

[A400M draws attention at Mobility Guardian](#)

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A Royal Air Force A400M Atlas is being put through its paces as never before as it takes part in Exercise Mobility Guardian in the United States.

The airlift aircraft has been transporting military vehicles, delivering aid relief and flying aeromedical evacuation sorties in an intensive series of exercise scenarios designed to improve interoperability between the 31 nations taking part.

Wing Commander Ed Horne Officer Commanding LXX Squadron. He said: "We've brought the A400 with us to conduct tactical air land missions. What this means is we're picking up troops and equipment and taking them around the area of responsibility and into places to support the exercise scenario."



"The exercise is a really excellent stepping stone for us as we build more and more tactical capabilities on to the aircraft. Working here with the USAF, and in particular alongside the C-17 crews, is something we just wouldn't be able to replicate in the UK, either for real or in the synthetic environment at RAF Brize Norton."

Personnel from a number of other units are also participating at Joint Base Lewis McChord near Seattle. These include 47 Air Despatch Royal Logistic Corps, No. 2 Squadron RAF Regiment, 1 Tactical Police Squadron and Tactical Medical Wing.

During the exercise the A400 has transported a variety of US Army vehicles including a 19-ton Stryker Commander Vehicle. The aircraft has also flown aeromedical evacuation flights with multi-national aeromed teams.



Wg

Cdr Horne: "The A400 was configured right from the start for aeromed missions, we're clearing more and more aeromedical equipment onto the aircraft. This is the first time we'll have done any aeromed tasking on an exercise although the aircraft has been used for real with stretcher patients in the UK previously."

Flight

Lieutenant Dave Ellis is an A400 pilot. He explained the benefits of the exercise from his perspective: "One of the big advantages is being able to discover just what the A400 is capable of. It also provides a great opportunity to train.

"For

example, prior to the exercise only one of the pilots that we brought with us was night vision qualified but as a result of this exercise we've been able to qualify four more something we can't achieve during UK summertime".



The

distinctive shape of the A400 has stood out on the vast aircraft pans at McChord Airfield. "There's a great deal of interest in the Atlas, particularly from the C-17 and C-130 crews who have been on to the aircraft to look around explained Wg Cdr Horne. "The aircraft they operate are now quite old and of course ours is very new so they're very excited about the different functionality the A400 has."

Editor: Wg Cdr Dylan Eklund

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