

## Swiss turn airshow into joint celebration

*Key Aero*

*Alan Kenny*



### **The Patrouille Swiss celebrate 50 years in 2014.**

It has announced plans to send their aerobatic display team, the Patrouille Suisse, in their 50th anniversary year, along with an F-18 Hornet and Super Puma helicopter to take part in the Air Tattoo's flying display.

Air Tattoo organisers said that official celebrations marking the 50th display season of the Red Arrows would also include the Patrouille Suisse in order that their anniversary was also recognised.

Formed in 1964, the team fly six F-5E Tiger IIs painted in a bright colour scheme that incorporates the red and white of the Swiss national flag. The pilots, who are all volunteers from various frontline squadrons, are famed worldwide for performing precise formations at high speed.

Air Tattoo spokesman Richard Arquati said that as an international celebration of aviation, it was important that the Air Tattoo recognised important anniversaries being celebrated by other participating air arms.

He said: "The Swiss have particular cause to celebrate this year. Not only is it the 50th anniversary of the Patrouille Suisse but it is also the 25th anniversary of their PC-7 aerobatic display team. On top of that, the Swiss Air Force will also be marking the 100th anniversary of military aviation in their country. Given all these anniversaries, we're really pleased that the Swiss have agreed to support our airshow in such an incredible way."

The Swiss Air Force have been regular visitors to the Air Tattoo since first attending the airshow at RAF Greenham Common in 1979 with the Patrouille Suisse. Then, the team flew six Hawker Hunter F-58s before switching to their current Northrop F-5E Tiger II jets in 1995. Accompanying the display team on their first visit was a Swiss Air Force de Havilland Venom FB.4, which was presented as a gift, to the Royal Air Force Museum.

This summer could be one of the last times the Patrouille Suisse perform in the UK after it was announced last year that the team would be disbanded in 2016 due to the withdrawal of the F-5 from Swiss Air Force service.

Specially-priced Super Earlybird tickets for next summer's Air Tattoo, on July 11-13, are available until the end of January from [airtattoo.com](http://airtattoo.com) or by calling 0800 107 1940. All accompanied under-16s go free. Free parking.