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FOUR CF-188 HORNET fighter aircraft from Canada have arrived in Romania to support NATO enhanced air policing operations.

From September until December the aircraft – from the Royal Canadian Air Force's 409 Tactical Fighter Squadron, based at Cold Lake in Alberta – will operate from Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base near the Black Sea port of Constanta. More than 130 RCAF personnel are to deploy to the base, to take over responsibility for the enhanced air policing mission from the Royal Air Force's 135 Expeditionary Air Wing (135 EAW).



Four Typhoon FGR4 fighter aircraft from the RAF's 3(F) Squadron have been based at Mihail Kogalniceanu since April as part of 135 EAW. 135 EAW is the first unit to have supported NATO's enhanced air policing operation, which augments Romania's existing quick reaction alert capability. During the deployment, Typhoons scrambled once in response to Russian air activity over the Black Sea, demonstrating NATO's resolve to reassure the region of the Alliance's air defence capabilities.



Ahead of the CF-188s' departure from Canada, Lieutenant-General Steve Bowes, the Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, said: "The Canadian Armed Forces is committed to the principle of collective defence of the Alliance, which is at the very heart of NATO's founding treaty. Our military personnel are well-trained and committed to contribute to NATO enhanced air policing that ensures the integrity of Allies' airspace. They are proud to work on behalf of Canadians, projecting the best of what Canada has to offer."

The Commanding Officer of 135 EAW, Wing Commander Andy Coe, said: "We are proud to welcome our Canadian allies to Romania to continue NATO's vital support for this region. As they arrive my team will start the final phase of our detachment: safely dismantling our operations, while handing over procedures, relationships and duties to our NATO partners. Already, it's clear to me that we are working with Canada's finest."



The RAF's Typhoons will depart Romania at the end of August, returning to their home base at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire. 409 Tac F Sqn shares in 3(F) Sqn's Lincolnshire heritage; the RCAF unit was first formed during the Second World War at RAF Digby, near Lincoln, as a night fighter squadron. The unit retains its wartime motto: *Media nox meridies noster* ('Midnight is our Noon').

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