

RAF Explosive Ordnance Disposal team train alongside Romanians

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Personnel from RAF Wittering based 5131 Bomb Disposal Squadron have conducted joint training with their counterparts from the Romanian Army at Ramnicu Valcea in central Romania.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) detachment from RAF Wittering is supporting 135 Expeditionary Air Wing currently deployed at Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase on the Black Sea coast of Romania and conducting enhanced air policing of NATO airspace.

The Officer Commanding EOD, Flight Lieutenant Rob Cornford said: "The role I have as bomb disposal officer is ensuring that any incidents with munitions are dealt with if they need to be by explosive ordnance disposal. I provide 24/7 crash cover for making safe munitions, flares or ejection systems that may be damaged."



Major Adrian Enache of the Romanian Army's 1st EOD Group welcomed RAF personnel Cpl Greg Cheeseman and Flt Lt Rob Cornford with a tour of the bespoke training facilities and demonstration of equipment. He invited them to a parade to celebrate 20 years since the inception of the Romanian EOD unit. He said: "Interoperability is a question of attitude. If we work together here, we can work together wherever we want."

On the training range, Major Enache's team demonstrated novel techniques to counter Improvised Explosive Devices and rendering safe Romanian Air Force rockets. Bries, the ten year old German Shepherd and veteran of Afghanistan was also given the opportunity to show her prowess in detecting different types of explosives.



Flt Lt Cornford

summed up the value of this, saying: “We’ve been doing some training on Romanian Air Force weapons, looking at how the Romanians operate and we’ve showed them our procedures for disposing of different types of munitions. They’ve also demonstrated some of their counter-Improvised Explosive Device (c-IED) capability with 3D printed C-IED weapons; it’s a pretty cost effective solution for disposing of IEDs.

He added: “It’s been good to see how the two nations work together, and how they work their different equipment. It’s really good to train with our NATO partners. It’s something we can look forward to doing in the future.”

The Romanian military also lead the way in working as a ‘whole force’ with civilian staff formed up alongside the Army for the 20th anniversary parade. Major Enache said: “The civilians on this unit are participating and working side by side with the military. Everyone is doing their job in order to achieve the common goal.”



The ability to share lessons across services is eased by making personal connections.

Romanian

Air Force Sergeant Major Florin Monteanu, and Romanian Navy Petty Officer Mares

Dragos were at the anniversary celebrations, the latter saying: “We all have different skills. When we work together we spread our skills and change each other. It’s a good opportunity for us.”

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RAF Aeromedical Evacuation team deploys with A400M Atlas on Ex Mobility Guardian

RAF Aeromedical

Evacuation team deploys with A400M Atlas on Ex Mobility Guardian

A Royal Air Force Aeromedical Evacuation team has deployed on exercise with A400M Atlas for the first time.

The medics from Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) and three RAF Reserve squadrons are in the US to participate in Mobility Guardian, the largest exercise of its type involving over 50 transport and air-refuelling aircraft, paratroopers, Force Protection and Aeromed personnel.



Flight Lieutenant Scott Fitzgerald, a Flight Commander on TMW based at RAF Brize Norton, explained the aim of the exercise. He said: "The focus for the aeromedical part of this exercise is to simulate the evacuation of up to 300 hospital patients in a humanitarian effort from a displaced area in a war torn environment.

"We're doing that by working closely with other aeromedical teams from other countries. We're mixing those teams to understand what qualifications, capabilities and skill sets are required in order to function on various aircraft from other countries and that combination of doctor, nurse and medical teams."



The scale of the exercise has enabled a medical evacuation process which replicates closely what the RAF personnel have experienced previously on coalition operations. Two separate patient preparation areas have been established over 350 miles apart. The RAF teams fly out to the humanitarian area to evacuate patients originating from a US Army Role 2 Hospital.

"We receive hand over of those casualties and evacuate them back" explained Flt Lt Fitzgerald. "We sometimes simulate an intra-theatre transfer which involves a 40 minute flight, or when we have a C-CAST on board, which is the critical care aspect of our aeromedical team, we simulate the 3-4 hour evacuation as if we were for example returning patients to Birmingham."



