

[News story: UK and US strengthen maritime aviation cooperation](#)

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin today signed a P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) declaration with her United States counterpart, Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work to further strengthen the uniquely close defence relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 2019 the UK will receive delivery of its first Poseidon P-8A aircraft and both nations have committed to deepen their defence cooperation when operating in the North Atlantic region. Through seeking opportunities to share logistics and support bases and optimise the use of P-8A aircraft, particularly in Europe, the declaration should ensure increased value for money and operational effectiveness.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The United States is our pre-eminent Ally in global defence and collective security. This declaration is further evidence of how our two countries continue to cooperate and build mutual security, particularly in the North Atlantic region.

Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178 billion Equipment Plan, the P-8A programme will provide us with enhanced surveillance capabilities.

As leading members of NATO, the UK and US are committed to the collective defence of each other and their Allies. We have also pledged to deepen defence cooperation, bilaterally and within the Alliance, to further improve the ability to operate together in exercises and operations.

The declaration provides a new opportunity to maximise value for money for the taxpayer and continue to strengthen UK-US interoperability and to pursue efficiencies in operations and support, including at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, where the P-8A will bring some 400+ jobs. The Department of Defense and Ministry of Defence plan to cooperate closely on operation of their P-8A aircraft in the North Atlantic to ensure a coherent approach to MPA activity.

Delivering on the commitment of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the UK is purchasing nine Boeing P-8A Poseidon MPAs to be based in RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland. The aircraft will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities, including conducting anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering.



Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin meeting Bob Work in September 2016

Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work said:

Today's signing of the Declaration on P-8A Poseidon Bilateral Cooperation exemplifies the importance and strength of the US-UK partnership.

This cooperation agreement ensures and deepens our interoperability and maritime patrol capabilities. Together, the US and UK will continue to deter regional threats and maintain a robust military posture.

With the first P-8A aircraft due to arrive in the UK in 2019, the RAF has ensured that we have maintained the skills needed to operate these MPAs through the 'seed-corn' programme, which has embedded former RAF MPA operators within the MPA squadrons of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Air Commodore Ian Gale, Senior Responsible Owner for the Poseidon P-8A programme, said:

This agreement will enhance the UK's maritime patrol capability and further strengthen UK-US defence relations. The arrival of the Poseidon P-8A in 2019 will provide the UK with significantly increased capabilities and bring hi-tech employment to Scotland and

the wider UK.

This agreement follows Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon's [recent visit to Norway](#), where he also committed to cooperate on Maritime Patrol Aircraft operations, ensuring that the UK will continue to play a key role in delivering collective maritime security across the globe.

[News story: UK Government leads Burns Night celebrations around the world](#)

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan will host tonight's reception, where guests will be welcomed by bagpipes, enjoy a whisky tasting, and listen to Scottish folk singer Katy Thompson, who will perform 'My Heart is in the Highlands' and 'My Love is Like a Red Red Rose'. In addition, Ryan Hunter, 2nd year BA Acting student from at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, will recite Burns' poem 'A Mans A Man for A' That'.

[Address to a Haggis](#)

The video shows UK Government staff and Scottish service personnel including Major Jonny Rourke, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Mackenzie, Bombardier Steven Cunningham and Chief Petty Officer John Boyle reciting Burns' most famous work, the 'Address to a Haggis'.

Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell said:

This week the whole country will celebrate the life and work of Robert Burns, one of Scotland's greatest cultural icons. His works are justly famous right across the globe. From Ayrshire to Atlanta, and from Cumbernauld to Canberra, on Wednesday Burns' work will be celebrated in homes and Burns societies all over the world.

Burns' legacy remains relevant around the world, and as someone from Dumfries, Burns has always played an important part in my life. On Burns Night, I will be promoting Scotland's fine produce at a reception with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. And, of course, toasting the Bard with a wee dram of "guid auld Scotch.

Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan said:

The clue is in the name – my father and many Duncans before us were born and brought up in Wick, Caithness, so I'll be in my Duncan tartan tonight.

Burns' enduring global influence demonstrates the impact of Scottish culture around the world and I know that Burns night will be celebrated all over – not just by British troops, embassies, aid workers and expats, but by people from many countries throughout the world. It shows us that Burns' appeal is as strong as ever.

[Typhoons from 6 Squadron take part in Red Flag](#)

6 Squadron Typhoons, from RAF Lossiemouth, are taking part in the world's largest and most complex air combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in the United States.



Red Flag is a three-week exercise that pits friendly 'Blue' forces – including the 6 Squadron Typhoons – against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors in live and synthetic training environments, simulating air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, and space and cyber warfare.



The training mirrors the threats and complex air defences posed by real-life adversaries, helps participating nations better understand each other's capabilities and ensures that RAF personnel maintain the highest levels of readiness for potential future military operations.

