

RAF Lossiemouth's XV (Reserve) squadron disbands

RAF LOSSIEMOUTH'S XV(RESERVE) SQUADRON DISBANDS

XV(Reserve) Squadron, the final Royal Air Force Tornado squadron based in Scotland, disbanded on Friday 31 March 2017 with a private military ceremony at RAF Lossiemouth. The disbandment of XV(Reserve) Squadron marks the end of the Tornado era at RAF Lossiemouth. The Squadron completed their final sortie on Friday 17 March.



The last parade of the Squadron's standard before it is laid up marks the end of the 102 year old Squadron's history. 750 invited guests attended the event that saw members of the Squadron, led by their Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Paul Froome, carry out the emotional but precise military ceremony.

Led by the Band of the Royal Air Force College, the personnel marched in two flights into the hangar and formed up in front of their proud families and friends. The parade personnel were flanked in the hangar by two Tornados, one being MacRobert's Reply.

Parade Commander was Officer Commanding XV(Reserve) Squadron, Wing Commander Paul Froome. No. 1 Flight Commander was Squadron Leader Mark Swinton, whilst No. 2 Flight Commander was Squadron Leader Matt Smith (the Squadron's Senior Engineering Officer).



The Standard Bearer was Flight Lieutenant Sam Williams, the Standard Escort was Warrant Officer Tam McEwan. Chief Technician Si Guillou and Chief Technician Grant Hamilton were the armed escorts.

The parade Reviewing Officer was Chief of Defence Intelligence, Air Marshal Phil Osborn himself a Tornado navigator and a former Tornado squadron commanding officer.

With the precision expected of the UK Armed Forces, Wing Commander Froome and his Flight Commanders led

their troops through 131 orders to carry out the parade. Finally the Standard Party left the hangar to the haunting tune 'Sands of the Kuwait' played on the bagpipes by Chief Technician Al Sharp. The tune was written to commemorate the Gulf War, which fittingly was XV(Reserve) Squadron's final battle honour.



Following the parade Wing Commander Froome gave an emotional tribute to the members of his Squadron, he said:

"I am incredibly proud today – members of XV(Reserve) Squadron have provided a stirring finale to the Squadron's history. And to be able to share today with many past and present members of the Squadron, as well as our families, has been wonderful.

"The hours of dedicated work the Squadron engineers have provided to the Tornado Force over recent years has been replicated in their efforts today in this arena. It was an absolute honour to lead them through today's parade, and I will be sad to leave them and RAF Lossiemouth."

Following the event there was a flypast of the Station in the early afternoon by Tornados from RAF Marham.

The final Tornado aircraft will leave RAF Lossiemouth over the coming months for RAF Marham where the RAF Tornado fleet is now based. RAF Lossiemouth will see growth in the near future as a fourth Typhoon squadron is formed here and 9 P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft are based here. Currently the three Typhoon squadrons based at RAF Lossiemouth provide Quick Reaction Alert (Interceptor) North, or QRA as it is commonly called, protecting UK skies.



The final ab initio Tornado GR4 student XV(Reserve) Sqn in mid-February. Flight Lieutenant Nathan Shawyer completed his training as 'combat ready' and was posted to 31 Squadron, RAF Marham.

The future of the squadron number plate hasn't been decided at this time, therefore the Squadron's standard will be laid up in the rotunda at RAF College Cranwell, Lincolnshire in April.

Group Captain Paul Godfrey, Station Commander of RAF Lossiemouth, paid tribute to the hard work

of

the Squadron's personnel both in recent years and in creating a fitting end to the Squadron's history. He said:

"I'm extremely

honoured to have been the Station Commander of RAF Lossiemouth in the last 18

months of XV(Reserve) Squadron's time as a Tornado Operational Conversion Unit

and it is a sad day to see the Squadron officially disband, ending over 23 years of Tornado presence in Moray.

"The Squadron's

output in terms of quality training that has provided the RAF with such skilled

air crew has been second to none and has been fundamental to the success of the

Tornado on operations. All of the Squadron's members on parade today have made a huge contribution to past and current operations worldwide and are highly regarded for their professionalism and skill. That same high standard of output and effort has been shown again today in an excellent parade, which was a fitting end to the Squadron's time here at RAF Lossiemouth.

