

Eurofighter

update



Testing multi-role capability during Exercise Green Flag West

The facts speak for themselves

Combat Ready



Main development near completion. Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) ability proven. Multi-role capability declared. Eurofighter Typhoon has announced its presence on the global military stage, defining new standards of performance for combat aircraft and delivering a capability of the highest magnitude. Don't just take our word for it - the facts speak for themselves!

With more than 140 weapon systems delivered to the partner Air Forces and Austria, Eurofighter Typhoon is establishing itself as the backbone of European air defence. Since official entry into service in Spring 2004, the rates of aircraft delivery and pilot conversion training ramped up while, simultaneously, the Air Forces' Operational Evaluation Units (OEU) shaped new mission tactics around the awesome capabilities of their new weapon system. Over 42,000 flying hours have been amassed by the customer nations.

As of today, Eurofighter Typhoon is responsible for QRA in Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom and Air Surveillance in Austria. On 01 July, the Royal Air Force declared the jet as mission ready following the successful integration of the laser designator pod (LDP) and Enhanced Paveway II guided bombs, as required under the "Austere Capabilities" contract for an enhanced air-to-ground capability for RAF Tranche 1 aircraft.

The analysts have forecasted it and the Air Forces are delivering on the promise. Its market leader status is globally recognised and, now, with its multi-role capability coming to the fore, Eurofighter Typhoon is primed and combat ready.

Nothing comes close.

Top: Fighter Wing 74 Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft took over QRA duty for Southern Germany on 12 June
Above: First in-service bomb dropping trials were carried out by the RAF



Italian Eurofighter Typhoons began NATO air surveillance in December 2005

QRA Proven

The Italian Air Force were, in December 2005, the first of the Eurofighter Typhoon nations to place the jet on Servizio Sorveglianza Spazio Aereo (SSSA) or Airspace Surveillance. Two aircraft from 4° Stormo at Grosseto were placed on guard to provide the first line of Italian air defence. Their first high profile assignment was to patrol the skies over Turin during the 2006 Winter Olympics.

Fast forward to July 2007 and the Royal Air Force announce that Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft will be on 24-hour readiness to respond to threats in or approaching United Kingdom airspace. The QRA teams, led by No.3 (F) Squadron at RAF Coningsby, were put to the test just a few weeks later as a Russian Tu-95 Bear-H bomber aircraft made its way over the North Atlantic towards the UK. Eurofighter Typhoons were scrambled and intercepted the oncoming bomber, shadowing it until it changed course and headed back to Russia. The photograph of a fully armed Eurofighter Typhoon escorting its target became the iconic image of Russia's change in defence policy and cemented Eurofighter Typhoon's reputation as a formidable air defence platform.

In January of this year, the German Air Force began a six month overlap process with Eurofighter Typhoons from Fighter Wing 74 performing QRA tasks alongside the outgoing F-4F "Phantom II" aircraft, out of their Neuburg/Donau base. At the start of June, the German Air Force formally notified NATO that QRA duties were to be assigned to the new type and, on 12 June, a "flying out" ceremony for the F-4F officially marked Eurofighter Typhoon's ascent into the QRA role.

Although essentially an air defence mechanism, QRA scrambles may cover a wide range of activities. This was demonstrated on 22 June when a MiG-29 of the Hungarian Air Force, en route from The Netherlands, got into radio difficulty over Germany. Two Eurofighter Typhoons were dispatched to intercept and, once alongside the stricken jet and by using internationally recognised hand signals, were able to motion to the Hungarian pilot to follow them to Neuburg where they could land and be repaired.

On 30 June, the F-5E "Tiger" aircraft departed their Graz Thalerhof base for the last time. Officially, as of 01 July, Eurofighter

Typhoon have taken their place in protecting Austrian airspace under the leadership of the Joint Armed Forces Command, Graz, and the Air Surveillance Command, Wals, of the Austrian Military. This operational declaration, coming just eleven months after the first Eurofighter Typhoon for the Austrian Air Force landed at Zeltweg, is astonishing and underlines the flexibility of the weapon system.

Prior to the July announcement, the Eurofighter Typhoon crews had already carried out their first assignments. Airspace security during the Euro2008 football championships was assured with fully armed jets patrolling the skies above the Austrian host stadiums. Then, on Friday 20 June, their first "Priority Alpha" was called and two Eurofighter Typhoons were diverted to intercept a French Hercules C-130 that had inadvertently flown into "closed" airspace. Faced with two fighters, the pilot realised his error and apologised, before being escorted to a point north of Salzburg, where he departed Austrian airspace and the Eurofighter Typhoons returned to base.

Quick Reaction Alert responsibilities demand an aircraft with performance and firepower to deter all airborne threats. On all counts, Eurofighter Typhoon delivers.

