

News

Like us at facebook.com/  
witneygazetteFollow us  
@witneygazetteVisit our website  
witneygazette.co.ukEmail us  
news@nqo.comCall our newsdesk  
on 01865 425500

The parade marched to the music of The Central Band of the Royal Air Force. Image: MOD Crown Copyright

# Princess at parade marking the retirement of C-130 Hercules

Miranda Norris

miranda.norris@newsquest.co.uk

**PRINCESS Anne attended the retirement of the C-130 Hercules and the stand down parade of Number 47 Squadron.**

The Princess Royal, who is Honorary Air Commodore to RAF Brize Norton, reviewed members of the Squadron on parade in front of invited guests, to mark their proud history.

The parade marched to the music of The Central Band of the Royal Air Force in front of two static C-130 Hercules.

Past and present members of the Squadron watched the Hercules carry out one of its last spectacular flypasts.

The Hercules will retire from service on June 30 and No 47 Squadron will be stood down at the same time.

The Hercules will be replaced by the RAF's newest transport aircraft the 22-strong Atlas (A400) fleet.

Its standard will be laid up for a period at College Hall Officers' Mess, RAFC Cranwell, until formed up again.

No 47 Sqn, Royal Flying Corps was formed in Beverley, Yorkshire, on 1 March, 1916.

The Squadron was initially designated for home defence, but was not issued with any aircraft until April 13, when four Royal Aircraft Factory BE2Cs were transferred from 15

Reserve Squadron.

During its 107-year history the Squadron has operated across the globe and has been equipped with a number of different aircraft.

In 1968 it became a C-130 Hercules Squadron based at RAF Fairford moving shortly afterwards to RAF Lyneham.

In 2011 No 47 Sqn moved from RAF Lyneham to RAF Brize Norton, where it has continued to provide highly trained crews and support staff to the MOD and the UK's requirements in the global theatre.

The Squadron has received several battle honours with the right to emblazon and a wealth of individual operational awards over the years.

The C-130 fleet has been part of air power for the RAF for nearly six decades, contributing to nearly every British conflict since it was brought into service in the 1960s thanks to its airlift/airdrop capabilities and the flexibility it has to operate in austere areas around the world.

It played an essential role during Operation Pitting, the evacuation of personnel from Afghanistan.

More recently in war-torn Sudan, 47 Squadron returned to Khartoum with three Hercules in April and May 2023.

Apart from RAF Lyneham, 47 Squadron has called Sudan home the longest.

Unable to access Khartoum airport, which 47 Squadron established in 1927, Hercules evacuated over 2,000 Embassy staff and British passport holders from a degrading



Princess Anne marks the end of the Hercules and the 47 Squadron at Brize Norton. Picture: MoD Crown Copyright

concrete strip north of the city.

Wing Commander James Sjoberg, Officer Commanding No 47 Squadron, said: "It is a great honour to command 47 Squadron at this historic moment.

"I am extremely proud of the people on my Squadron and across the

wider Hercules family they have delivered time and again on operations.

"I wish to pay tribute to them, and their families, for their exceptional contribution to UK Defence during my tour and over nearly 57 years of Hercules operational service.

"Whilst the retirement of the Hercules and the laying-up of the 47 Squadron standard is a sad moment for many of us, I have full confidence that the people of the RAF Air Mobility Force will continue to deliver excellence around the globe."







# Princess Anne marks the end of the Hercules at RAF Brize Norton

9th June



By Miranda Norris Senior reporter

A stand down parade at RAF Brize Norton attended by Princess Anne marked the end more than 100 years of service.

On June 30, the iconic Hercules will retire from service in the Royal Air Force, coinciding with the stand-down of No. 47 Squadron.

The Princess Royal, who serves as the Honorary Air Commodore to RAF Brize Norton, reviewed the Squadron on parade, commemorating their proud history.

The parade marched to the uplifting tunes performed by The Central Band of the Royal Air Force in front of two static C-130 Hercules aircraft.

The ceremony, attended by past and present members of the Squadron, witnessed one of the last awe-inspiring flypasts by the Hercules.

Wing Commander James Sjoberg, Officer Commanding No. 47 Squadron said: "It is a great honour to command 47 Squadron at this historic moment. I am extremely proud of the people on my Squadron and across the wider Hercules family – they have delivered time and again on operations.

"I wish to pay tribute to them, and their families, for their exceptional contribution to UK Defence during my tour and over nearly 57 years of Hercules operational service.

"Whilst the retirement of the Hercules and the laying-up of the 47 Squadron standard is a sad moment for many of us, I have full confidence that the people of the RAF Air Mobility Force will continue to deliver excellence around the globe."





















