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Princess Royal attends reformation parade of Number 30 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton

By [Miranda Norris](#) Senior reporter



HRH Princess Royal praised and celebrated the reformation of a squadron operating the newest aircraft at RAF Brize Norton yesterday.

The Princess Royal visited the base at around noon to mark the official reformation of No 30 Squadron, which did not officially stand down but has been operating an administrative function with a single officer since 2017. The base marked the event with a parade for the Princess, who is honorary air commodore at RAF Brize Norton, in front of a seated crowd of supporting family and friends.

Joining her on the podium in front of military personnel was fellow guest of honour Air Vice-Marshal Alan Gillespie, Air Officer Commanding No 2 Group. They returned the salute as the marchers passed. No 30 Squadron paraded to the sound of the National Anthem and other [music](#) performed by The Band of the Regiment.

The squadron is the newest operator of the A400M Atlas which staged a spectacular flypast above the parade square to mark the momentous occasion. No 30 Squadron was also presented with a Standard - a special military flag which marks the trust bestowed on the squadron by the monarch.

The squadron was formed for service in Egypt on the 24 March 1915, and consisted of a single flight of BE2s. It is lauded for its services in Iraq and Afghanistan. The squadron was also deployed in Haiti to help with the relief effort after the 2010 earthquake and the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The reformation is a significant milestone in both the Squadron's and the Royal Air Force's history. In December 2016 the Squadron ceased flying the Hercules.

30 Squadron will, along with No. LXX Sqn, now operate the A400M Atlas in global operations, war-fighting, humanitarian and disaster relief scenarios. The parade took place against a background of two static RAF A400M Atlas' outside the Airbus hangar which the Princess later inspected. No. 30 Sqn's long and distinguished history began at Farnborough in November 1914. Its first operations were in Egypt, with the majority of the Squadron's efforts in the First World War taking place in Mesopotamia. It was here during resupply to the siege of Kut in 1916 that the Squadron asserted its claim as the first air drop squadron.

Operations in North Africa and the Middle East continued in the interwar years and at the start of the Second World War. The Squadron, which at that point was a fighter squadron, subsequently saw action over Greece, Ceylon and Burma prior to its reduction to number-only status in 1946. Reforming as a transport squadron in 1947, it has been heavily engaged on operations ever since. It was a significant contributor to the Berlin Airlift, supported famine relief in Africa in the late 50s/early 60s and subsequently was involved in the sustainment of operations in the Middle East from Bahrain.

It received the C-130 in 1968 and continued to operate a variant of this aircraft until 2016. In this near 50-year period, 30 Squadron's notable support to operations include The Falklands; Iraq (1990-1, 1990s, 2003); The Balkans, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Libya.

The officer commanding No 30 Squadron Wing Commander Stu Patton said it was

“an incredible honour to be taking command of the squadron which has more than 100 years of operational experience”.

He added:

“It has a rich history and I am really excited to be bringing that back to life.

“We are all looking forward to starting the next chapter with the A400M Atlas.”