

Duke of Edinburgh visits RAF Northolt

His Royal

Highness Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh made an official visit to RAF

Northolt on Friday 17 March.

The Duke

made the visit in his capacity of Honorary Air Commodore for the unit, which is

home to 33 units from across Defence and wider Government.



As part

of the visit programme The Duke received an update on operations on the unit and met 120 personnel from all three Armed Services and Civil Servants.

Corporal Loz Prior, who works on the unit as

a Physical Training Instructor was part of the group that met The Duke, he

said: 'I felt immensely proud to be part

of the occasion. A big part of my role

is to ensure that our people are fit to do their job, and His Royal Highness

was very interested in the various ways we manage to achieve that. It was a

real honour to meet and speak with a

member of the Royal family.'



The Duke

last visited RAF Northolt in March 2015, when he awarded a new standard to 32

(The Royal) Squadron as part of the unit's centenary celebrations.

Editor: Squadron

Leader James Tenniswood

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RAF Sportswomen Top of Their Game

RAF SPORTSWOMEN TOP OF THEIR GAMES

Wales-based RAF servicewomen are competing at the top levels in a range of

sports, either representing the Service, civilian teams and even their countries.

SAC Sian Williams, 26, serves as a Logistics Mover at MOD St Athan. For the majority of the time, however, she trains and plays for the senior women's Welsh international rugby team and RAF Women's Rugby. She has 25 caps for Wales and is currently training for Women's Rugby World Cup in 2017, a tournament she has fond memories of.



"The highlight of my career so far has definitely been playing against New Zealand in the 2013 World Cup," said Sian. "It was a privilege to represent Wales and play against the best."

SAC Catherine Sharples, 43, is a reservist with Number 614 (County of Glamorgan) Squadron, where she serves as a photographer. She plays for Newport County's women's football team and is a regular goalscorer. She has played football for over twenty years and credits the RAF with helping to keep her fit enough to play alongside colleagues less than half her age. She said:

"One of the reasons I became a reservist is the military's emphasis on fitness. I was already fit when I joined, scoring light blue on the fitness test, but over two years of service now see me regularly achieve dark blue scores, which has only helped my speed and endurance on the pitch."



LAC Olivia Blok, 27, is a civil engineer in civilian life but serves in personnel support in the RAF Reserves. She has been a triathlon and duathlon competitor for the past four years and puts in between 10-15 hours a week training in swimming, cycling and running. She enjoys the emphasis that the RAF puts on fitness and competition and hopes to represent the Service in the near future.



"That's definitely something I'm working towards if the opportunity is there," said Olivia. "I was honoured to represent the United Kingdom in my age group at the European Duathlon Championships in 2014 and it would be great to do so for the RAF or UK again."

Finally, Kate Gale, 24, is a reservist soon to become a regular as she is about to start Initial Officer Training. She plays for Cardiff City women's basketball and after seeing a poster for RAF ladies team, she signed up and hasn't looked back. In the course of a year, she has made fast friends and

has been selected to play for the RAF at the inter-services tournament in May.



“I’ve always taken my fitness and sports seriously as a reservist,” said Kate. “But playing competitive basketball for the RAF has taken my motivation to another level. The training days can be long and intense but are all the more enjoyable for it, and in a funny way will help prepare me for officer training. I’m really looking forward to continuing RAF basketball as a regular.”

Images by SAC Cathy Sharples

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RAF A400M 'ATLAS' demonstrated to NZ Air Force

A glorious day in Wellington, New Zealand, provided the perfect backdrop for the RAF to show-off the Airbus A400M 'Atlas' to the Royal New Zealand Air Force as part of a prestigious partnership between the two nations.



The A400M, based at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire is the newest aircraft in the RAF's fleet. It boasts cutting edge technology, combined with sheer brute strength to make it a formidable strategic and tactical air lift platform. Able to deploy globally, it specialises in carrying over-sized loads and can transport a load of 25 tonnes over a range of 2,000 nautical miles.



The A400M combines huge lifting power with agility, with manoeuvrability akin to a fast-jet rather than an Air Transport Aircraft. It is a phenomenally capable aircraft and able to fly at a staggering 170 degrees angle of bank.



Number 70 Squadron demonstrated the aircraft to Air Commodore Darryn Webb, the New Zealand Defence Force Air Component Commander on a short flight around New Zealand's stunning islands.



