

First nine-ship for 2017 Red Arrows team

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THE 2017 Red Arrows team have flown their first “nine-ship” ahead of this year’s display season.

Carrying out their winter training at RAF Scampton, the Lincolnshire home of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Squadron is renowned for displaying with nine, British-built fast-jets and bringing the whole formation together is a key moment in the six-month winter training programme.

The Red Arrows begin training for the forthcoming season almost as soon as the previous year has ended.



For the latest season, full preparations got underway after the team returned from a nine-week, 20,000-mile, tour of the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions supporting UK interests at the end of 2016.

Typically, this winter training starts with small groups of three or four aircraft formations.

Each pilot flies three sorties a day, five days a week, and the formations grow in aircraft number as training progresses.

The occasion saw the team’s trademark Diamond Nine formation flown, among other manoeuvres that will feature in this year’s show.

Squadron Leader David Montenegro, Red 1 and Team Leader, said: “We have flown 13 weeks of intensive training and the result is being able to get 9 aircraft airborne today which is a testament to the perseverance and dedication of the team pilots; tireless and enduring effort of our engineering team; brilliant work from our PR and administrative teams on the squadron and indeed, support from the Station services at RAF Scampton.

“On a personal note, this is the third and final year that I will achieve this milestone and I can say in all honesty that the adrenaline build-up and sense of achievement is as strong as it was in 2015.

“In the pursuit of professional excellence, we now transition to the next phase of training during which we will perfect the display and ensure we maintain the RAF Red Arrows’ benchmark of being a world-leading team, able to represent our Service and our Nations’ interests in all corners of the globe”.



Three of the Red Arrows’ nine pilots are new to the team for 2017.

Flight Lieutenant Dan Lowes, who is Red 3 and a former Typhoon pilot, said: “That was a truly memorable experience. It was an honour and a privilege to have flown in my first Red Arrows 9 ship.

“The training has been tough, and there’s still a long way to go, but it’s great to have achieved our first 9.

“I’m now looking forward to deploying on our spring training camp and working towards PDA.”

These flights involve a thorough brief, debrief and discussion to ensure safety is paramount and the formations are precise.



Winter training in the UK lasts until mid-spring, when the team usually moves overseas to a location with more predictable, settled weather to maximise flying hours and perfect the display. This is known as Exercise Springhawk.

Flight Lieutenant Si Taylor, Red 7, who also previously flew operationally in the Tornado and Typhoon and joins Red 6 to form the 2017 Synchro pair, said: “This feels like it’s happened so fast since we got back from the tour in December.

“It’s a great

feeling to have achieved a significant milestone through some hard graft and dedication throughout the winter months. Hopefully now we can kick on and make the show look incredible for all the crowds in the 2017 Season. I'm really looking forward to it".

The first nine-ship is an important occasion for the whole Squadron – including the ground team, who number more than 100 and comprise technicians, suppliers, drivers, photographers, administrators, operations staff and a public relations department.

Each has a crucial part to play in ensuring the Red Arrows can fly and perform precision displays around the world.

Among those people with a role in today's nine-ship were the technicians on the flightline – responsible for checking the aircraft are safe for flight, assisting the crewing-in of the pilots into the cockpits and marshalling the jets from their parking stands.



Flight Lieutenant Alicia Mason, the team's Junior Engineering Officer responsible for day-to-day engineering issues on the Squadron, and who is also new to the Red Arrows this season, said: "Today has been a superb achievement for all concerned. It's another milestone in our calendar that the groundcrew have been preparing for behind the scenes for the past few weeks.

"Luck was not on our side this week though and we've had a tricky few days with the jets not behaving themselves but I'm proud to say that the team have put in a tremendous performance over the past 2 days working together day and night to ensure that we had 9 serviceable aircraft for the programme this morning. It was great to see the fruits of our labour when all 9 took off and landed safely and the aircrew were able to practice some of their 9-ship manoeuvres. Even some of the groundcrew were able to take a break for a few minutes this morning to come outside and watch part of the first 9-ship practice to show their support and enjoy this moment as a team.

"We can't rest on our

laurels though, there is still much to be done ahead of our deployment to Greece for Exercise SPRINGHAWK. The groundcrew will be busy over the next 4 weeks ensuring that we have 11 serviceable aircraft and equipment prepared and ready to take with us for the duration of the Exercise”.



