

Typhoons from 6 Squadron take part in Red Flag

6 Squadron Typhoons, from RAF Lossiemouth, are taking part in the world's largest and most complex air combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in the United States.



Red Flag is a three-week exercise that pits friendly 'Blue' forces – including the 6 Squadron Typhoons – against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors in live and synthetic training environments, simulating air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, and space and cyber warfare.



The training mirrors the threats and complex air defences posed by real-life adversaries, helps participating nations better understand each other's capabilities and ensures that RAF personnel maintain the highest levels of readiness for potential future military operations.

The live element takes place over the US Air Force's premier military training area in Nevada; over 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land – an impossible scale to achieve in Europe.



The exercise also sees the Typhoons fly alongside US Air Force F-22 Raptors and F-35A Lightnings. This continues the evolving integration of RAF operations with 5th Generation aircraft ahead of the introduction of the F-35B into the RAF's combat air inventory in 2018.

Wing Commander Billy Cooper, Officer Commanding 6 Squadron, said: "We've brought eight Typhoons with us from RAF Lossiemouth to take part in Red Flag alongside the United States Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force.



"While our day job at Lossiemouth is protecting UK airspace through Quick Reaction Alert, here in Nevada the majority of what we're doing is air-to-air fighting and some strike missions. This means we'll be flying two waves of six aircraft every day.

"One of the benefits of this exercise is the threat replication; we can simulate fighting our way into a target area through a high-threat environment, dropping precision munitions on specific targets and then fighting our way back out again. It's a privilege to deploy here with 6 Squadron and to represent the Royal Air Force, the UK and Scotland in particular."

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[RAF Apprenticeship Award](#)

RAF trainers are celebrating being recognised as one of the top 100 employers of apprentices in Britain.

The Service, which currently has 2,700 personnel on its programmes, has provided apprenticeships since its creation in 1918 and in 2014 its scheme was graded 'outstanding,' in all areas by the education standards watch dog Ofsted.

Now the RAF has been included on the prestigious Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers list compiled annually by the National Apprenticeship Service.



Group Captain Stephen Dharamraj, Commandant of the Royal Air Force Central Training School, said: "Apprenticeships are an integral part of our training philosophy by which we ensure that our personnel are able to operate at or above that required by their counterparts in industry. This is essential for the Service to succeed wherever it may be called upon to operate."

Editor: Simon Mander

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[News story: Update: air strikes against Daesh](#)

Updated: Updated with new strikes.

Summary

- Monday 15 October – Tornados destroyed a Daesh observation post in eastern Syria.
- Wednesday 17 October – Tornados demolished another terrorist observation post in eastern Syria.

- Sunday 21 October – Typhoons struck a Daesh strong-point which was firing at the Syrian Democratic Forces.
- Monday 22 October – Tornados bombed a base for a terrorist improvised explosive device team in eastern Syria.
- Wednesday 24 October – Tornados destroyed an armed truck, and two strong-points which were firing at the Syrian Democratic Forces.
- Friday 26 October – Tornados bombed a further two strong-points with which the Syrian Democratic Forces were engaged in a firefight.
- Sunday 28 October – a Reaper attacked a group of terrorists caught in the open in eastern Syria, whilst Typhoons collapsed the entrance to a cave containing stockpiled weapons in northern Iraq.

Detail

Royal Air Force aircraft have continued to provide support to the Syrian Democratic Forces' operations against the last significant pocket of Daesh-held territory in the Euphrates valley of eastern Syria. On Monday 15 October, two Tornado GR4s were tasked with the destruction of a terrorist observation post which had been identified to the south-east of Hajin. A single Paveway IV guided bomb was released and this scored a direct hit on the observation post, destroying it. A further such observation post was identified to the north-east of Abu Kamal on Wednesday 17 October, and was again dealt with effectively by a Paveway attack delivered by a Tornado flight. As normal, the Tornados were supported by a Voyager air refuelling tanker, based alongside them at RAF Akrotiri.