67 air-to-surface weapons were released during the US deployment

Multi-role capable

Although the Eurofighter consortium had commenced heavy loads trials a few months earlier, it wasn't until the 2006 Farnborough International airshow that the drive towards a multi-role capability for Eurofighter Typhoon began to gather pace. With the "Austere Capabilities" contract secured, the Test & Evaluation teams ramped up their activities with air-to-surface weapons.

Two significant events in early 2007 highlighted the increased urgency towards delivering a multi-role platform. First, in February, Spanish colleagues at EADS CASA conducted the first GBU-10 jettison trials with Eurofighter Typhoon Instrumented Production Aircraft Four (IPA4). Shortly afterwards, on 30 March at RAF Coningsby, the Royal Air Force held a "Stand Up" Ceremony for XI Squadron, the first Eurofighter Typhoon frontline unit with multi-role responsibilities, who were assigned the task of achieving a squadron-level ready-to-deploy status by 01 July 2008.

The Combined Test Team (CTT) of BAE Systems and the Royal Air Force delivered, in November 2007, the most convincing results to date that progress was on schedule with the announcement of the first laser-guided release of an Enhanced Paveway II bomb from a Eurofighter Typhoon. The successful mission on Instrumented Series Production Aircraft One (ISPA1 or BT005 of the Royal Air Force) proved the avionics software for air-to-ground operations with the Litening III laser designator pod and, ten days later, the first guided firing from a Royal Air Force Eurofighter Typhoon was conducted, albeit with target illumination provided by the LDP-carrying BT005.

Left: On base at Grosseto, home of the Italian Air Force's Eurofighter Typhoon QRA squadron

Far left: Eurofighter Typhoons of the Austrian Air Force secured the airspace during Euro 2008



Alongside the in-flight trials, the Royal Air Force frontline squadrons had carried out austere deployments away from the sanctuary of RAF Coningsby in order to lean down the logistics footprint associated with foreign assignments. With their participation in Exercise Green Flag West at Nellis AFB, USA, confirmed, could they combine the two elements and prove Eurofighter Typhoon's multi-role mettle in realistic operational conditions? The answer was a resounding yes.



Around 150 engineers and support staff participated in Exercise Green Flag West

Ready to deploy status: confirmed

On 21 April, seven Eurofighter Typhoons from the Royal Air Force's XI Squadron departed for the United States for a seven week deployment to demonstrate the "Austere Capability". Although work with the Litening III pod had been covered in the UK with industry assistance, only on arriving at Davis-Monthan AFB did the squadron have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the system.

A week of work-up activities was followed by two weeks of live sorties during which the squadron released 67 1,000lb bombs. Overall, the exercise statistics were impressive: 100% of stores landed within their circular error of probability distance; 65% recorded direct hits, around 700 rounds were dispersed from the aircraft's Mauser 27mm cannon; and 99.3% of the planned sortie rate was achieved.

With this success under their belt, XI Squadron progressed onto Nellis AFB to be joined by a further three Eurofighter Typhoons from 17 Squadron, increasing the UK presence to ten jets, 20 pilots and around 150 engineers and support staff.

Post flight at Nellis AFB



The two-week Exercise Green Flag West was to be the stage on which the aircraft's ability to provide Close Air Support would be demonstrated. With up to 24 aircraft in the skies at any one time, the Eurofighter Typhoons, often operating alongside USAF F-16 jets, utilised their Link 16 data-link capability, emphasising the benefit of its interoperability and situational awareness technology.

On typical sorties, the Eurofighter Typhoons would be configured with four Enhanced Paveway II bombs, a Litening III pod, two AMRAAMs, two ASRAAMs and two 1,000L droptanks, delivering a mission endurance of up to two hours.

The exercise was declared an astonishing success. Additional deployments are planned for later in 2008 and into 2009 but, as of 01 July 2008, Eurofighter Typhoon, with its proven multi-role capability, is combat primed and ready to deploy.

The Exercise was an "outstanding success"



Quotes:

Commander-in-Chief RAF Air Command, Air Chief Marshal **Sir Clive Loader:**
"The declaration of Typhoon being multi-role capable is a truly significant step in the development of this remarkable aircraft. This latest capability upgrade means that the Royal Air Force now has in its inventory its most operationally flexible aircraft ever."

Station Commander of RAF Coningsby and Typhoon Force Commander, Group Captain **Stuart Atha:**

"We've inserted a great deal of capability on to the platform in a really short period of time. In terms of the difficult stuff, it's job done. We are ready to declare."

XI Squadron Commanding Officer, Wing Commander **Gavin Parker:**

"It has been an outstanding success. The aircraft loved the hot and dry conditions." And describing the exercise: "The complexity of the exercise is astonishing. This is the best preparation for contemporary operations that money can buy."

British Army 4th Battalion Ground Liaison Officer to XI Squadron, Major **Simon Newiss:**

"I can appreciate the difference the Typhoon is going to make. It's ability to stay over the top is superior to what we've got."

