

Osprey takes to the skies over Salisbury Plain

United States Air Force (USAF) pilots have been using vertical take-off aircraft to carry out mission-specific training on Salisbury Plain.

Pilots flying CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft from the 352nd Special Operations Group have been conducting training. They have been flying day and night, one to two times a week, over the last month

The CV-22 Osprey combines the vertical takeoff, hover and vertical landing qualities of a helicopter with the long-range, fuel efficiency and speed characteristics of a turboprop aircraft. Its mission is to transport and resupply military forces.

USAF Col. Michael McNerney, 352nd Special Operations Group deputy commander, said:

"The CV-22 has a one-of-a-kind combination of speed, range and operational flexibility that allows it to perform missions normally requiring both fixed and rotor-wing aircraft.

"While this is a new and exciting airframe, we are still operating under the same parameters as other aircraft and follow UK aircraft regulations and restrictions.

USAF Lieutenant Col. Christopher Goodyear, 7th Special Operations Squadron CV-22 operations officer, added:

"Salisbury Plain provides great opportunities for CV-22 tactical profiles that we might encounter on missions in dedicated airspace and ranges. We are grateful to the UK, MOD, DIO and Natural England for the opportunity to conduct mission critical training at this location."

A highly-versatile aircraft allows USAF Special Operations Command aircrews to execute long-range special operations missions. It takes off vertically and, once airborne, the nacelles (engine and prop-rotor group) on each wing can rotate into a forward position.

The CV-22 is equipped with integrated threat countermeasures, terrain-following radar, forward-looking infrared sensor and other advanced avionics systems that allow it to operate at low altitude in adverse weather conditions and medium – to high – threat environments.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Hiskett, Principal Training Safety Officer, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Operations Training South West, said:

"DIO's priority is to support our Armed Forces as they prepare for operations. We are proud to be able to offer a training area of the right type and size in the UK that enables our international allies to carry out their mission critical training efficiently and effectively."

At over 38,000 hectares (94,000 acres), Salisbury Plain is the UK's largest training area and offers first-class and diverse training facilities to enable the British Army to meet its training requirements to prepare for operations worldwide.

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Further information:

Press enquiries to Tony Moran, Senior Communications Officer 0121 311 3879 or email tony.moran572@mod.uk

DIO website: www.gov.uk/dio

Twitter: [@mod_dio](https://twitter.com/mod_dio)

Read DIO's blog: <https://insidedio.blog.gov.uk/>

Notes to Editors

1. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) plays a vital role in supporting our Armed Forces by building, maintaining and servicing what the men and women who serve our country need to live, work, train and deploy on operations. We are working hard to become even better by becoming a world-class infrastructure delivery organisation over the next few years. DIO is part of the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

2. It is responsible for managing and maintaining land and properties, as well as providing related support services, to meet the current and future needs of the MOD and personnel at home and abroad, and to support current operations. Our work includes supporting operational units by providing and improving single living and service family accommodation; training areas and historic military sites.

3. DIO actively manages these to ensure the needs of Defence are met, value for money is achieved, and its heritage is protected, and to achieve its environmental goals.

4. Picture caption - please credit 'Crown copyright/MOD 2013:

CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft in action over Salisbury Plain