



SAXAVORD THE SAXA VOICE

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NATO delegates visit Spaceport



SaxaVord Spaceport and its German rocket launch partner RFA showed their capabilities first hand to a delegation from NATO during a visit to the site ahead of an initial test flight which is planned for later this year.

The trip followed a two-day NATO STARLIFT meeting hosted by the Department for Science, Industry and Technology, Ministry of Defence and UK space Agency in Edinburgh.

The STARLIFT project aims to give NATO countries agile access to space for the rapid deployment of satellites through commercial launch, which are critical to the capabilities of NATO allies.

The UK and Germany are already committed to deepening defence co-operation across all domains under the Trinity House Agreement reached in October last year.

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SaxaVord, the UK's only fully-licensed vertical launch spaceport, announced in March its collaboration with RFA and other clients including Hylmpulse, another German company, to provide a rapid vertical launch capability for Europe.

SaxaVord Spaceport CEO Frank Strang said:

“With global geopolitical uncertainty mounting, this was a great opportunity for SaxaVord and RFA to show the NATO Starlift delegates what we have built here and brief them on our future plans.

“Space as a domain has an ever-increasing role to play in keeping us secure and protecting our economies, and the UK and Europe have an asset in SaxaVord and partners like RFA that can help defend our combined interests.”

Daniel Hilgert, NATO's Senior Space Coordinator, who joined the delegation, underlined the critical importance of NATO's space port architecture and its launch sector.

“Through the STARLIFT programme, Allies are exploring novel mechanisms to harness innovation in the commercial launch market, allowing for faster responses to security and defence needs in the space domain.”

UK Science and Technology Secretary Peter Kyle said: “We have been working to bolster the UK's ability to launch into space so that we can boost our collective security both domestically and for our allies as well as grow the UK's space industry and the British economy, as part of our Plan for Change.

“This event at SaxaVord was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the progress being made towards launch from UK soil, as the spaceport prepares for its first launches with companies such as RFA and Orbex.”

The visit followed the SaxaVord and RFA declaration at the SpaceComm Expo in London's Docklands of support for the launch of defence-oriented satellites.

Jörn Spürmann, co-founder and CCO at RFA, said: “In a world where security challenges are evolving at an unprecedented pace, the partnership between RFA, SaxaVord, and the UK and German governments has never been more vital.

“Together, we are establishing a sovereign, rapid-response launch capability – one that is not just ready but built to act decisively when national and regional security demands it.

“By combining cutting-edge launch technology with SaxaVord's strategic location, we are reinforcing the backbone of a resilient, agile European defence network in space.

“This collaboration not only strengthens UK-German ties but also fortifies allied security frameworks like NATO and the expanding Seven Eyes initiative. More than just cooperation, this is a decisive step toward securing Europe's leadership in space defence and strategic deterrence.”

General Traut, head of German Space Command, said: “For me, it has even become more important to strengthen links between our traditional European partners, especially in regard to space. What we are seeing today between German and UK companies is very encouraging. Having access to sovereign launch will be very important for our security.”

German Ambassador to London, Miguel Berger, said: “It’s so good to see SaxaVord working so closely with German companies Rocket Factory Augsburg and Hympulse – we will very soon have the capability for rocket launch on the European continent by having micro launchers. Sovereign launch is important for our two nations and allies across Europe.”

Former UK security Tom Tugendhat said:

“ What happens in space changes lives on earth. A sovereign launch site is essential to defending our interests and our allies. We can’t make choices if we don’t invest in our capabilities. That’s why SaxaVord matters. In partnership with Germany and others in Europe the investment in Britain’s ability to put satellites up makes us commercially and globally more secure. ”



Commons committee members at Saxa

Members of the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee visited SaxaVord in May as part of an inquiry into the space sector.

Six MPs met senior figures from Saxa and RFA and chair Patricia Ferguson said afterwards that they had been impressed.

The report, which will have recommendations for the government, is due to be published prior to the summer recess.

Fredo the Unstronaut: a new adventure in space education

SaxaVord Spaceport is thrilled to announce the official launch of *Fredo the Unstronaut*, a brand-new animated character-driven educational initiative designed to inspire the next generation of space enthusiasts.

The project includes an engaging website and a series of fun, informative videos aimed at children, parents and educators.

Fredo, a young and energetic aspiring “Unstronaut” – named after SaxaVord’s location in Unst, Shetland – is on a mission to explore space, science, and sustainability while learning about the exciting work happening at the spaceport.

His adventures, filled with space facts, activities and interactive content, aim to ignite curiosity and make space more accessible to children everywhere.

The *Fredo Mission Centre* website serves as the hub for Fredo’s adventures, featuring multiple zones tailored to different audiences:

→ Kids Zone

Home to *Fredo’s SaxaVord Adventures*, activities like word searches and quizzes, the *Fredo Fact File* where kids can learn more about their favourite Unstronaut, and *Fredo’s Wall of Fame* where kids can send in their own space adventures to be featured on the site.

→ Parent and Teacher Zone

A resource hub with educational materials, lesson plans, and access to this very newsletter.

→ Fredo News

The latest updates, articles, and videos from SaxaVord as well as an opportunity to *Ask an Unstronaut* any question about space, SaxaVord and Shetland and be featured in this video series.

→ What is SaxaVord Spaceport?

Information about the spaceport, the role of satellites, and how the UK is leading in space innovation.



Frank Strang, CEO of SaxaVord, said:

“In advance of our more conventional test-flight launch day later in the year and the first orbital mission from UK soil from SaxaVord, I’m pleased to mark the official launch of my friend, the Unstronaut, Fredo’s SaxaVord Adventures missions, where Fredo as the face and voice of SaxaVord is tasked with inspiring our future work force and showcasing the many diverse and exciting opportunities that the space economy offers young boys and girls throughout the world.

“Fredo is a loveable character whose infectious enthusiasm has already captured the hearts of everyone who has met him, and I have no doubt that his missions will land safely and be a huge success ... and a lot of fun.”

The launch of *Fredo the Unstronaut* aligns with SaxaVord’s commitment to using “Space for Good”, highlighting how space technology can benefit society and the environment.



FredoMissionCentre.com is live and ready to take children and families on an out-of-this-world journey of discovery.

**Visit the Fredo Mission Centre now
and start your adventure!**

Tracking and telemetry system installed

SaxaVord's rocket tracking and telemetry system has been installed on the site at Lamba Ness.

Three antennae provided by Orbit Communications Systems, with telemetry equipment from Safran and a flight termination system from WV Communications, make up the ground element of the flight safety system.

SaxaVord Range Manager Jimmy Slaughter said: "This system allows us to track the launch vehicle, receive telemetry from it, and provide flight termination should it be required if something goes wrong.

"Its installation has been three years in the making, but it was installed in perfect weather in just five days.

"After installation we had another week of acceptance testing on site, and training in its use. This testing went well, and it is working as designed."

