

[RAF Typhoons arrive in Estonia](#)

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The Minister for Armed Forces announces Royal Air Force Typhoons will be conducting a training mission in Estonia.

The Minister for Armed Forces Mark Lancaster TD MP has met the first two Typhoon Fighters from 3 (Fighter) Squadron Royal Air Force to deploy to Estonia to conduct this training mission.

The Typhoon jets arrived to conduct Air Land integration training with the British Army Battlegroup currently deployed in Estonia as part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Operation.

Watch the video [HERE](#)

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[RAF Photographic Competition 2017: "People's Choice" public](#)

RAF Photographic Competition 2017: "People's Choice" public vote opens today

The annual public vote for the 'People's Choice' RAF image of the year opens at 17:00BST today. Members of the public can choose one of nine contenders through [a dedicated website](#).



Images of the Chinook Helicopter, the Red Arrows, and the Falcons are among the nine images selected by expert judges from over 800 that were submitted by RAF personnel, including both professional RAF photographers and amateurs.

The nine images being put to the public were chosen by Marc O'Neill, Night Photographer and Light Painter from Digital Noise Photography; the Co-Creative Director and owner of Studio MM, Madeline Penny, and former Picture Editor for Barcroft

Media, Morgan Coates who currently works for LBC News London.



Judge Mark O'Neill said: "Judging this year's instalment of the RAF's prestigious photography competition was no easy task. The submitted photographs are of an exemplary standard and cover a broad range of briefs, subjects and photographic disciplines; from front-line action, to heart-warming portraits.

This wide variety goes some way towards revealing just how challenging and diverse a role that the RAF's Photographers are faced with and how well they execute it. I must, on behalf of the panel of judges, offer my congratulations to all involved in the competition and now eagerly await the results of the People's Choice category."



The public can vote by visiting <http://www.raf.mod.uk/photo-of-the-year-2017>, or from next week, by visiting the RAF Museum at Hendon, London and the RAF Museum at Cosford, Shropshire. Voting closes at 23:59 on Wednesday, 20 September 2017, with the awards announced at a ceremony on Thursday, 21 September 2017.



12 other categories were featured in the 2017 RAF photo competition. Winners for these categories were selected by the judges. The finalists are all available via the [RAF photo competition website](#):

- The Judge's choice RAF image of the year
- Photographic section (professional photographers only)
- Technical/Engineering (professional photographers only)
- RAF Operations & Exercises (professional photographers only)
-

Current

RAF equipment (professional photographers only)

·

Sports

(professional photographers only)

·

Personnel

(professional photographers only)

·

Open

video (open to all personnel)

·

Open

image (open to all personnel)

·

The

Mallett Student Trophy (RAF basic training students at the Defence School of Photography only)

·

Amateur

military (non-professional photographers only)

·

RAF

Photographer of the year

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[RAF Typhoons hand over NATO Romania duties to Canada](#)

RAF Typhoons hand over NATO Romania duties to Canada

FOUR ROYAL Air Force Typhoon FGR4 fighter aircraft departed Romania on 28 August, ending the UK's five-month leadership of NATO's enhanced

air policing mission in the country. Since April the Typhoons – from 3(F) Squadron, RAF Coningsby – had spent alternate weeks on high-readiness

standby

to defend NATO's airspace over the Black Sea, augmenting the Romanian Air Force's existing air defence capability. The Royal Canadian Air Force is now preparing to assume responsibility for the NATO mission, while two of the RAF's

Typhoons proceed to Estonia to join NATO training with the British Army.



The Typhoons deployed to Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, near the Black Sea port of Constanta, as part of the RAF's 135 Expeditionary Air Wing under the code-name Operation BILOXI. More than 300 regular and reserve RAF personnel from 16 RAF units – supported by Royal Engineers soldiers – were

involved in the mission. Typhoons launched once in response to Russian air activity over the Black Sea, and flew more than 280 sorties to support NATO training with Romanian, Hungarian and Bulgarian armed forces. Towards the end

of 135 EAW's tour of duty, eight of its personnel were awarded the Romanian Air

Force's highest peacetime honour for their work in the country.



135 EAW's Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Andy Coe, said:

"As we hand over NATO duties to our colleagues in the Royal Canadian Air Force,

the men and women of 135 EAW can be proud of what we have achieved. In our five

months here, we were ambassadors for the RAF Whole Force, and for a truly global Britain. We learned much from our Romanian friends, even as we passed on

our experience to them and to our other allies in the region. It's been a privilege to lead a team who have embraced NATO's principles with complete enthusiasm and dedication."

