

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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