The UK Aeromedical Team on the exercise have brought Flight Nurses who are emergency qualified, including four Reservists from three different squadrons.

The A400M, which can carry up to 66 stretcher patients, was recently used for the first time on a real aeromed mission for operational reasons. Mobility Guardian is however the first time it has been used on exercise in the role.

Flt Lt Fitzgerald: "All the personnel we have brought with us have never flown A400 previously so this is new for us. It's a new capability, we can carry up to 66 stretchers on board the A400 which is our aircraft for the future."

Editor: Wg Cdr Dylan Eklund

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[RAF trains alongside Royal Navy over the Black Sea](#)

ROYAL AIR FORCE TRAINS ALONGSIDE ROYAL NAVY OVER THE BLACK SEA

Typhoon aircraft from the Royal Air Force currently based, in Eastern Romania have been testing the air defence capabilities of HMS Duncan, a Royal Navy Type 45 destroyer which is leading the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the Black Sea.

The Four Typhoons from 3(F) Squadron were tasked to test the capability of HMS Duncan in controlling air defence and anti-surface warfare. During the exercise the ship's crew had the opportunity to control some of the jets to defend the destroyer from air attack and at the same time practice launching an air attack on other surface ships.



HMS Duncan's Senior Warfare Officer Lt Cdr Michael Waters said: "Opportunities for Type 45 to work with the RAF Typhoons are few and far between, even in the UK. The chance to operate with 135 EAW, and for HMS Duncan to control live aircraft in the execution of both Air-Air and Air-Surface missions was invaluable and proved our interoperability while both were tasked to NATO in the Black Sea."

Flight

Lieutenant Brett Fusco, from 3(F) Squadron, co-ordinated 135 EAW's participation

and who flew during the exercise explained what happened. He said: "There were

two elements, their fighter controllers on board practiced controlling us against an air threat while one of us was acting as the threat and two of us were on Combat Air Patrol protecting the ship.

"The other

element was conducting Anti Surface Forces Air Operations (ASFAOs) using the fourth

jet. For Duncan it was a chance for them to concurrently have different elements of their crew defending against an air threat whilst controlling an anti-surface operation."



Following the

conclusion of the exercise there was an opportunity for an exchange with 18 RAF

personnel visiting HMS Duncan for a tour of the ship and 15 RN personnel being

hosted at MK Air base.

Flt Lt Gemma

Bean, the 135 EAW Detachment Administrative Officer said: "It was really interesting. It was the first time I've ever been on a RN ship. Just to see how

their lifestyle compares to ours was eye-opening. We saw everything from their helicopter, the operations centre to the bridge and the weapons systems."

She reflected on the similarities of

operations, adding: "They are also on NATO ops. It was interesting to see how

they conduct theirs working with different nations, liaising with host nations

and how everything fits together as a NATO package."



Petty

Officer Tim Rumble, from HMS Duncan said: "It was great to have the opportunity to visit an Expeditionary Air Wing deployed with NATO and offered a

fascinating insight into the way our RAF colleagues operate. I particularly enjoyed

seeing the aircraft up close as well as the unique facilities at MK Airbase."

The RAF has deployed 135 Expeditionary

Air Wing, from RAF Leeming with four Typhoon aircraft, from RAF Coningsby, to western Romania until the end of August as part of a four-month NATO mission to enhance air policing. At the same time the Portsmouth-based Type 45 Destroyer, HMS Duncan has been tasked in the Black Sea leading the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, providing reassurance and deterrence in the Black Sea, as well as commanding NATO's counter migration activity in the Aegean.

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[RAF Force Protection leads on security on Exercise Mobility Guardian](#)

RAF Force Protection leads on security on Exercise Mobility Guardian

Royal Air Force personnel are playing a leading role in providing security on Mobility Guardian, a large air mobility exercise in the United States involving 3000 personnel from 24 countries.