The live element takes place over the US Air Force's premier military training area in Nevada; over 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land – an impossible scale to achieve in Europe.



The exercise also sees the Typhoons fly alongside US Air Force F-22 Raptors and F-35A Lightnings. This continues the evolving integration of RAF operations with 5th Generation aircraft ahead of the introduction of the F-35B into the RAF's combat air inventory in 2018.

Wing Commander Billy Cooper, Officer Commanding 6 Squadron, said: "We've brought eight Typhoons with us from RAF Lossiemouth to take part in Red Flag alongside the United States Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force.



"While our day job at Lossiemouth is protecting UK airspace through Quick Reaction Alert, here in Nevada the majority of what we're doing is air-to-air

fighting and some strike missions. This means we'll be flying two waves of six aircraft every day.

"One of the benefits of this exercise is the threat replication; we can simulate fighting our way into a target area through a high-threat environment, dropping precision munitions on specific targets and then fighting our way back out again. It's a privilege to deploy here with 6 Squadron and to represent the Royal Air Force, the UK and Scotland in particular."

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WAAF who stared into Hitler's eyes dies

Former WAAF Patricia Clark, a Battle of Britain filter room plotter, who became a bestselling novelist, has died aged 95.



Born Patricia Robins on February 1, 1921, she was the second of three daughter of novelist Denise Robins, known as 'the Queen of Romance'. After going to school in Switzerland, where she learned French and how to ski, Patricia wanted to learn German and was sent, aged 16, in 1937 to study near Munich. She once found herself in a traffic jam a few feet away from Hitler who was in an open topped car. Nearly 80 years later she vividly remembered 'meeting Hitler's cold blue eyes.'

Returning to England she found a job on *Women's Illustrated* magazine as a junior editor. As war loomed, she joined the RAF and after basic training was assigned to special duties, in the Filter Centre at 10 (Fighter) Group. Her job as a filterer was important, skilled work. The Filter Centre was a high pressure environment that demanded a great degree of skill and dexterity and close team cooperation.

Patricia proved to be a highly capable operator who was commissioned and made a Filterer. The Filterer's job was to analyse the huge amount of conflicting information to decide on the most accurate position, vector, height and strength of detected aircraft in a very short time. She was further promoted to Filter Officer, acting as deputy to the Filter Centre Controller and with overall responsibility for all the filtered information which produced the recognised air picture.



In 1944 Britain was the first nation ever attacked by ballistic missiles and Patricia took part in the pioneering work designed to locate the firing positions of V2 rockets so they could be attacked from the air. Her work was highly classified and she was sworn to secrecy about it for 30 years after the war ended. During breaks for bad weather in this top-secret war work, Patricia started writing romance stories for magazines, using the extra income she made from them as petrol money to get to NAAFI dances.

In 1947, she met and married former RAF pilot Donald Clark. They divorced in 1976. Her writing career began in earnest after the war and, like her mother; Patricia became a prolific author of light romantic fiction. In the 1970s she started to write blockbuster historical romances using the pen name Claire Lorrimer. In later years she moved to new genres, including murder mysteries. In March last year, under her pen name, she was presented with an Outstanding Achievement Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association, after completing her 80th novel.

She is survived by her three children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

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Personnel on Ice at RAF Championships

THE SERVICE'S stars on ice are doing battle for precious Inter-Service spots in La Plagne, France as the RAF Championships got under way.



The two-week camp, which culminates in the championships, is not for the faint-hearted, as the track is regarded as one of the toughest on the winter sports circuit, having been used for the 1992 Winter Olympics, with athletes reaching speeds of 90mph, with forces of up to six G testing all involved.

Team manager and reigning Inter-Services champion Flt Lt Gav Arnold said: "The championship race will see SAC Mark McQuitty of 99 Sqn as favourite following his excellent performances on the World Cup Circuit for Team GB.

"I will be challenging him along with GB hopeful Cpl Danny Burke, with the race determining selection for the Inter-Services Championships to be held in Norway in March where we will be defending our title against what is sure to be tough opposition from the Army."

Cpl Ross Brown bobsleigh coach/ceputy team manager said: "The camp is proving to be a very demanding fortnight, which has pushed all 32 athletes beyond

their limits on the second fastest track in Europe, reaching speeds in excess of 75mph whilst pulling up to 4.5g on a mile- long track from a standing start.

“Bobsleigh athletes have been exposed to dealing with a wide variety of emotions, such as adrenaline, fear, nerves, excitement, physical pressures and much more, all within a controlled environment of this extreme winter ice sport. And this camp is proving no different.”

Anyone interested in next year’s luge novice training camp should contact team manager Flt Lt Gav Arnold on: 30Sqn-pilot27@mod.uk. or for bobsleigh: marksilva021@hotmail.com

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