U.K. Reapers surpass 10,000 hours over Afghanistan

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Our cousins across the pond have achieved an historic milestone: the RAF's Reaper program logged more than 10,000 hours over Afghanistan. In-theater since October 2007, the Reaper is the only Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) operated by the U.K.

The MQ-9 Reaper has surpassed the Predator as the premier attack drone. With a longer wingspan, greater endurance, bigger payload, faster speed and higher service ceiling (25,000 vs. 50,000 feet), the Reaper is an integral part of each military's airpower capacity. Known as a hunter-killer, the Reaper possesses extensive intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, and scored its first "kill [1]" in Octover 2007.

The UK variant is operated by 39 Squadron [2] from the same spot as their American colleagues—Creech AFB, Nevada. The squadron's motto is "*Die noctique*" (By day and night) and fittingly, since November 2009, the Reaper has been supporting operations 24 hours a day.

According to Wing Commander Jules Ball, Officer Commanding 39 Squadron [3], "The squadron's personnel, from pilots to imagery analysts and support teams, are motivated and dedicated to supporting all our coalition forces and the people of Afghanistan; everyone has played a significant part in the delivery of this landmark achievement. It's absolutely clear that the Reaper plays a vital role in delivering Air's contribution to operations in Afghanistan."

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