

Press release: UK Royal Air Force marks 100th anniversary by inspiring Canadian youth

To celebrate 100 years of the Royal Air Force (RAF), school and cadet groups across Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec are getting an exclusive opportunity to learn about how pilots from the British and Canadian armed forces continue to work together to support peace and security around the world.

With inspiring future generations being such a big theme of [RAF100 celebrations](#), the UK's Naval and Air Attaché to Canada, Commander Neil Marriott (Royal Navy), called on Ottawa based RAF Exchange Officers, Squadron Leader Drew Anderson and Squadron Leader Andy Wilson, to offer a series of informative and exciting visits for school and youth groups, in partnership with volunteer group Vintage Wings of Canada.

During each session, 30 teenagers are invited to visit Vintage Wings impressive aircraft collection at the Gatineau Airport where they receive an informal presentation on the history of the RAF by current Air Force service members. They also learn about Canada's role in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan during the Second World War and how the RAF and RCAF continue to cooperate today.

So far, school groups from Carleton Place and Ottawa have taken part and at least five further school and cadet groups have trips planned for the coming weeks.

RAF Squadron Leader Drew Anderson, who is currently on exchange with the RCAF, said:

We've got a fantastic opportunity here to help the next generation learn a little bit of our shared history while at the same time maybe inspiring some of them to consider a career in aerospace.

The volunteer staff at Vintage Wings of Canada have been fantastic and everyone is fully supportive of our RAF100 outreach activities. It's also important to remember that this is not a museum – these aircraft actually fly – and these youth are really excited to get so close to such beautiful and functioning classic aircraft.

Don Buchan from Vintage Wings of Canada said:

As an organization we are all about inspiring young people, so the RAF100 commemoration gave us the catalyst we were looking for to put together an interesting and informative program that we could

use to reach a lot of local youths.

The RAF has capitalised on its centenary year to: Commemorate 100 years of extraordinary success, achievement and sacrifice; Celebrate the professionalism and dedication of today's RAF, which is airborne 24/7 supporting UK and allied interests around the world; and Inspire future generations by telling its unique story.

Commander Marriott said:

The focus of these events is to celebrate the history of the RAF and demonstrate its close relationship with the RCAF over the last century and today, at home and overseas.

We will inform you of the significant scientific leaps in aeronautics that were required to form the modern Air Forces of today, hopefully inspiring you to be Canada's future scientists, engineers, medical professionals or even pilots.

News story: Flagship AI Lab announced as Defence Secretary hosts first meet between British and American defence innovators

As part of the MOD's commitment to pursue and deliver future capabilities, the Defence Secretary announced the launch of AI Lab – a single flagship for Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and data science in defence based at Dstl in Porton Down. AI Lab will enhance and accelerate the UK's world-class capability in the application of AI-related technologies to defence and security challenges. Dstl currently delivers more than £20 million of research related to AI and this is forecast to grow significantly.

AI Lab will engage in high-level research on areas from autonomous vehicles to intelligent systems; from countering fake news to using information to deter and de-escalate conflicts; and from enhanced computer network defences to improved decision aids for commanders. AI Lab provides tremendous opportunities to help keep the British public safe from a range of defence and security threats. This new creation will help Dstl contribute more fully to this vital challenge.

Yesterday's meetings provided the US Defense Innovation Board, a team of

experts from across defence and industry, with an opportunity to meet with UK defence leaders to share experiences and innovation priorities. This co-operation further strengthens the excellent relationship between our militaries.

The team of American experts includes notable figures who have led transformative change in government or are acutely aware of the challenges the Department of Defense faces. Members include: Dr Eric E. Schmidt, former chair of Google Inc; Dr. J. Michael McQuade Ph.D, Senior Vice President for Science and Technology at United Technologies; and Sally Donnelly, former Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The relationship we have with our American partners is indispensable to both our nations. In the face of evolving global threats, we must harness new technologies and approaches to stay ahead of our adversaries and keep us safe.