"I am extremely

pleased that many of the Squadron personnel will transfer to our Typhoon squadrons here at RAF Lossiemouth to support the future growth of the Station,

and I wish all members of the Squadron the very best of luck in their future endeavours; every single one of them can have with a real sense of pride in what they have achieved and it is obvious that they have maintained the very highest of standards right to the very end."

Editor: Flt Lt Ian Smith

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[Press release: Proposals to introduce transparency to overseas-owned UK property published](#)

- new proposals would deliver the world's first public register of the

beneficial owners of overseas companies and other legal entities who own UK property

- National Crime Agency: “Greater transparency will assist investigators track down and recover proceeds of crime”
- investors, transparency experts and property industry called on by government to help understand how a register could be delivered

Proposals to deliver the world’s first register of overseas companies and other legal entities that own property in the UK have been published as part of the government’s drive to build a fair economy.

The UK would be the first country to have a public register showing the beneficial owners of property controlled by overseas companies and other legal entities, strengthening the UK’s position as a world leader in corporate transparency and anti-corruption.

The register would also list the beneficial owners of overseas-registered firms involved in central government procurement exercises.

While the government welcomes legitimate foreign investment in the UK, overseas investors in the UK property market have also included criminals laundering the proceeds of crime.

Since 2004, law enforcement investigations into international corruption have identified more than £180 million of property in the UK as the suspected proceeds of corruption, with 75% of those investigated using overseas companies to hide their real owners. This is a tactic that investigators pursuing high level money laundering continue to encounter routinely.

The government today (5 April 2017) launched a call for evidence, asking overseas investors, property and transparency experts for their opinions on how this register could be delivered. The government already requires owners and controllers of UK companies to be registered with Companies House.

A research project, due to be launched shortly for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, will assess the likely impact of the overseas property register on inward investment and wider corporate transparency.

Business Minister Margot James said:

We are committed to protecting the integrity and reputation of the UK property market and this register would be a valuable measure to increase transparency and investor confidence.

The extension of transparency requirements, which UK owners are already subject to, levels the playing field and means we would know who owns and controls UK property wherever they are from.

Today we are inviting the views of overseas investors, property and transparency experts on how this register could be delivered.

Donald Toon, Director for Economic Crime at the National Crime Agency said:

Criminals and their money launderers will always seek to hide the true ownership of assets, including property, to frustrate investigations and hold onto the profits of their crimes.

Greater transparency over the true ownership and control of UK property held in the name of overseas companies will make the UK a less attractive place to launder money and will assist investigators track down and recover the proceeds of crime.

Mark Hayward, Chief Executive, National Association of Estate Agents Propertymark, said:

This new register will set a gold standard for transparency and enhance the reputation of the UK property market as an attractive place to do business. We will be working closely with our members to help them understand the requirements that will help shape the world's first register of its kind.

The call for evidence is open until 15 May 2017 and can be viewed and responded to here:

1. Currently £25 million of property is frozen worldwide in connection with ongoing National Crime Agency international corruption investigations.

Speech: Foreign Secretary Statement at Syria Conference in Brussels

I want to thank all of our co-hosts today and you in particular, Federica and the European Union as well as the seventy nations and international organisations that are here today.

Let me begin by saying: I think it is impossible for us to ignore, as many colleagues have said, the horrific gas attack that took place yesterday. And although we can't be certain yet, this attack bares all the hallmarks of an action by the regime that has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. Today we are calling, together with our French friends, an emergency session of the UNSC.

And we must accept the paradox of this meeting today. We're all here together trying to assemble a vast multi billion sticking plaster for Syria, when there are still governments here supporting the Assad-regime which is

inflicting those wounds, caused by weapons that were banned internationally a century ago. And our publics can see that paradox. They can see what's going on. As Sigmar Gabriel has rightly said, they will not accept that their money should go in any way to those responsible for these crimes. But at the same time we have to accept this scale of the humanitarian suffering when the bloodshed began in 2011, Syrians population stood at 20 million and in the last 6 years an absolute majority have been either killed or forced to flee. One in two Syrians dead or displaced. There is no other conflict like it in the world. And that's why what we're doing today is so important. I hope we can make progress and go further than the London conference. After the Prime Minister's, the UK PM announcement this week, the British government pledge almost £2.5 billion for Syria and the region making the UK the second biggest bilateral humanitarian donor since 2012.

