

RAF TYPHOONS ROLL UP MAGIC CARPET IN OMAN

Royal Air Force

personnel have been put through testing training over Oman since the beginning of October as 6 Squadron from RAF Lossiemouth conduct exercises with the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO).

Nearly 250

personnel comprising RAF regular, reserve and civilian contractors serving alongside the Royal Air Force of Oman have come together on Exercise Magic Carpet 17. The Detachment Commander, Wing Commander Billy Cooper said: "In two weeks of flying we have flown 102 sorties. The Typhoons have performed exceptionally well with first class maintenance from our engineers."



He added: "Not only have my pilots been able to practice all the skills they need. But it has been a fantastic opportunity to work in testing conditions for everyone from our field caterers to armourers and the forward air controllers who call in airpower."

The RAF has been hosted by the Royal Air Force of Oman who have provided extensive training facilities. Wg Cdr Cooper said: "From the military perspective we have had excellent access to ranges to drop precision guided bombs and to use Typhoon's 27 mm cannon as well as practising air defence alongside the RAFO F-16 jets." He added, "But for me, and I know I can speak for the whole detachment, I've particularly enjoyed the opportunity to meet our hosts, experience the professionalism of RAFO and see what Oman has to offer."



Being in Oman has provided training representative of the weather and flying conditions expected on operations. The two weeks of flying have also enabled many personnel in the air and on the ground to be efficiently qualified in delivering live munitions.

Royal Air Force squadrons recognised for gallantry

The MOD has announced that Her Majesty The Queen has approved the award of Battle Honours to squadrons of Her Majesty's Royal Air Force.

The Battle Honours have been awarded to commemorate notable battles, actions, or engagements in which squadron aircrew or RAF Regiment personnel played a memorable part.

Battle Honours were approved for 27 operational flying squadrons and eight Royal Air Force Regiment squadrons for their service during Operation TELIC in Iraq. Five operational flying squadrons and three Royal Air Force Regiment squadrons have been awarded the highest honour of 'Battle Honour with Emblazonment'.

For Operation DEFERENCE and Operation ELLAMY in Libya, Battle Honours were approved for 13 operational flying squadrons with three being awarded the highest honour of Battle Honour with Emblazonment.

There are two levels of Battle Honour within the Royal Air Force, the first is entitlement, signifying that a squadron took part in the campaign. The second, higher level, gives the right to emblazon the Battle Honour on the Squadron Standard itself. This highest level has been awarded to squadrons who were involved in direct confrontation with the enemy, and who have demonstrated gallantry and spirit under fire.

The RAF's Deputy Commander for Operations, Air Marshal Stuart Atha said:

Whilst individuals are often recognised for bravery and courage, the award of a Battle Honour to a unit is rare, so I am delighted to hear that the fighting spirit of Royal Air Force squadrons has been recognised at the highest level by their award today. Those Air Mobility, Rotary, Fast Jet, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance squadrons, and RAF Regiment units, whose people have contributed so much to these operations in the air and on the ground, should be hugely proud of this important addition to their legacies.

The honours will be awarded for participation in Operation TELIC, which took

place between 1 May 2003 and 22 May 2011, Operation DEFERENCE, which took place from 22 February 2011 to 27 February 2011, and Operation ELLAMY, which took place from 19 March 2011 to 31 October 2011.

To mark the awards, the MOD is releasing a number of examples of outstanding service during these campaigns:

FIRST UK LAUNCHED STRIKES SINCE WW2

Royal Air Force Squadrons II (Two) and IX (Nine) are two of three units to be awarded the honour of emblazoning the battle honour "Libya 2011" on their standards.

On 19 March 2011, under strict secrecy and in the dark of night, four Tornado fast jets from IX (Bomber) Squadron, Royal Air Force Marham, roared into the Norfolk night sky to deliver long-range airstrikes against Libyan Regime targets.

