

# 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 is 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 on in the synthetic environment at RAF Brize Norton."

Personnel  
from a number of other units are also participating at Joint Base Lewis  
McChord  
nr 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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