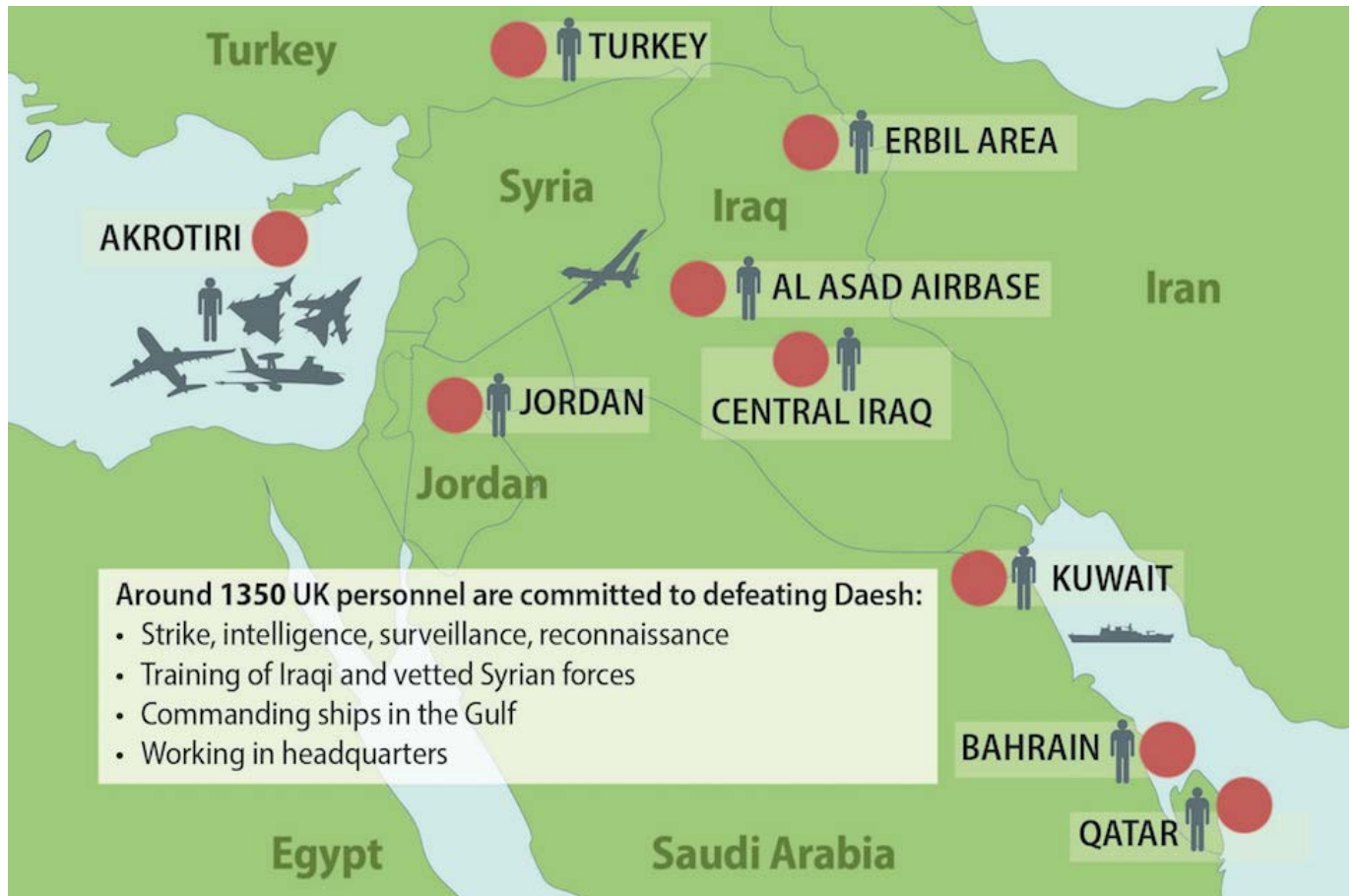
Typhoon FGR4s provided further support to the SDF on Sunday 21 October. That evening, an SDF advance came under fire from a Daesh strong-point some five miles north-east of Abu Kamal. The Typhoon flight conducted a carefully planned attack with a single Paveway IV, which struck the strong-point and immediately eliminated the threat to the SDF.

