

Boeing Delivers First P-8A Poseidon to United Kingdom's Royal Air Force



The first P-8A Poseidon for the U.K. lifts off on Nov. 7 from Boeing Field in Seattle, Wash., after the formal delivery ceremony. Paul Gordon/Boeing

SEATTLE – Boeing has delivered the first of nine P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to the United Kingdom Royal Air Force, the company said in a release.

The U.K. is acquiring the multimission aircraft through the foreign military sales process with the U.S. Navy. The P-8A Poseidon replaces the U.K.'s retired Nimrod aircraft.

Speaking to attendees at the delivery ceremony, Air Marshal Andrew Turner, deputy commander of capability for the Royal Air Force, spoke of the “profound challenge” of enemy submarines threatening the U.K. and other nations.

“P-8 is the key to solving this challenge on the surface, the sub-surface and in the waters of the North Atlantic. There is no place [for our enemies] to hide. We will make the oceans transparent and we will prevail.”

Boeing formally delivered the aircraft on Oct. 29 to the U.S. Navy during a ceremony at the Boeing Military Delivery Center in Tukwila, Wash. From Tukwila, the aircraft flew to the Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, where Navy leaders officially are to turn the aircraft over to the U.K. At JAX, Royal Air Force crew will work with the aircraft before flying it to the U.K. in January. All nine P-8A aircraft will be based at Lossiemouth, Scotland.

As part of a collaborative program with the U.S. Navy, pilots

and maintainers from the RAF have been stationed at NAS Jacksonville since 2012. Called "Project Seedcorn," the arrangement has allowed RAF members to fly the P-8A with Patrol Squadron Thirty (VP-30), the Navy's maritime patrol and reconnaissance fleet replacement squadron, to maintain their maritime patrol skills in advance of receiving the P-8A.

The P-8 is a long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. In addition, the P-8 performs humanitarian and search and rescue missions around the globe.