# Defence Secretary orders urgent review for additional transport aircraft for D-Day commemoration



Defence Secretary Grant Shapps has ordered an urgent review to secure additional transport aircraft for the 80th-anniversary D-Day commemoration. Initial plans for a significant parachute drop over Normandy involving paratroopers from the UK's 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team have been scaled back due to a shortage of aircraft. This is driven by the RAF's commitments to NATO missions and aid drops in Gaza amid the crises in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Currently, only one RAF A400M plane is confirmed available for the parachute drop, though efforts are underway to add another. The Red Devils Parachute Display Team will join in Normandy, and the event will feature Royal Air Force flypasts and Royal Navy vessels. Critics attribute the shortage to the government's decision to retire the Hercules C-130 fleet, with replacement A400Ms not yet fully capable of matching the C-130's parachute capabilities.

The anniversary on June 5 will see UK paratroopers commemorating the efforts of the 18,000 Allied troops who initiated the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944. Dignitaries, including King Charles and U.S. President Joe Biden, are expected to attend the events hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron in Normandy.