.

Building and supporting the boats will also sustain 60 British jobs, including 15 at Atlas Elektronik UK near Dorchester in Dorset where the boats will be built. A further 45 jobs will be sustained across the supply chain, including at E P Barrus in Bicester, KPM-Marine in Birmingham and Mashfords in Plymouth.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

From the south coast to the banks of the Clyde, British shipbuilding is ensuring that our growing Navy has the reach it needs to protect our interests around the globe. These cutting-edge workboats will support the likes of our iconic new aircraft

carriers and the Type 26 frigates, as well as sustaining 60 British jobs. This is another step in our £178 billion plan to provide our Armed Forces with the very best equipment to keep our country safe.

Ministry of Defence de&s

NEW WORKBOAT FLEET CONTRACT

Supporting Royal Navy ships worldwide

11-18
Ranging in size from 11 to 18 metres.

38 Up to 38 workboats

60 Jobs supported across the UK

£48 million contract

Duties include:

- Passenger transfer for QEC Aircraft Carriers
- Officer and diver training
- Antarctic exploration
- Hydrographic survey
- Explosive ordnance disposal

Features:

- Innovative modular design for rapid repurposing
- Twin waterjet propulsion
- Glass-reinforced plastic hulls
- Common steering and control systems

Build location: Atlas Elektronik, Dorset

The £48m contract will support UK carriers and UK jobs.

Ranging in length from 11 to 18 metres, the boats will also perform other tasks including officer and diver training, Antarctic exploration and explosive ordnance disposal.

They are highly adaptable to operational demands thanks to their cutting-edge modular design elements. For example, if the Royal Navy wished to quickly redeploy a boat from hydrographic survey duties to support diving for explosive ordnance, the survey module can be quickly lifted out of the boat and replaced with the diving module containing the high pressure air required for that task.

The contract will enable the design and construction of up to 38 boats as well as in-service support for the fleet for a further two years after the final boat is accepted. The first boat will enter service next year.

Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, Tony Douglas said:

These boats use modern materials and have been designed from the keel up to provide the Royal Navy with unparalleled flexibility and adaptability.

DE&S is proud to maintain excellent working relationships with partners across UK industry, ensuring our Armed Forces continue to be provided with the equipment they need while also maintaining vital British skills and jobs.

The boats will all feature glass-reinforced plastic hulls and advanced twin waterjet propulsion. Despite their varying roles, they will all have the same steering and control system, reducing the need for training and making them simpler to operate.

[News story: Grave of Kent born WW2 Pilot Officer finally rededicated after 77 years](#)

Verifying the research submitted was crucial in identifying the final resting place of Pilot Officer (P/O) Hector Garmen Webb of the 224 Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF), who was killed during WW2. A rededication service was held on 8 August 2017 at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Åndalsnes Church Cemetery, Norway 77 years after he fell.

The service, which was a fitting tribute to the sacrifice made by P/O Webb, was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, and was conducted by The Reverend Dr David Richardson, RAF Station Chaplain, RAF Halton.

Reverend David Richardson, said:

As someone serving at RAF Halton today, it is such a privilege to be here at this beautiful cemetery to remember the courage and sacrifice of Hector who graduated from Halton nearly 80 years ago.

P/O Webb was just 16 years old when he joined the RAF as an apprentice engine fitter. He later volunteered to train as a pilot and in 1937 he joined 224 Squadron as a Sergeant. He finally received his commission to become a Pilot Officer in 1940.

In the early stages of WW2, 224 Squadron were assigned to provide air cover in support of Operation Primrose – the landing of British troops near Åndalsnes, Norway. On 23 April 1940 P/O Webb's aircraft (Hudson N7249) was approaching Åndalsnes when he was hit by friendly fire and crashed into a nearby mountain. His 3 crew members ejected and parachuted to safety, however, P/O Webb was sadly killed. He was aged just 24.

P/O Webb's burial place had remained unknown, until the grave of an unknown airman buried in Åndalsnes Church Cemetery, Norway was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Defence by Hector's nephew, Ben Sharp. Further research was undertaken by the MOD JCCC to corroborate the evidence and the identification of the "Unknown Airman" grave was found to belong to P/O Hector Garman Webb, meaning his grave could finally be marked with his name.

Ben Sharp who travelled to Norway from the USA to attend the service of his uncle, Hector, said:

It was a very touching ceremony and we were so pleased to see the people of Åndalsnes here to remember him with us.

It is very important for us to take a break in our busy lives and spend time to remember the sacrifices these men made for our freedom. We are especially thankful to the JCCC, CWGC and the local community who have looked after Hector's grave so well for all these years.

Nicola Nash, JCCC said:

It has been a privilege to work on this case and today's ceremony was a fitting commemoration for P/O Hector Webb and the ultimate sacrifice he made.

A new headstone bearing P/O Webb's name was provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.