Intelligence identified a small building north-east of Abu Kamal as a base for terrorists planting improvised explosive devices. Two Tornados carried out an attack with a Paveway IV on Monday 22 October, which destroyed the target and caused a number of secondary blasts as the explosives inside detonated. On Wednesday 24 October, another Tornado flight provided further close air support to the SDF in the same area. Our aircraft struck a truck, armed with a pair of anti-aircraft guns, with a Paveway; the attack also accounted for a number of terrorists close to the vehicle. The SDF then encountered two successive Daesh strong-points, both of which engaged the SDF at short range. Despite the proximity of the SDF to the two targets, the Tornados were able to strike both of the terrorist positions with Paveway IVs.

Despite very challenging weather, Tornados again supported the SDF north-east of Abu Kamal on Friday 26 October. The SDF reported being in close combat with Daesh positioned in two strong-points. The Tornados had to bomb through cloud, unable to see either the target or the friendly forces close by, but the SDF reported both targets to have been hit accurately by the Paveway IVs. On Sunday 28 October, a Reaper conducted armed reconnaissance over the Abu Kamal area, and carried out a successful attack with a Hellfire missile,

striking a group of terrorists spotted manoeuvring through fields. In northern Iraq, a Daesh stockpile of weapons had been identified in a set of caves on a hillside thirty miles north-west of Kirkuk; a Typhoon flight was able to collapse the entrance to the caves using Paveway IVs.