We are all humbled by the contribution and sacrifice of our friends who have spoken earlier today from Lebanon, from Jordan and of course Turkey, who set a moral example to the world by their willingness to accept millions of refugees. Other countries in the region and beyond have also taken in many millions and many fugitives from Syria's tragedy and we should work together to help refugees gain an education and find work so that they can contribute to the economies of their host countries and eventually support themselves in a peaceful Syria.

For that to happen, Syria will need a political settlement including a genuine transition to a new government and the task of reconstruction cannot begin until a credible transition is underway. We need a proper ceasefire and we need to recognise that the UN-led talks represent the surest pass to peace and we strongly support the efforts of Staffan de Mistura including the negotiations that resumed in Geneva last week.

But as we sit here in Brussels it is still the case that the regime is preventing the UN from delivering aid to millions of Syrians, besieging over 475,000 people with the aim of starving them into submission. Not a single UN convoy has been allowed to reach Eastern Ghouta, an area of some 400,000 inhabitants since October 29th last year. And yet within easy reach there are UN warehouses stuffed with food and medical supplies.

Together we should make clear our abhorrence of the regimes' tactic of starve or surrender. We must remind all sides of their obligation contained in numerous UN resolutions to allow aid to reach all who need it wherever they may be. Colleagues, the people of Syria are today paying a price for our collective inaction over the last 5 years and the decisions we took. We cannot now undo those mistakes but we can and we must work together to alleviate their suffering, to help Syria's neighbours and to prepare Syria for the moment when peace finally returns for the sake of future generations of Syrians and indeed for the entire world.

Thank you.

News story: IHAT to close at the end of June

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today announced that the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) will officially close on 30 June 2017. This follows his decision in February to bring IHAT to an end by the summer, enabled by the striking off of Mr Phil Shiner.

The remaining cases, expected to number around 20, will then be dealt with by the Service Police – a combination of Royal Navy Police and Royal Air Force Police, led by a senior Royal Navy Police officer. All investigations are expected to be completed by the end of next year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We took the unprecedented step of submitting evidence which saw Phil Shiner struck off and allowed IHAT to dispose of many false allegations he made. Now I can confirm that IHAT will close in June and the Service Police should complete investigations into the small number of remaining cases a year earlier than planned.

We are taking steps to make sure the reputation of our Armed Forces cannot be attacked in this dishonest way again.

In 2015 the Defence Secretary directed the MOD to submit evidence of wrongdoing by Phil Shiner which led to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal striking Mr Shiner off in February.

The exposure of the dishonesty of Mr Shiner meant that many of the allegations that his now defunct firm, Public Interest Lawyers, had brought forward were discredited and enabled the Defence Secretary to decide to close IHAT. IHAT's caseload is expected to reduce from a peak of over 3,000 allegations to around 20 investigations by the time it closes.

Chief of the General Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

The Army's Leadership Code requires the highest values and standards. It is right therefore that on the occasions that there are credible allegations of unacceptable behaviour they should be investigated.

However, a significant number of claims made against our soldiers have not been credible. The recent exposure of unscrupulous law firms and vexatious claims has clearly shown this to be the case; it is right therefore that the Defence Secretary has decided to close IHAT and hand over the remaining investigations to the Service Police, a process the Army supports.

Mutual trust is at the heart of the Army Leadership Code as is the care of soldiers and their families. We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to ensuring we have the Nation's confidence and the tools to do our jobs effectively on operations, free from the burden of unjust litigation.

The Service Police will be supported by a minimum level of essential contractor support for specialist back office functions, such as the operation of the Forensic Data Handling computer, in order to complete its investigations. Contractors will have no contact with UK witnesses or suspects.

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