The RCAF's Air Task Force Romania, comprising 135 specialists from across the Canadian Armed Forces, is preparing for a vital NATO certification on 31 August – the final stage in its preparation to lead the enhanced air policing mission. Four RCAF CF-188 Hornet fighter aircraft from 409 Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived in Romania on 20 August, and will be

patrolling the skies shortly after the NATO certification.



Air Task Force Romania Commander Lieutenant Colonel Mark

Hickey said: "As we bid farewell to our British friends, my entire team's focus

is now on supporting Canada's allies here in Romania and across the wider region. Canada will always stand up for the freedom and collective security of

our NATO allies; that's why we are happy to assume leadership of this

important

mission. My team will make Romania and Canada proud.”

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[The BBMF's Merlin Engines](#)

Following the recent pause in flying our Merlin-powered aircraft for safety reasons, OC BBMF said: “Please see below the MOD’s latest release on the subject of BBMF Merlin engines. As I hope you all know, my aim is to keep these vital and unique artefacts of Britain’s proud history in the sky forever. To do that we sometimes have to take extra precautions, with our eye sharply on continuing safety, to ensure that we can keep them flying for future generations. I thank each and every one of you who has voiced their support and shown their understanding. We will get them back into the blue as soon we can.

Lest We Forget.”

The update from the MOD:

“Our

investigation has confirmed an issue with a pinion gear in a Merlin engine.

With

the precise cause of the problem known, each pinion gear is now being inspected

to confirm it meets our exacting standards, with the BBMF and industry putting

all of our efforts into getting these beautiful aircraft safely back in the air

as soon as possible.”

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[ROYAL AIR FORCE PERSONNEL RECEIVE HIGH HONOURS IN ROMANIA](#)

ROYAL AIR FORCE PERSONNEL RECEIVE HIGH HONOURS IN ROMANIA

EIGHT ROYAL Air Force personnel stationed in Romania on NATO operations received the Romanian Air Force's highest peacetime award at a ceremony in Bucharest on 22 August. The personnel – from 135 Expeditionary Air Wing (135 EAW), based at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base – received the Romanian Air Force Emblem of Honour from the Chief of the Air Force Staff, General Laurian Anastasof, for their contributions to NATO's enhanced air policing mission.



Since April four Typhoon FGR4 fighter aircraft from 3(F) Squadron, based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, have been deployed with 135 EAW to reinforce Romania's existing air defence capabilities. Commanded by NATO's Combined Air Operations Centre at Torrejon, Spain, the Typhoons have spent alternate weeks at high readiness to respond to unusual air activity over the Black Sea, in order to reassure Romania and other NATO members of the Alliance's resolve to defend its airspace. During the mission Typhoons had to scramble once – on 25 July – in response to Russian activity above the Black Sea.

Gen Anastasof presented the awards at a ceremony at the Romanian Air Force's headquarters in Bucharest. During the ceremony he praised the RAF's "outstanding" support for NATO and Romania and said he was proud of the UK's strong show of "solidarity and deterrence".



135 EAW's Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Andy Coe, was the first to be decorated by Gen Anastasof. Wg Cdr Coe said: "I can't express how proud I am to receive such a high honour from our Romanian friends and allies. But I'm absolutely clear that those of us who were honoured received our awards as ambassadors for our teams, for NATO and for the Royal Air Force. We work as a Whole Force, and that's how we'll celebrate too."

135 EAW is currently drawing down its presence in Romania as the Royal Canadian Air Force prepares to assume the responsibility for NATO's enhanced air policing mission. Four RCAF CF-188 fighter aircraft arrived in Romania on 20 August.



The RCAF's Air Task Force commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Hickey, said: "135 EAW and 3(F) Squadron have put in place an outstanding handover schedule for us, and it has been a pleasure working with our

British counterparts. We look forward to the exchange aspects with Romanian Air Force personnel located in Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base as we go ahead with this enhanced Air Policing mission. This is the third time since 2014 that the RCAF will be flying Romanian skies and the CF-188 Hornets deployed on this operation are ideally suited to assist Romanian Air Forces with this mission. Romania is our ally and we are committed to the principle of collective defence of the Alliance.”

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