During Springhawk the team is assessed by senior Royal Air Force officers, with the aim of gaining Public Display Authority.

If this is awarded, the Squadron’s pilots change from green coveralls into their famous red flying suits and the ground crew are allowed to wear their royal blue display coveralls.

The season then officially begins and public performances by the Red Arrows are permitted.

It is hoped the first display to the public in the UK will be on 3 June this year, for the Torbay Airshow, Torbay.

More information about the 2017 season will be release on the Red Arrows website shortly.

For more information about the team, follow @rafredarrows on Twitter, like RAF Red Arrows on Facebook or visit www.raf.mod.uk/reds

Editor – RAFAT PR Manager

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[RAF Tornados join NATO partners to put defences to the test](#)

RAF Tornados join NATO partners to put defences to the test

1,100 personnel and 48 aircraft from 7 NATO nations, including the RAF’s 31 Sqn “The

Goldstars," have descended on Leeuwarden Air Force Base in the Netherlands for the start of the two-week-long "FRISIAN FLAG" exercise.

The local Dutch population have been treated to the spectacle of Tornados, Typhoons, Mirage and F16 aircraft taking off on the exercise, which is organised by the Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF) and runs from 27 March to 7 April 2017.



The RAF has deployed six Tornado GR4s for the exercise in which they will at times simulate the "Red Force Element, effectively playing the part of the enemy that will attempt to breach the defences of opposing forces from the USA, France, Germany, Portugal, Belgium and the Netherlands, they will also be playing "Blue" friendly forces.

EX FRISIAN FLAG aims to provide aircrew with experience of the planning, execution and debriefing of large scale composite air operations (COMAO) in realistic scenarios by allowing partner NATO nations to work alongside one another, test each other's capabilities and develop a close working relationship. Missions being flown include various air defence scenarios including protection / escort of high value aircraft and the attack of ground targets on land and sea in a high threat environment, which include opposing fighter aircraft and ground based Patriot and SA-6 missile batteries.



Wing Commander Matt Bressani, OC 31 Squadron & the Detachment Commander of the RAF contingent at FRISIAN FLAG, said: "Working with NATO countries helps us to better understand our own strengths and weaknesses by testing each other's defences. With the Tornado GR4 going out of service in a few years' time, this is an ideal opportunity to train our crews for their future beyond this airframe. The time working alongside our allies means that we will expose both air and ground crews to working closely with Typhoon deployments from our partner nations, allowing our boys and girls to get up close to an aircraft they could be working on themselves in the near future. The aircrew will get to see

German, Dutch and Portuguese Typhoons in action and see how they work alongside the American and French aircraft too.”



The Commander of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, Lieutenant General Luyt said: “In the current security situation, air superiority can no longer be taken for granted. Our colleagues from the army and navy count on us to achieve air superiority wherever required. Large-scale deployment as part of a NATO air campaign can no longer be ruled out. What’s more, we could be called on as early as tomorrow. As the Royal Netherlands Air Force, we must once again be prepared to meet the challenge.”

Editor – Ken Pike

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6 Apr 2017



Crucial funding to tackle Scotland's drugs and drink crisis has been cut across Scotland, new figures have revealed today.

In half of all Scotland's 14 Health Board areas, support for Alcohol and Drug Partnerships has fallen this year, the statistics show.

It contradicts a promise by Health Secretary Shona Robison to ensure that treatment would be maintained at “existing levels” across Scotland.

The cuts follow changes to the way drug and alcohol partnerships are funded.

Ministers have reduced their own funding but said earlier this year that Health Boards would top it up to ensure cash was maintained.

However, a Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservatives has shown that, in several health board areas in Scotland, this has not happened.

The biggest cut is in Lanarkshire. Spending from central government and the NHS board amounts to a cut of £700,000 on 2015-16. Funding has also gone down in Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.

This is despite the fact Ms Robison said in January that she would be “maintaining alcohol and drugs treatment performance at existing levels across ADP locales.”□

Scottish Conservative lifestyle spokesman Brian Whittle said:

“When she announced this changes, Shona Robsion could not have been clearer – overall spending on alcohol and substance misuse would be maintained at existing levels across Scotland.