UK contribution to the fight against Daesh

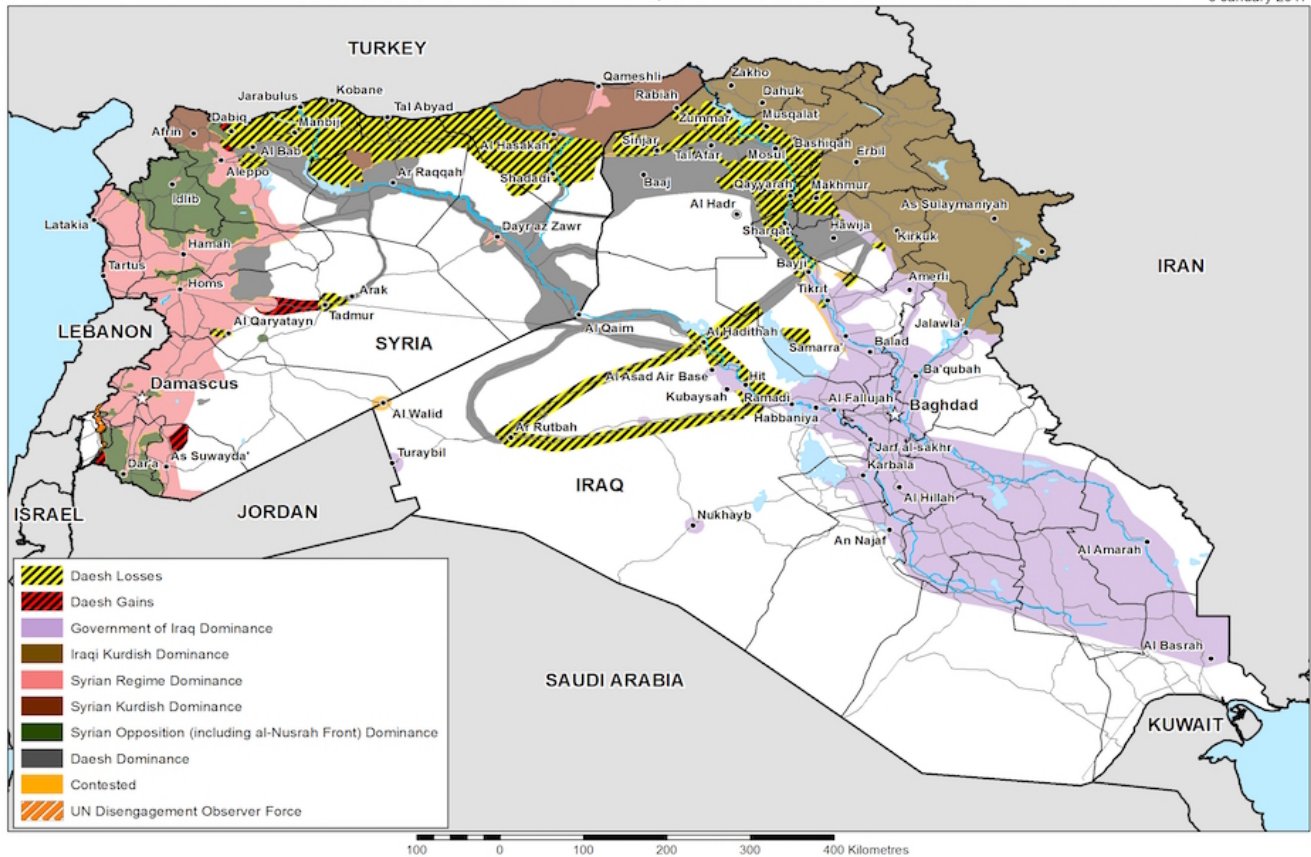


Map of UK forces committed to Operation Shader

Campaign against Daesh

DAESH - LOSSES & GAINS IN IRAQ & SYRIA SINCE SEPTEMBER 2014

9 January 2017



Map of Daesh losses and gains in Iraq and Syria since September 2014

Previous update

With the Syrian Democratic Forces continuing their offensive against the last major pocket of Daesh-held territory in eastern Syria, centred on Hajin, Royal Air Force aircraft have provided further intensive support. As in the previous month, a particular focus has been on terrorist positions north-east of Abu Kamal. On Wednesday 3 October, an RAF Reaper detected a Daesh mortar which was firing on SDF forces a short distance away. Two RAF Tornado GR4s were also on task in the area, and they struck the mortar position with a single Paveway IV guided bomb.

The following day, an SDF attack on a Daesh position encountered a truck-bomb which was blocking their advance towards a terrorist strong-point in a nearby building. Tornados destroyed the truck-bomb using a Brimstone missile, then demolished the strong-point with a Paveway IV. Another building in the area was then identified as not only Daesh-held, but a probable facility for further improvised truck-bombs. This target was also destroyed with a Paveway IV.

On Friday 5 October, Typhoons bombed a Daesh command post north-east of Abu Kamal using two Paveway IVs. Nearby, a flight of Tornados supported the SDF, who had come up against a Daesh-held compound. The SDF were very close to the target, but careful coordination allowed the Tornados to strike the two key buildings within the compound with Paveway IVs. A Reaper provided further support in the same area on Saturday 6 October, and an attack delivered with a GBU-12 guided bomb successfully disrupted firing by Daesh on the SDF.

Typhoons and Tornados were working further north, near Hajin, and used Paveway IVs and a Brimstone missile to deal with four Daesh mortar positions and a weapons stockpile.

A Reaper's crew successfully targeted Daesh fighters who had positioned themselves beneath trees in the Hajin area on Sunday 7 October, hitting them with a Hellfire missile. Closer to Abu Kamal, Typhoons meanwhile destroyed a terrorist command post.

Despite bad weather, our aircraft were able to provide effective close air support to the SDF at both the northern and southern ends of the Hajin pocket on Thursday 11 October. North of Hajin, a flight of Typhoons and a flight of Tornados used Paveway IVs to destroy three Daesh-held buildings which the SDF had encountered. In the south, close to the border with Iraq, a second pair of Tornados bombed two groups of terrorists spotted in the open; one of the attacks also destroyed the extremists' vehicle.

A Daesh armed truck was spotted north-east of Abu Kamal on Friday 12 October, and was destroyed by a direct hit from a Paveway IV dropped by a Typhoon flight. A pair of Tornados conducted one attack through thick cloud, striking a tunnel – again to the north-east of Abu Kamal – then delivered a second successful attack with two Paveways against a Daesh-held building near Hajin. On Saturday 13 October, Typhoons bombed a Daesh strong-point north of Hajin, whilst Tornados struck a second such defensive position north-east of Abu Kamal. The Tornados also attacked a mortar position and a Daesh command post in the same area, using Paveway IVs.

Our aircraft were able to attack successfully three known terrorist command and control locations on Sunday 14 October, all in and around Hajin. Typhoons dealt with two of the targets, including one where a Daesh attack planning team were reported to be present at the time, whilst Tornados destroyed the third.

Details of previous airstrikes can be found [here](#).

For more information see [Daesh: UK government response](#) page on GOV.UK