

News story: Fourth Quick Reaction Alert Squadron for RAF Lossiemouth

The personnel and aircraft of IX(B) Squadron will be at the heart of the UK's Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Force, ready to take off within minutes of an alert being triggered.

The Squadron was officially stood up at a ceremonial parade and flypast at RAF Lossiemouth today, but has been operational since 1 April. The standing up of the new Squadron coincides with RAF Lossiemouth marking its 80th anniversary.

Some of the Squadron's aircraft will be painted in distinctive markings to identify them as training 'adversaries', in their role as 'aggressors'. In this role, they will provide a sterner training test to RAF and NATO fast-jet pilots, as they will play the role of opposing aircraft which match their speed and manoeuvrability while using the latest real-world dogfighting and air combat tactics against them.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

I'm delighted to be back at RAF Lossiemouth today, one day after the station celebrated its 80th Anniversary. RAF Lossiemouth has and will continue to play a key role in the Defence of the United Kingdom, being ready to intercept potential airborne threats 24/7 and in addition shortly becoming home to our nine new submarine hunting P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft. These will work with our Typhoon force to patrol far out into the Atlantic protecting the UK's submarine-based nuclear deterrent and two new aircraft carriers.

Today's transition of IX Sqn from Tornado to Typhoon is one important part of the expansion of RAF Lossiemouth which will see the number of service personnel here increase to some 2,300, supported by a further 1,800 MOD civilian and contractor staff.

I am proud to see our Combat Air capabilities continue to grow, a necessity as they will undoubtedly continue to be in exceptionally high demand on operations, here in the UK and across the world.

Image shows Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, and RAF personnel at a ceremony to mark a fourth Quick Reaction Alert Squadron based out of RAF Lossiemouth. Crown Copyright.

Quick Reaction Alert involves the entire UK Air Defence system on standby at immediate readiness, 24/7, 365 days a year, with aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby protecting northern and southern UK airspace respectively. In recent months, Typhoons from RAF Lossiemouth have been

scrambled four times as long-range Russian bombers approached UK airspace.

Personnel and Typhoons from RAF Lossiemouth conducted a NATO Air Policing mission role in Romania in 2018, where they scrambled eight times in response to 20 Russian aircraft as part of assurance measures for eastern allies. Later this year, RAF Lossiemouth aircraft will deploy to Iceland to conduct a further NATO Air Policing mission, while other aircraft from the UK Typhoon force deploy to Estonia on a similar task.

The Typhoon has exceptional performance that makes it capable of intercepting aircraft from the smallest light aircraft to the largest of airliners. The supersonic fighter has the ability of reaching all corners of the UK's airspace within minutes of getting airborne.