

16th December 2008

An Early Christmas Delivery for RAF Museum

17th December 2008

1pm approximately (weather permitting)

Christmas spirits will be flying high at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford tomorrow, when it takes delivery of an extra special Christmas gift from the United States Air Force, its latest exhibit - the Sikorsky MH-53 Pave Low helicopter.

The helicopter is due to arrive at 1.00pm on Wednesday 17th December 2008 in an RAF C-17 aircraft from 99 Squadron being flown by Captain, Wing Commander Simon Edwards, Co-Pilot, Squadron Leader Keith Hewitt and Air Loadmaster, Squadron Leader Dave Thompson.

The MH-53 will enjoy a short period of conservation and refurbishment in the Museum's Michael Beetham Conservation Centre before taking its rightful place at Cosford's multi-award winning National Cold War Exhibition in Spring 2009.

The only MH53 Pave Low helicopter to be displayed in the U.K – and one of only 41 MH53Js used by American Special Ops Forces in the first Gulf War – the main role of the helicopter was Combat Search and Rescue in Iraq and Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the United Nations Task Force supplying not only military assistance but also humanitarian aid in both arenas.

Alex Medhurst, General Manager says:

“Receiving this magnificent new exhibit is exciting in itself, but having it flown in by an RAF C-17 is something special. Never before has an aircraft as large as a C-17 landed at Cosford, it will be a truly spectacular moment”.

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is open daily from 10am – 6pm. Entry to the Museum and parking are FREE. For further information, please call the Royal Air Force Museum on 01902 376200 or visit the Museum website www.rafmuseum.org.

...Ends

Notes to Editors

- Media are invited to attend from 12.00pm, please book in with Karen Crick or Michelle Worthington in advance, for security purposes.
- Captain, Wing Commander Simon Edwards took command of 99 Squadron in May 2008. This is his second C-17 tour having previously been Flight Commander Operations. He has also flown C-130Ks and is a Tucano QFI. Prior to taking command of the Squadron he completed ACSC followed by a tour in MOD DJtCap as the AT / AAR SME.
- Co-Pilot, Squadron Leader Keith Hewitt joined the RAF in 1968 as an Apprentice Radar Fitter and has also spent time working in Air Traffic Control. Following pilot training he flew the Jetstream, Vulcan, Bulldog, VC10 and C-17. A member of the initial cadre of pilots trained on the C-17 he remains 99 Squadron's most experienced pilot having amassed 4760 hrs on type.
- Air Loadmaster, Squadron Leader Dave Thompson is 2IC 99 Squadron. This is his second C-17 tour, having previously been part of the initial cadre of aircrew that helped to introduce the aircraft into RAF service. An Air Loadmaster, he has also flown on C-130K and Tri-Star aircraft.
- Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Photos available on request
- Open daily between 1000 – 1800 (Last admission 1700)
- Free admission and parking
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact
Karen Crick on 01902 376 208 or karen.crick@rafmuseum.org
Michelle Worthington on 01902 376 212 or michelle.worthington@rafmuseum.org