Today's meeting of military and scientific minds from both sides of the Atlantic encourages our best and brightest to develop new capabilities in everything from Artificial Intelligence and autonomous weapons to advanced cyber and robotics.

Building upon this hugely important area of research, the Defence Secretary also announced a reciprocal UK Defence Innovation Board visit to the US later this year which will develop joint recommendations based on the needs of the MOD and its American partners.



Defence Minister Guto Bebb meets members of the US-UK Defence Innovation Board. Crown copyright.

The UK's Defence External Advisory Panel published findings from their independent report which examines how the MOD can become 'innovative by instinct'. The report highlighted a requirement to expand capabilities in cyber defence and information technology systems but also the need to streamline procurement processes and the implementation of ground-breaking abilities.

As the MOD carries out the Modernising Defence Programme review, US counterparts are also examining how to strengthen their armed forces in the face of intensifying threats. In a rapidly changing world, military planning must be agile to counter emerging challenges and the MOD must consult widely with our closest allies.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

UK defence has always been at the forefront of significant technological advances, from the development of radar systems crucial to our victory in the Battle of Britain to our Harrier jump jets which revolutionised our air capabilities in the Falkland and Iraq wars.

The UK has invested £800 million on boosting innovation over the next decade to meet future threats. This coupled with our close working relationships with allies provides us with the opportunity to maintain our military advantage for decades to come.

Note to editors:

- The US Defense Innovation Board is made up of leading experts from business, civil society and the military and broadly mirrors the work of the British team.
- The Defence Innovation External Advisory Panel was established, and met for the first time in July 2017.
- The Panel provides independent challenge as the members seek to interrogate MOD's current innovation ecosystem and help ensure that the Department is driving the right change at the necessary pace to meet its future goals. To support this challenge function, the Panel were asked to provide an annual report to Secretary of State for Defence on their findings. This is the first of these reports.
- The Defence and Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) works to apply cutting-edge science and technology (S&T) to keep UK armed forces, and the British people, protected from harm.
- Dstl is an Executive Agency of the MOD, run along commercial lines. It is one of the principal government organisations dedicated to S&T in the defence and security field, with six sites; at Porton Down, Portsmouth West, Fort Halstead, Sandridge, Langhurst and Alverstone.
- Dstl works with a wide range of partners and suppliers in industry, academia and overseas.

For more information contact the MOD News Desk on 0207 218 7907.

News story: Decontamination work complete at Maltings site in Salisbury

This follows on-going clean-up operations to remove any potential residual contamination following the nerve agent attack on 4 March 2018.

The site was visited by specialist teams and any items that may have harboured residual amounts of the agent were removed. All waste has been removed and will be disposed of safely.

A Defra spokesperson said: "Following extensive clean-up operations in Salisbury to remove any potential residual contamination resulting from the nerve agent attack on 4 March, decontamination work is now complete at the Maltings.

"The site will now be handed back to Wiltshire Council, who will decide when it is appropriate to release it back into public use."

News story: UK poised for take-off on ambitious Defence Space Strategy with personnel boost

Updated: Added the Defence Space Strategy Headlines.

With an increasing amount of the UK's military systems now dependent on space technology, it can today be announced that RAF Air Command has assumed responsibility for command and control of UK military space operations to defend the UK's interests in space.

The Defence Secretary has also confirmed his intention to boost the 500 personnel currently working in the UK defence space sector by a fifth over the next five years, taking the total to over 600.

The new Strategy, expected in the summer, will set out plans to protect UK operations against emerging space-based threats such as jamming of civilian satellites used for broadcasters and satellite navigation to support military capabilities

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We must make sure we are primed and ready to deter and counter the intensifying threats to our everyday life that are emerging in space. That's why today I'm announcing the RAF is taking the lead in this area and why we plan to increase the number of personnel covering space.

Satellite technology is not just a crucial tool for our Armed Forces but vital to our way of life, whether that be access to our mobile phones, the internet or television. It is essential we protect our interests and assets from potential adversaries who seek to cause major disruption and do us harm.