At a remote austere airfield a Force Protection team led by the RAF are protecting the transport aircraft and personnel conducting humanitarian relief operations to ensure aid reaches those in need.

In the opening days of the exercise the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division conducted a mass parachute drop to seize the airfield. Once secured, responsibility for the establishment and operation of the airfield passed to the Contingency Response Group (CRG).



The force protection for the CRG is being provided by 4 Force Protection Wing Headquarters, No. 2 Squadron RAF Regiment, 1 Tactical Police Squadron and 2624 Squadron, RAuxAF Regiment together with personnel from the Royal Australian Air Force, Belgian Air Component and US Air Force.

As military vehicles of all shapes and sizes are loaded and offloaded in quick time from a row of huge transport aircraft, the Force Protection team kept a watchful eye on potential threats to the transporters and their crews in temperatures exceeding 40°C.

The Force Protection Component Commander is Squadron Leader Steve Turner, Officer Commanding No. 2 Squadron RAF Regiment. He said: "Our role is to provide force protection to the CRG operations. That forms two parts. First the security of the operating areas here at Moses Lake, the other is enabling certain air mobility operations that conduct land away tasks from here.



"It's a very valuable exercise, it's been a real learning process for everyone involved. Since we got here the integration has been fantastic, the attitude towards interoperability and flexibility has helped resolve any sticking points which have arisen."

One training serial was observed by Group Captain Dave Tait, the Station Commander of RAF Honington. He said: "You really can't beat working alongside the aircraft, the aircrew, the technicians, the movers and our international partners with whom we'll be operating alongside on the day in a real time live flying environment. It's absolutely fantastic training value."



The scenario observed by Gp Capt Tait saw an Air Mobility Protection Team comprising of RAF and Belgian personnel having to keep a crowd of civilians away from an RAF A400M Atlas. Tact and diplomacy was required to ensure the aircraft remained secure and could complete its mission unhindered.

Gp Capt Tait: The variety of scenarios enable us to trial new tactics techniques and procedures (TTP), and it's quite interesting to work with the Belgians who do things in a subtly different way. We've learnt a few things about them which allowed us to refine our TTPs and they learn from us as well."

Editor: Wg

Cdr Eklund

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[RAF Sentinel aircraft returns from the Middle East](#)

RAF Sentinel aircraft returns from the Middle East.

A Royal Air Force Sentinel R1 aircraft based at RAF Waddington, was today welcomed back following the latest successful mission supporting the coalition in the fight against Daesh in the Middle East.

The 5 (Army Cooperation) Squadron aircraft landed today after eight weeks away where the crew have been supporting coalition operations by supplying information that ensures the strikes carried out by the RAF and other coalition aircraft are accurate.



Wing Commander Chris Melville the officer commanding 5 Squadron said: "This has been a highly successful deployment by the Squadron and we continue to contribute to the success of the mission. ". He added: "It is always difficult to recognise the work of my Squadron due to the sensitive nature of it, but today is an opportunity to publically congratulate them on a job well done."

During this tour the Iraqi Security forces, together with their coalition allies in the air and on the ground, have successfully recaptured the Iraqi city of Mosul with the 5 Squadron Sentinel playing an important part in the gathering of information to support the ground campaign.



The Sentinel crew used the aircraft's powerful radar to identify and track numerous targets over great distances,

passing the information in near real time to friendly forces. The information gathered was also used by intelligence specialists to conduct in-depth forensic analysis of the data to generate intelligence products that are passed to commanders and decision makers enabling them to plan future operations.

Today's returning Sentinel aircraft has been deployed in support of operations for two months and during that time was airborne for 235 hours, or the equivalent of nearly 10 days, with the typical sortie lasting for ten hours. During this time the aircraft flew approximately 4200 miles.



Squadron Leader Tom a member of the crew said, 'We are very proud of the work that we collectively do as a Squadron here. It gives the crews immense satisfaction to see the end product of their efforts and the effect of this on current operations.'



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