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Chief of the Air Staff celebrates NZ Air Force 80th Anniversary

This year marks the Royal New Zealand Air Force's 80th anniversary and the RAF is proud to have been invited to take part in the celebrations at the Ohakea Air Tattoo.



The Airbus A400M 'Atlas', the RAF's cutting-edge tactical and strategic airlift aircraft, impressed the public, international air forces, and defence chiefs alike in New Zealand this weekend.

The highly-capable aircraft, which provides a wealth of options in both operational and humanitarian environments, played host to a meeting between the Chief of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the Chief of the Royal Air Force. Later, gifts were exchanged and both thanked the crew and engineers for bringing the aircraft 11,600 miles from RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, to Ohakea to celebrate a great partnership between the two nations.

Air Chief Marshall Sir Stephen Hillier, Chief of the Air Staff, said: "As Chief of the Air Staff I am delighted the Royal Air Force has been able to come to New Zealand to help celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. We have a long and rich history together going back over decades, going back over operations, and everything we do today.



"It's a fantastic new capability for the Royal Air Force, showing our ability to deploy all the way from the UK to the other side of the world really underlines the Air Forces Global Mobility capability in support of operations, wherever they might be. We get here quickly and effectively in this fantastic new aircraft."



The A400M Atlas is the newest aircraft in the RAF's fleet. It boasts cutting edge technology, combined with the ability to move outsized loads vast distances, making it a formidable strategic and tactical air lift platform. Able to deploy globally, it can transport a load of 25 tonnes over a range of 2,000 nautical miles.

Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies Chief of the Royal New Zealand Air Force said: "I did get to see the aircraft and have a good introduction with it last July, when I was kindly hosted by 70 Squadron. I got to fly the simulator and go flying in the aircraft, which was really impressive. Great range and payload. I am really envious that you've got them. This one has a lot of capability and a lot of credibility."



"We have a huge shared history together, our roots are from the RAF. It is very meaningful that in our 80th year the RAF is first and foremost the prime guests at our own party. To take the time and effort to come out here, especially for your Chief of the Air Staff, is really meaningful."

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100 Years of Aeromedical Evacuation

Lone Airman in Desert Rescue

A lone airman saved the life of a wounded soldier by flying him directly to a field hospital 45 minutes away – a journey by land that would have taken days across hazardous desert terrain. Remarkably, this flight took place 100 years ago on 19 February 1917 and was the first recorded aeromedical evacuation.

Lance Corporal MacGregor of the Imperial Camel Corps had been shot in the ankle as his unit advanced towards Bir-el-Hassana in Egypt. Forty four miles from the nearest medical facility in El Arish, it was felt that L/Cpl MacGregor's best chance of survival was to be flown there in the observer's seat of a Royal Flying Corps B.E.2c biplane.



One hundred years on, and still one year away from its own centenary, the Royal Air Force remains at the forefront of this life saving aviation capability.

The heroism of the RAF's Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) became synonymous with recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of injured servicemen today owe their lives to the RAF helicopter aircrew, Flight Doctors, Flight Nurses and Flight Medics who risked their lives to recover them, sometimes while still under enemy fire.



Specially adapted RAF C-17s and Voyagers, manned by aeromedical evacuation (AE) flight doctors, nurses and medics, provide the next step of the journey home for injured and ill servicemen, wherever they may be in the world. Critical Care Air Support Teams (CCAST) move critically unwell patients, while general AE teams move general ward patients.



The RAF currently has one Regular AE squadron and two Reserve AE squadrons. Squadron Leader Sarah Charters ARRC, has served as a Reservist with 4626 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron for 27 years and has deployed to two Gulf wars and twice to Afghanistan. She said: "It is an absolute honour to be a part of this fantastic service which has such a rich history of saving lives.

"My squadron's motto is 'Safely Home' and this neatly sums up the role of Regular and Reserve aeromedical evacuation personnel. We provide high quality clinical care in the air, all the way from point of injury on the battlefield back to the UK."



Later this year, a re-enactment of L/Cpl MacGregors historic flight in a B.E.2c will further mark this milestone for aeromedical evacuation services. More information on medical roles in the RAF, either as a Regular or Reserve, can be found [here](#) or by searching 'RAF medical careers'.

Editor: Flt Lt Peter Lisney

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