Storm Shadow, the Tornado's highly capable stand-off cruise missile, which is currently seeing service in Iraq and Syria, was used as the weapon of choice against heavily defended and hardened targets in a gruelling 3000-mile round trip. For the missions, RAF Marham operated as a cohesive team. II (Army Cooperation) Squadron personnel worked tirelessly to plan this complex mission and prepare the aircraft, while aircrew from IX (Bomber) Squadron flew and delivered successful mission.

This historic event was the first direct delivery of airborne weapons launched from Royal Air Force aircraft based in the United Kingdom since World War Two and demonstrated the Royal Air Force's ability to conduct highly effective surprise airstrikes at great distance. The missions were ably supported by RAF Voyager in-flight refuelling aircraft, which were used four times during the eight-hour sortie.

Following these strikes, IX (Bomber) Squadron deployed to Italian Air Force Base Gioia Del Colle and mounted an intensive bombing, close air support and armed reconnaissance campaign against the Libyan Regime's mobile military forces. The unit was relieved by II (Army Cooperation) Squadron one month later.

At this point, the campaign had grown significantly, requiring II Squadron to undertake complex strike missions by day and night using, Paveway precision guided bombs and Brimstone missiles.

PUMAS PROVIDE IMPORTANT SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Number 33 Squadron, based at RAF Benson, Oxfordshire, was one of seven RAF units to earn the right to emblazon the battle honour 'Iraq 2003-2011' on its standard.

33 Squadron operated Puma helicopters during the Iraq campaign. Working in

close cooperation with UK and allied land forces, their role was to move equipment and soldiers around the battlefield, as well as provide convoy escort, reconnaissance and resupply of Forward Operating Bases (FOB). They also transported the wounded quickly away from the front line for emergency medical care.

Aircraft often flew at 50 feet above the ground, to try and avoid ground fire due to the level of the insurgent threat. Working in the highly unstable area around central Iraq, the Pumas operated at a furious pace, often at the limits of their performance. Nevertheless the helicopters proved to be highly reliable; a testament to the superb efforts of the squadron's engineers based at FOB Kalsu.

In November 2004, a formation of one 33 Squadron Puma and one Lynx helicopter operated in support of the Black Watch (now Scottish Regiment) Battle Group. Working from Camp Dogwood which was in an area locally dubbed 'the Triangle of Death', the two aircraft came under heavy mortar fire within minutes of landing. Later, due to the volume of enemy ground fire, both the Puma and the Lynx were hit by enemy rounds with the Lynx pilot suffering injury.

Flight Sergeant Andy Leys, a crewman on the Puma said:

On arrival back at base after operations, the sense of satisfaction and achievement was immense. This period was the busiest and most intense operational tasking I have completed in my 19 year flying career. All of our tasking was completed safely and professionally with crews returning to base wiser and more experienced aviators – something that can never be too highly valued.

Recognised squadrons:

With the Right to Emblazon 'IRAQ 2003- 2011' on Squadron Standards

- No 7 Squadron RAF
- No XXIV Squadron RAF
- No 33 Squadron RAF
- No 47 Squadron RAF
- No 230 Squadron RAF
- No 1 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 26 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 34 Squadron RAF Regiment.

Without the Right to Emblazon 'IRAQ 2003- 2011' on Squadron Standards

- No II (Army Cooperation) Squadron RAF
- No IX (Bomber) Squadron RAF
- No 10 Squadron RAF

- No 12 (Bomber) Squadron RAF
- No XIII Squadron RAF
- No 14 Squadron RAF
- No 18 Squadron RAF
- No 27 Squadron RAF
- No XXVIII (Army Cooperation) Squadron RAF
- No 30 Squadron RAF
- No 31 Squadron RAF
- No 32 (The Royal) Squadron RAF
- No 39 (Photographic Reconnaissance) Squadron RAF
- No 51 Squadron RAF
- No LXX Squadron RAF
- No 99 Squadron RAF
- No 101 Squadron RAF
- No 120 Squadron RAF
- No 201 Squadron RAF
- No 206 Squadron RAF
- No 216 Squadron RAF
- No 617 Squadron RAF
- No II Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 3 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 15 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 51 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 63 Squadron RAF Regiment.