Britain is a world leader in the space industry and our defence scientists and military personnel have played a central role in the development of the EU's Galileo satellite programme alongside British companies, so it is important we also review our contribution and how we plan for alternative systems in this crucial area.

As part of the EU's Galileo programme, UK companies have led the way in developing innovative satellite technology. The UK has contributed €1.4bn (£1.2bn) in funding to the programme and provided vital ground infrastructure in the Falklands and the Ascension Islands. Participation in Galileo with the appropriate level of access and involvement remains our preferred option,

however we are working on alternative options, and as part of this the MOD will work with the UK Space Agency to explore opportunities for UK companies.

Speaking at the conference, Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

Space is a vital part of our economy, with an industry worth £14 billion a year. With the launch of this Strategy, we are setting our aspirations much higher, to ensure that our industry continues to benefit from this growth in satellite technology. We are investing millions into Britain's most innovative companies to help us launch forward in the space domain.

Speaking at the conference, Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

I am determined to ensure that the RAF's leadership of military space operations transforms our ability to address the growing threats and hazards. In doing this, it is essential that we work jointly across Defence and with partners across Government and internationally.

Satellites and space-based services provide communications, imagery, precision targeting and friendly force tracking for the Armed Forces. As the reliance on satellites continues to grow, any disruption could lead to severe consequences, whether by natural or man-made hazards, or intentional threats from hostile states. The Defence Space Strategy will examine how we can work with our allies across NATO and the five-eyes partnership to protect and defend our mutual space interests.

The Defence Space Conference is taking place from 21-22 May 2018 at 8 Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2N 5BY

Click here for the
[MOD defence space strategy headlines](#)
(PDF, 776KB, 2 pages)

[News story: Armed Forces proud to take part in Royal Wedding](#)

Today 250 members of the Armed Forces are on parade in Windsor to help celebrate the Royal Wedding of HRH Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle.

The Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force are all providing ceremonial support to mark the occasion.

Units that hold a special relationship with Prince Harry were chosen at the request of Kensington Palace. Some of the troops performing ceremonial duties today served alongside Prince Harry during his ten years in the Army.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I am proud that so many servicemen and women from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force will take part in the ceremonial aspects of the Royal couple's wedding day.

For the whole country this is a joyous occasion and the presence of our troops reminds our nation and the entire world of the special and unique relationship between our Armed Forces and the Royal family.

Captain William Calder, who commanded a Half Company of 3 Regiment Army Air Corps lining the streets during the carriage procession, said:

It's an honour for us to be on parade in Windsor today, helping the man we knew as Captain Wales celebrate an important day for him and his family. I hope the ceremonies we take part in today will help the whole country celebrate this happy occasion.

From 9.30am this morning, the Band of the Irish Guards entertained crowds as they gathered to watch events unfold around Windsor.

The State Trumpeters of the Band of the Household Cavalry then played fanfares in St George's Chapel to mark the arrival of HM The Queen and Ms Meghan Markle ahead of the wedding service.

Members of the Household Cavalry lined the steps of St George's Chapel as the guests left the wedding service. After the service, a Travelling Escort of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment accompanied the bride and groom during the carriage procession through Windsor.

The streets inside Windsor Castle were lined by servicemen and women from Royal Navy Small Ships and Diving, 30 Commando IX Group the Royal Marines, The 1st Battalion Irish Guards, 3 Regiment Army Air Corps, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, and personnel from RAF Honington.

Prince Harry joined the Army in 2005 and was commissioned as an Officer in 2006 after training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He joined The Blues and Royals, one of two regiments in the Household Cavalry, in April 2006. Prince Harry served in the Army for ten years, undertaking two tours of Afghanistan and rising to the rank of Captain.

Both Prince Harry and Ms. Meghan Markle have shown their continued support

for serving Armed Forces personnel and veterans in their benevolent work, most recently in their support of the Invictus Games Foundation.