

UK-Qatari Typhoons take off as joint squadron

News story

The Royal Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Squadron have commenced flying as a Joint Squadron.



RAF and Qatari Air Force pilots. Crown copyright.

The Royal Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Squadron, known as No.12 Squadron, have marked an important milestone as they commenced flying as a Joint Squadron

Based at RAF Coningsby, No.12 Squadron is a unique initiative between the UK and Qatar and will provide the QEAF with valuable experience operating the Typhoon as they prepare to receive their first aircraft. With deliveries commencing in 2022, the aircraft are part of a £5.1 billion deal between BAE Systems and the Government of Qatar.

The flags of both nations were raised at RAF Coningsby this week as Typhoons with new Squadron markings flew for the first time, signalling the Squadron's readiness to train pilots and ground crew from both air forces.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

No.12 Squadron is a testament to our enduring friendship and commitment to Qatar, the only nation with which the UK has a Joint Squadron. Together we are protecting populations and securing our mutual interests across the Middle East.

His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohammad al Attiyah, Minister of State for Defence Affairs said:

The first flight of No. 12 Squadron marks an important milestone in the commitment of the Qatari Emiri Air Force and the Royal Air Force to deliver on excellence.

The raising of the flags of The State of Qatar and the United Kingdom side by side in commemoration of the first joint flight represents the alignment of vision and strategy in building for a stable and prosperous future for both nations and the world.

The UK has a long history of working with international partners in our Armed Forces, with such defence engagement recognised as key to strengthening partnerships and promoting our national interest. However, No. 12 Squadron is the first Joint Squadron in the RAF since the Second World War and Battle of Britain.

The Joint Squadron was stood up on 24 July 2018 and will drive closer collaboration between the RAF and QEAF, putting our bilateral security and defence relationship on a long-term and sustainable footing.

Published 19 June 2020