With the Right to Emblazon 'LIBYA 2011' on Squadron Standards

- No II (Army Cooperation) Squadron RAF
- No IX (Bomber) Squadron RAF
- No 47 Squadron RAF.

Without the Right to Emblazon 'LIBYA 2011' on Squadron Standards

- No 3 (Fighter) Squadron RAF
- No V (Army Cooperation) Squadron RAF
- No VIII Squadron RAF
- No XI Squadron RAF
- No 30 Squadron RAF
- No 32 (The Royal) Squadron RAF
- No 51 Squadron RAF
- No 99 Squadron RAF
- No 101 Squadron RAF
- No 216 Squadron RAF

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RAF Typhoon fly their longest sortie in the fight against Da'esh.

On 23 September a pair of Typhoons flew for seven hours and 46 minutes on a mission which saw them attack and destroy a weapons cache before conducting a simultaneous strike against four truck bombs.



Flight Lieutenant Tom [surname withheld for security reasons] led the mission from RAF Akrotiri. He said:

"Whilst this sortie was the longest flown by RAF Typhoons to date the nature of the mission was no different to those flown day in day out over the past three years of this operation by both Typhoon and Tornado aircrew. These sorties would not be possible without the tireless support of our ground crew and of the air-air refuelling team who enable us to remain on station for such long periods of time."



During the sortie, which was mostly conducted at night, the Typhoons refuelled on a number of occasions from RAF and Coalition air-air refuelling aircraft. After scanning the areas around the targets to ensure no civilians were present the targets were struck with a total of six Paveway IV precision guided munitions. Flt Lt Tom:

"Sitting in the confines of a fast jet cockpit for such a long time can be tiring, particularly at night, but assisting the Coalition forces fighting Da'esh on the ground is extremely rewarding and more than enough to keep us focussed. By destroying vehicle borne IEDs and weapons caches we not only save the lives of troops but also civilians; Da'esh have shown no hesitation in the past in detonating these huge bombs close to civilians."



The Typhoon pair were not the only aircraft in operations that day. Over northern Iraq RAF Typhoons destroyed a truck bomb, a terrorist-held building and a mortar team firing on Iraqi forces. RAF Tornado aircraft also destroyed five truck bombs, an armed truck, a Da'esh building and command post on a day which saw the RAF destroy a total of 17 terrorist targets.

The RAF has played an essential role to allies, helping Syrian Democratic Forces engaged in ground close combat and the Iraqi Security Forces who continue their advance having liberated Mosul and Ninewah province. The RAF recently marked the third anniversary of operations against Da'esh which also involves Reaper remotely piloted aircraft, air-air refuelling tankers and surveillance aircraft. More than 5.5 million people have been freed from Daesh's rule and over two million displaced Iraqi civilians have returned to their homes. In Mosul alone, it is estimated that over 265,000 people have

returned.

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Red Arrows tour finale thrills Bahrain

A final public display of 2017 has been carried out in Bahrain by the Red Arrows.

The Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team was watched by crowds at the city's seafront, marking the end of the team's 53rd season and also a significant tour of the Mediterranean and Gulf supporting United Kingdom interests.

Wing Commander Andrew Keith, Officer Commanding, Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, said: "Our busy schedule has meant the whole team, both aircrew and essential support staff, have worked hard, often in extreme temperatures, but it has been worth it.



"Representing the UK, we have highlighted links with close friends in the region and helped to forge new ones, across a range of industries and sectors."

The overseas deployment, known as Exercise Eastern Hawk, has focussed on British expertise in the fields of aviation, technology, engineering and education.

