

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Hon the Chief Minister has given notice on 17th May 2018 that he proposes to move the following motion at the next meeting of Parliament:

"THIS HOUSE:

WELCOMES the long and historic relationship between RAF Gibraltar and Gibraltar;

RECALLS that two RAF camps were constructed in Gibraltar at the beginning of the Second World War. The first was RAF North Front on the site of the old racecourse which was to become the main camp. The second was RAF New Camp which was built on reclaimed land next to Montague Bastion. Although these were the first permanent RAF camps in Gibraltar, the history of aviation and the RAF's involvement starts somewhat earlier. The first record of aviation in Gibraltar was in 1903 when two officers and 16 Non-Commissioned Officers installed a captive balloon and equipment to Gibraltar for reconnaissance at the southern end of the Rock;

NOTES that works on an airfield in Gibraltar began on a grass strip on 3rd September 1934 and was completed 18 months later on 10th March 1936. It was during this construction period that the RAF first dispatched military aircraft to Gibraltar. Construction of a solid surface runway began in late 1939 and land reclamation commenced towards the end of 1941 along with the construction of the RAF camp at North Front. Following the declaration of war with Germany in September 1939, the War Office realised that there was a strong possibility of German submarines concentrating in the Strait of Gibraltar and using Spanish port facilities;

RECALLS that on the 9th September 1939, No 202 Squadron was ordered to Gibraltar, heavily loaded with equipment. Shortly after the Squadron's arrival, No 200 Coastal Group was formed with its headquarters in the Bristol Hotel. It operated as part of RAF Mediterranean Area and later a combined HQ was formed with the Royal Navy at the Tower in the dockyard. This began antisubmarine patrols in early 1942. It took the fall of France in 1940 to concentrate minds on the building of a proper runway;

TAKES NOTE that at the end of November 1941 it was decided that the runway should be extended seaward to give a total length of 1550 yards. Construction teams were brought from the UK and they used stone blasted from the north face of the Rock and dumped into the sea along with stone taken from tunnel construction. The extended runway was ready for use in July 1943 but towards the end of that year operations in



Gibraltar began to dwindle in number. However, there was no reduction in transit aircraft;

RECALLS that the RAF North Front's biggest moment came on the night of 7/8 November 1942 when no fewer than 650 aircraft of many types were parked along both sides of the runway in readiness for operation TORCH, the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa. In October 1944 RAF New Camp became a satellite of North Front;

CONSIDERS that Gibraltar should rightly be proud of these remarkable achievements;

HEREBY DECLARES that the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar be conferred on RAF Gibraltar in view of its historic and close connection with Gibraltar and its people."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul E Martinez', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul E Martinez
Clerk to the Parliament