

VAYU on-the-spot report

Squadron 81: The Skylords of the Indian Air Force



The C-17 Globemaster III with its proud team at Hindon! (Photo: Mayyank Kaul)

On the 81st anniversary of the Indian Air Force (IAF), a new chapter was written in the annals of Indian military aviation. On 1 September 2013, No. 81 Squadron, known as “The Skylords,” was officially constituted. This squadron, based at Hindon Air Force Station, has since become synonymous with strategic airlift capabilities, thanks to its fleet of Boeing C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.

Giving impetus to the long standing strategic airlift of the Indian Air Force, the then Defence Minister AK Antony on 2 September 2013, formally inducted the Boeing C-17 Globemaster III into the IAF at a special ceremony held at Hindon airbase of the IAF. The induction ceremony was attended by a host of dignitaries including the then Minister of State for Defence Jitendra Singh, the now retired Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne, now retired Vice Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Arup Raha, then Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Air Command Air Marshal SS Soman, the now former US Ambassador to India Ms Nancy Powell and other senior officials of the IAF, USAF and Air warriors of the newly formed C-17 squadron “Skylords”.

Recalling the journey embarked by the IAF to fulfill the futuristic needs of air operations, the then Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne stated, “The induction of ten C-17 aircraft promises to be a game changer on how we conduct air transport operations. The C-17 fleet will provide tremendous flexibility in terms of operational response