As well as the display, pilots and personnel of the Red Arrows' ground support team met women's networking groups, members of the business community and also students in Bahrain.



The five-week overseas tour began with a flight over the Cannes Yachting Festival – highlighting British industry at the event – before visiting Athens Flying Week, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Pakistan. A flypast over Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, follows the full display in Bahrain.

The British Ambassador to Bahrain, Simon Martin, said: "I'm delighted that the team are back to represent the best of British innovation and excellence within the Royal Air Force, which shows the UK's commitment to strengthen its relations with Bahrain."

One of the Red Arrows' key roles is as national ambassadors, supporting UK trade, business, education and industry – most recently in conjunction with the GREAT Britain campaign.



The Bahrain display was also the last show of the Red Arrows' 2017 season, which included a busy domestic programme across the UK before the overseas deployment.

It was the final public display for four of the pilots who have reached the end of their period with the team.

This includes Red 1, Squadron Leader David Montenegro, who has finished his second, three-year, stint with the team – with 2015-2017 as Team Leader.

Flight Lieutenant Tom Bould, who is Red 6, and Flight Lieutenant Emmet Cox, Red 9, have completed their three-year tours with the team.

And also leaving is Red 10, Squadron Leader Mike Ling, who has completed nine years in the team – more than any other Red Arrows pilot – and the last six years as supervisor and team commentator.



The Red Arrows are based at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire and are famous for flying BAE Systems Hawks in a Diamond Nine formation.

For more information about the team, follow @rafredarrows on Twitter, see the latest images posted on Instagram by following rafredarrows, like RAF Red Arrows on Facebook or visit www.raf.mod.uk/reds

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RED ARROWS' DYNAMIC DISPLAY MARKS UK'S HISTORIC TIES WITH OMAN

CLOSE links between the United Kingdom and Oman have been celebrated with a display in Muscat by the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows.

Aircraft from the world-renowned display team performed a precision show of loops, rolls and close-passes in front of thousands of people lining a coastline of the capital and also a reception for senior government officials.

The display is part of a five-week overseas tour by the Red Arrows supporting UK interests.



The visit to Oman, which also includes a number of ground events showcasing British excellence in engineering, education and innovation, marks the close relationship between the two countries.

Wing Commander Andrew Keith, Officer Commanding, Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, said: "Displaying in Oman and for the people of Muscat is a clear demonstration of the UK's close links with the country, particularly among our Armed Forces.

"The Red Arrows have a vital role when visiting locations overseas, being versatile ambassadors for the UK and able to promote – in a bold and dynamic way – the very best of British across a range of sectors and industries.



"The display in Muscat is just one of the activities we are able to carry out to support these interests – a number of the Red Arrows' technicians are due to visit a local college this week to highlight to young people the importance of the so-called STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths."

Known as Exercise Eastern Hawk, the Red Arrows' five-week deployment overseas follows a busy domestic season in which the aerobatic team performed for millions of people and more than 60 times across the UK.

The team has already visited France, Greece, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar as part of the tour.



Following Oman, the Red Arrows will display in Pakistan and Bahrain before a flypast in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and then will return home.

One of the Red Arrows' key roles is supporting UK trade, business, education and industry and working as part of the GREAT Britain campaign.

The campaign is the Government's most ambitious international marketing campaign ever and showcases the very best of what the whole nation has to offer in order to encourage the world to visit, study and do business with the UK.

It focuses on China, India, Brazil, USA, the Gulf, France, Germany, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Emerging Europe and is also active in more than 144 countries worldwide.



Famous for flying British-built BAE Systems Hawk fast-jets in a Diamond Nine formation, the Red Arrows are based at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire.

For more information about the team, follow @rafredarrows on Twitter, see the latest images posted on Instagram by following rafredarrows, like RAF Red Arrows on Facebook or visit HYPERLINK "<http://www.raf.mod.uk/reds>"
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