



Citizens of the city of Patras, Greece had the unique opportunity to enjoy the spectacular demonstration by [RAF Red Arrows](#) on 22nd of May 2013 and we now here at Airforce.gr have the pleasant chance to share with you both the experience and some nice shots.

As all aviation enthusiasts know the **Red Arrows** is the aerobatics display team of the Royal Air Force based at RAF Scampton station. The team was formed in 1964 and their emblem shows the aircraft in their trademark diamond nine formation, with the motto

### **Éclat**

(french word meaning "excellence"). Initially, they were equipped with seven Folland Gnat. In 1966, the team was increased to nine aircraft/pilots, so that they can develop their famous Diamond Nine formation. In 1979, the

### **Red Arrows**

switched to the  
*BAE Hawk*  
trainer aircraft.

BAE Systems Hawk is a single jet engine aircraft. The main role in RAF service is to be a fast jet trainer but especially for the **Red Arrows** some special modifications have been performed. The most important is the smoke generation pod and the faster engine acceleration. The smoke generation pod enables smoke to be generated havingvdiesel mixed with a coloured dye and ejected into the jet exhaust to produce either red, white or blue smoke.

The nine **Red Arrows** display pilots are coming from frontline Royal Air Force squadrons having great experience and hours flying fighter aircrafts in battle fields. Each spends about three years touring with the Red Arrows and then returns to their Royal Air Force duties. To qualify for selection to the team, pilots must have a minimum of 1,500 flying hours, completed a frontline tour, assessed as being above average in their flying role. Every year three new pilots are chosen to actually replace the three that have just finished their tour and that is how more or less the rotation continues. The Team Leader must have completed a three-year tour as a

Team pilot earlier in his career, and is appointed in a separate selection process. Reds 1 to 5 form the front section known as 'Enid', and Reds 6 to 9 make up the rear section of the formation. The Synchro Pair, Reds 6 and 7, perform the highly popular opposition manoeuvres during the second half of the display sequence.

The **Red Arrows** have performed over 4000 demonstrations all over the world in more than 50 countries. On May 22nd 2013 they performed a marvellous demonstration for the citizens of the city of Patras in southern Greece located really close to Andravida Air Base.

The **Red Arrows** returned to Andravida after having spent about a month in RAF Akrotiri Air Base in Cyprus island. This process is known **Exercise Springhawk 2013**. The weather in both Cyprus and Greece is perfect for completing the practise sorties needed for a safe and well executed tour. The team performs up to 3 practise sorties every day. Of course except pilots a support team accompanies the jets wherever they base and ensure the safety of pilots and aircrafts. The task on Exercise Springhawk 2013 was to achieve the **Public Display Authority**

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On May 17th 2013 the **Red Arrows** were eventually awarded their **Public Display Authority** for 2013 by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton. It has been a nervous period for all the pilots but especially for the three new pilots who gave their first demonstration over crowd in the city of Patras. The Team will return to their home-base at RAF Scampton on the 26th of May after a display in France, where they will participate in the 60th anniversary celebrations for the French National Display Team, the **Patrouille de France**

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If you want to learn more about the Reds then please:

- Visit their official web-site [here](#)
- Like them at Facebook [here](#)
- Follow them at twitter [here](#)

Enjoy some photos taken in Patras' demonstration of the **Red Arrows**.

We would like to sincerely thank Mr. **George Mougios**, **Panagiotis Panagiotopoulos** and [sf pa-ikaros.gr](#) for their contribution and precious help.

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