

## Security Concerns Grow Over Weak Fence at RAF Marham Nuclear Jet Base

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A short, wooden fence protecting part of Royal Air Force (RAF) Marham, soon to house the United Kingdom's newest nuclear-capable fighter jets, has sparked renewed concerns over base security amid global tensions and a growing need for national defence readiness.

The Norfolk airbase, home to 617 Squadron, famously known as “The Dambusters”, currently operates the F-35B Lightning, a fifth-generation multi-role stealth fighter. However,

RAF Marham is also expected to accommodate the new F-35A Lightning II jets, which are capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear payloads. These American-made fighter-bombers, which the government recently announced it is purchasing, mark the United Kingdom's return to a tactical airborne nuclear capability for the first time since the 1990s.

Despite the strategic importance of RAF Marham, a section of the base remains exposed behind a mere five-foot wooden fence. This barrier, located just 300 meters from the runway, is accessible via five visible gaps in a neighbouring hedge along a farmer's field. Journalists who visited the site reported no sign of a security response during a 30-minute stay, raising serious concerns about perimeter integrity.

This revelation comes on the heels of a significant breach at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire, where anti-military protesters caused an estimated £7 million in damage to aircraft. That incident has prompted a wider review of security at all Royal Air Force installations.

A former British Army colonel and nuclear weapons expert, voiced his concern publicly. "It seems incongruous that at the base for our stealth fighters, there is only a picket fence, which a small child could vault, as protection," he told reporters. "When our new tactical nuclear bombers, the F-35As, arrive at RAF Marham, a wooden fence is almost encouraging terrorists to 'have a go.'"

The acquisition of at least 12 Lockheed Martin F-35A jets, at an estimated cost of £700 million, is intended to bolster the United Kingdom's deterrent posture in light of increasing global nuclear threats. The F-35A model differs from the short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) F-35B currently in use, offering greater range and payload ideal for the United Kingdom's renewed role in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.

During a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit in The Hague, the Prime Minister emphasised that the purchase represents "the biggest strengthening of the UK's nuclear posture in a generation," highlighting it as a proactive response to today's evolving security environment.

In response to mounting criticism, a government spokesperson stated: "We take security extremely seriously and operate a multi-layered approach to protect our sites, including fencing, patrols, and CCTV monitoring. Following the incident at Brize Norton, we are

urgently reviewing security and have implemented a series of enhanced security measures at all sites.”

As Britain moves to reassert its role in European defence and nuclear deterrence, critics argue that hardening security around such high-value military assets should be prioritised with immediate effect.