

# ROYAL AIR FORCE PERSONNEL RECEIVE HIGH HONOURS IN ROMANIA

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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 NATO 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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## [Royal Canadian Air Force jets arrive in Romania for NATO mission](#)

### **ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JETS ARRIVE IN ROMANIA FOR NATO MISSION**

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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## [Celebrity Aviator Carol Vorderman Receives Flying Award](#)

**Celebrity aviator Carol Vorderman receives  
flying award**

Carol Vorderman, an honorary  
Group Captain and Ambassador for the RAF Air Cadets has received a  
prestigious aviation award.

The celebrity aviator, was  
presented the Lennox-Boyd Trophy, whilst visiting young air cadets at RAF  
Syerston, Nottinghamshire.



The award – from the Aircraft Owners' and Pilots' Association – is for her work furthering interest in aviation with the RAF Air Cadets.

Gp Capt Vorderman was visiting the RAF Air Cadet Aerospace Camp at RAF Syerston where she also met 220 cadets, who have travelled across the country to take part in a week of aviation and engineering themed activities.

The majority of training and activities on the camp is delivered by air cadets who have completed the Qualified Aerospace Instructors' Course.



Ambassador Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman said: "As Ambassador of the RAF Air Cadets I am delighted to be receiving this award from AOPA in front of the next generation of young aviators at the Air Cadet Aerospace Camp.

"The Air Cadets is an inspiring youth organisation for 12 to 19-year-olds and with the help of adult volunteers delivers fantastic STEM opportunities for young people across the country each year."

The award was presented to her by Chairman of the AOPA Mr George Done and Chief Executive Officer Mr Martin Robinson.



Carol has her private pilot's licence and owns her own aircraft Mildred. She has been an Ambassador for the RAF Air Cadets since 2014 and hopes to encourage more young people into science, technology, engineering and maths subjects.

More information about the RAF Air Cadets, including how to join as a cadet or as an adult volunteer, can be found at [www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets](http://www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets)

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# From Lancashire to Texas: 10% production milestone achieved for f-35 Lightning II fighter jets

FROM

## **LANCASHIRE TO TEXAS: 10% PRODUCTION MILESTONE ACHIEVED FOR F-35 LIGHTNING II FIGHTER JETS**

British engineers working on combat jets for the UK's new aircraft carriers have reached a key production milestone.

The 318<sup>th</sup> rear section for an F-35 Lightning II combat jet has rolled off the BAE Systems production line in Samlesbury, Lancashire meaning that 10% of the global requirement has now been produced.



The aft fuselage is the back part of the state-of-the-art aircraft's main body and with more than 3,000 aircraft currently on order it is estimated that 25,000 jobs will be sustained across the UK by more than 500 companies in the supply chain when at peak production.

The rear section has now transferred from BAE Systems' advanced manufacturing suite to Lockheed Martin's Final Assembly and Check Out line in Fort Worth, Texas to be connected with other major assemblies to become one of three aircraft variants. The 318<sup>th</sup> aft fuselage in particular will form part of a UK 'B' model variant of the combat jet.

This variant has the short take-off and vertical landing capability which makes it ideal for Britain's new Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers. With HMS Queen Elizabeth set to enter her new home in Portsmouth imminently, the F-35B jets are on track to make their first flight trials from her deck next year.

The F-35 programme is the world's largest single defence programme, and as a key partner, the UK has been working closely with the US from the outset.



Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin, said:

“This is an important milestone and the latest example of how the F-35 programme is benefitting the UK’s defence industry, creating thousands of jobs and helping to keep Britain safer and more secure.

“Britain is a leading partner in the development of the F-35, supporting not just the aircraft that will operate from RAF Marham and our two new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, but also the thousands of jets that will serve our allies around the world.”

Andrea Thompson, F-35 Lightning II Director for BAE Systems Military Air & Information, said:

“Reaching the 10% mark of production on the F-35 programme shows how far we have come, but also highlights that there is an enormous amount of work still to do.

“With an order book of more than 3,000 aircraft for the global F-35 fleet, the investments we are making in our advanced manufacturing facilities are key to ensuring we continue to deliver on our commitments.

“To add to this, we are also working closely with our supply chain to ensure they are equipped to meet the ramp up in production at the same time as delivering against our existing commitments.”



Eric Branyan, vice president of F-35 Supply Chain Management for Lockheed Martin said:

“BAE Systems is a valued partner on the F-35 program, and we congratulate them on this significant milestone. The United Kingdom is the F-35 program’s only tier one partner and the work of BAE Systems and other in-country suppliers has a significant positive impact on the UK economy. We look forward to many more years of partnering to deliver the most advanced and capable 5th generation fighter jet to our allies around the world.”

BAE Systems is responsible for 15% of the work on each aircraft including every aft fuselage as well as other mission critical systems for the F-35 Lightning II programme.

The first operational Lightning II squadrons will be the RAF’s 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) and 809 Naval Air Squadron. Combined with the QEC aircraft carriers they will transform the UK’s ability to project influence overseas.

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## [A400M draws attention at Mobility Guardian](#)

### **A400M draws attention at Mobility Guardian**

A  
Royal Air Force A400M Atlas is being put through its paces as never before  
as  
it takes part in Exercise Mobility Guardian in the United States.

The  
airlift aircraft has been transporting military vehicles, delivering aid  
relief  
and flying aeromedical evacuation sorties in an intensive series of exercise  
scenarios designed to improve interoperability between the 31 nations taking  
part.

Wing  
Commander Ed Horne Officer Commanding LXX Squadron. He said: "We've brought  
the  
A400 with is to conduct tactical air land missions. What this means is we're  
picking up troops and equipment and taking them around the area of  
responsibility and into places to support the exercise scenario.



"The  
exercise is a really excellent stepping stone for us as we build more and  
more  
tactical capabilities on to the aircraft. Working here with the USAF, and in  
particular alongside the C-17 crews, is  
something we just wouldn't be able to replicate in the UK, either for  
real on in the synthetic environment at RAF Brize Norton."

Personnel  
from a number of other units are also participating at Joint Base Lewis  
McChord  
nr Seattle. These include 47 Air Despatch Royal Logistic Corps, No. 2  
Squadron  
RAF Regiment, 1 Tactical Police Squadron and Tactical Medical Wing.

During

the exercise the A400 has transported a variety of US Army vehicles including a 19-ton Stryker Commander Vehicle. The aircraft has also flown aeromedical evacuation flights with multi-national aeromed teams.



Wg

Cdr Horne: "The A400 was configured right from the start for aeromed missions, we're clearing more and more aeromedical equipment onto the aircraft. This is the first time we'll have done any aeromed tasking on an exercise although the aircraft has been used for real with stretcher patients in the UK previously."

Flight

Lieutenant Dave Ellis is an A400 pilot. He explained the benefits of the exercise from his perspective: "One of the big advantages is being able to discover just what the A400 is capable of. It also provides a great opportunity to train.

"For

example, prior to the exercise only one of the pilots that we brought with us was night vision qualified but as a result of this exercise we've been able to qualify four more something we can't achieve during UK summertime".



The

distinctive shape of the A400 has stood out on the vast aircraft pans at McChord Airfield. "There's a great deal of interest in the Atlas, particularly from the C-17 and C-130 crews who have been on to the aircraft to look around explained Wg Cdr Horne. "The aircraft they operate are now quite old and of course ours is very new so they're very excited about the different functionality the A400 has."

Editor: Wg Cdr Dylan Eklund

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