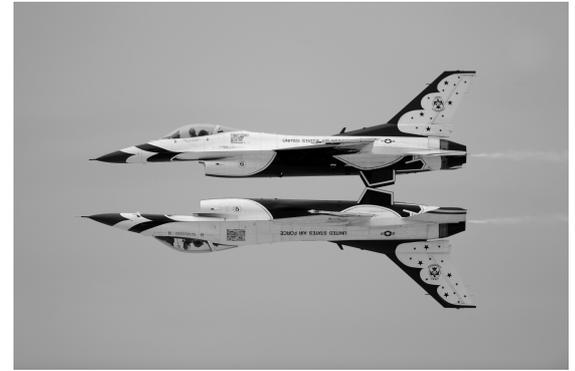


THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO

The USAF aerobatic team, the “Thunderbirds” are set to return to the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford this July after an absence of 10 years, the team previously appearing at the Tattoo in 2007. Since 1982, the team has flown the General Dynamics F-16, from their home at Nellis Air force Base, Nevada. The displays flown by up to 6 F-16’s tend to be a bit faster (and noisier!) than those of the Red Arrows.



The “Thunderbirds” formed in 1953, initially flying the Republic F-84G Thunderjet. In 1955 the team converted to the F-84F Thunderstreak. The following year they converted to the F-100 Super Sabre. Only six shows were flown with the F-105B Thunderchief, before converting back to the F-100 for the next 13 years. In 1969, they started flying the F-4 Phantom, but in 1974, a spreading fuel crisis resulted in the team converting to a non-front line jet fighter, the T-38A Talon, until replaced by

the F-16 in 1982. The American “rock concert” style of commentary can be considered a bit over the top to European airshow audiences but there is no denying that the whole demonstration from start up to shut down is a real choreographed “show” If you have never seen the “Thunderbirds” then this is worth the cost of a ticket to RIAT this year.



RED ARROWS NEW PILOTS ANNOUNCED

Three new pilots have joined the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team for the Red Arrows’ 2017 season. The aircrew bring with them years of frontline, operational fast-jet flying and instructional experience.

Flight Lieutenant Toby Keeley, Flight Lieutenant Dan Lowes and Flight Lieutenant Chris Lyndon-Smith have begun training with the Red Arrows. They will be among the nine pilots who display the team’s famous jets across the United Kingdom and around the world in 2017. Red Arrows pilots generally stay with the Squadron for three years and are selected following a gruelling process that involves flight tests, interviews and other exercises. Chris Lyndon-Smith is returning to the Red Arrows having previously completed a successful tour as a “Red” from 2011 to 2013, after which he was posted to 100 Squadron where he flew as one of the aggressor pilots in air combat, close-air support and low level evasion roles. He also served as one of the deputy flight commanders and was one of the instructors on the Squadron.

Other key appointments to the team are Squadron Leader Rich Bland – the Red Arrows’ Senior Engineering Officer, responsible for the technical and engineering operations of the Squadron.

And Flight Lieutenant Alicia “Lissy” Mason joins as Junior Engineering Officer, looking after all day-to-day engineering aspects of the Squadron and also flying in the rear seat of Red 1’s jet as Circus 1 – the small team of on-the-road technicians who service the jets when away from RAF Scampton.



Any newsletter contributions, ideas or comments to:

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