NEWS RELEASE

DATED 17 June 2013

**GOODWILL VISIT TO UKRAINE**

**BY UK AIR SQUADRON LAUNCHES ON 30TH JUNE**

**A group of 60 members of the Air Squadron of the United Kingdom, led by the Squadron’s Chairman Mr Tim Clark, will be flying their own aircraft across Europe at the end of the month to begin a 10-day visit to the Ukraine commencing on 30th June at the invitation of the Ukrainian armed forces.**

**Joining the group will be His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, an active and distinguished Honorary member of the Air Squadron which is an association of members dedicated to international friendship through aviation and pilotage.**

**HRH Prince Michael and Squadron members will visit the cities of Lviv, Kyiv, Sevastopol and Vinnytsia where goodwill meetings are planned with state leaders, heads of branches of the armed forces and senior representatives of local authorities.**

**Chairman Tim Clark says that it is a great honour to be invited to visit the Ukraine for the first time, a country with a fine record in aviation design and development.**

**“Having already spread its wings over several oceans and continents, the Air Squadron was greatly honoured this year by being invited by the Ukrainian armed forces to visit their country, the cradle of aviation in what was then the Soviet Union. Koktebel in Crimea still represents the oldest active airfield in the world and Antonov, whose design bureau and test centre we shall be visiting, carries high the torch of this magnificent aeronautical tradition to this day” he says**

**“The visit will enable us to honour the Ukrainian people for their immense sacrifice in defence of their freedom, and in so doing the western world’s too, at a crucial turning point in history by bringing to Kiev a rare flying example of a Yak-3 which will be escorted by two UAF MiG-29s on arrival at Zhulyany airport on 1 July”**

**“We will also pay homage to the fallen during the Crimean War of 1853-55 by re-enacting the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava from the air on 6 July with five vintage De Havilland Tiger Moths playing the part of the five British cavalry regiments involved in that fateful action and two American WWII P-51 Mustangs representing the Russian guns firing into them from the opposite end of the valley.”**

**The Air Squadron is an association of aviation-minded friends dedicated to promoting aviation in a range of areas and strengthening the bonds of friendship amongst fellow aviators, not only within the United Kingdom but most especially beyond its borders. This they do by undertaking regular and often challenging flights in their privately-owned light aircraft all over Europe and beyond, to places as far-flung as the United States up to Alaska, South Africa, the North Cape, Moscow, Jordan and Pakistan.**

**Founded in London in 1966, the Air Squadron counted amongst its first members the legendary WWII fighter-pilots Sir Douglas Bader and Sir Hugh Dundas, along with other distinguished military and civilian pilots such as Sir Max Aitken and Lord Waterpark. To this day the Air Squadron, which currently numbers no more than 100 active pilots, includes several former Chiefs of Air Staff and other senior officers from the Royal Air Force, the British Army Air Corps and the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy. His Royal Highness Prince Philip is Honorary Air Commodore, while Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles, Prince Andrew and Prince Michael – the last of whom will accompany the Squadron on this trip to Ukraine – are all Honorary members, as are former Heads of the United States, Russian, Pakistani and South African air forces.**

* **ENDS -**

**Issued by the Air Squadron of the UK –** [**www.airsquadron.org**](http://www.airsquadron.org)

**Media contacts**

**UK Simon Ames Mob : +44 7785 745 857**

**Ukraine: Jonathan Elwes Mob: +44 7770 488 703**