“It has taken our own research to show this is simply not the case. A fall of nearly three quarters of a million pounds in some areas can only mean that support for drug and drink addiction is being cut.

“Cutting funding on alcohol and drug support is a false economy – because people with addictions often cost far more to the justice system and the NHS, not to mention to themselves, if they do not get treatment earlier on.

“Once again, we see SNP pledges falling apart at the seams.

“The Scottish Government must now urgently review the funding of this vital projects to assess whether people who need support are not getting it because of these cuts.”

Please see a copy of Shona Robison’s letter on ADP funding, dated January 16th.

In it, Robison wrote:

“From the increased board baseline budgets we would expect a total of £15 million to also go towards supporting these efforts and maintain the overall spending on addressing alcohol and substance misuse, maintaining alcohol and drugs treatment performance at existing levels across ADP locales.”

Document including full figures of ADP funding:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/adp-funding/>

Spending cuts are as follows:

NHS Lanarkshire: -£693,740

NHS Grampian: -£243,922

NHS Dumfries and Galloway: -£233,834

NHS Western Isles: -£130,510

NHS Fife: -£125,000

NHS Orkney: -£68,843

NHS Shetland: -£66,515

Press release: Pension Trustee companies retired

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd administered nine occupational pension schemes and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd, was the trustee of three of those schemes, namely, the Focusplay Retirement Benefit Scheme, the Focusplay No 2 Retirement Benefit Scheme and the P.S.P. Retirement Benefit Scheme.

The court action follows an investigation by the Insolvency Service which found the companies did not market the various schemes but approved a series of investments which were then offered to the general public through a network of introducers and sub-introducers.

Those who chose to take up the offer were charged an initial fee of up to £1,645 in addition to a percentage annual management fee which could be as much as £2,500, with total fees generated by the nine schemes being in excess of £3.5m over 3 years.

The investigation also found the companies failed to adequately carry out their trustee role by neglecting to obtain independent investment advice, failing to comply with their own governance statements and by failing to adhere to pensions legislation and guidance issued by the Pensions Regulator; In particular, by making loans from the schemes to the sponsoring employer as well as to associated companies and individuals.

The court heard there had been a failure to ensure share certificates were obtained in return for investments made, that the companies had operated with a lack of transparency, particularly in not ensuring that investors were aware their funds were being put into high risk investments, and that members of the schemes were offered contrived and artificial employment in order to comply with guidance then in place.

Scott Crighton, Group Leader with Company Investigations North said: –

The Insolvency Service will investigate and bring to a halt the activities of companies that fail to meet the required standard for

dealing with investment funds placed with them by members of the public and that are found to be operating against the public interest.

For their own protection, members of the public need to be wary of any uninvited contact offering them a free pension review and to be aware that many of the products on offer are unregulated and high risk or may even be outright scams and the safest course of action is to simply ignore them.

Notes to editors

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd – company registration number 07235880 – was incorporated on 27 April 2010. The company's registered office is at 1 Navigation Business Village, Navigation Way Ashton On Ribble, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2YP.

Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd – company registration number 08207804 – was incorporated on 10 September 2012. The company's registered office is at 1 Navigation Business Village, Navigation Way Ashton On Ribble, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2YP.

The petitions to wind-up Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd were presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 16 February 2017. The Official Receiver was initially appointed as Provisional Liquidator of both Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd on 16 March 2017 and was then appointed as Liquidator of both companies on 28 March 2017.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Further information about live company investigations is [available](#)

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences,

primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Debbie Abrahams response to Joseph Rowntree Foundation report showing Tory Government's two child benefit limit could push 200,000 children into poverty](#)

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, which shows the Tory Government's two child benefit limit could push 200,000 children into poverty, said:

"Labour is calling on the Tories to scrap this inhumane policy, which will have a devastating impact upon many families on the lowest incomes in our society.

"An arbitrary cap on the number of children that the Government will help families to bring up is not only cruel, but is bad policy. This evidence shows that it will increase child poverty.

"As 90 per cent of lone parents are female it is a further example of how these six years of wasted austerity have been borne on the backs of low income mothers.

"That's

why Labour will stand up for low income families, including providing free school meals to all primary school children.”