

RAFALO UPDATE – MAY 2017

This is the latest edition of the RAFALO Update, which includes information on changes to the Service. If you have anything you wish me to cover, please advise in the usual way via Adrian.morris941@mod.uk

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS LIST

GENERAL

Air Vice-Marshal A M Turner CBE to be Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) in January 2018 in succession to Air Vice-Marshal E J Stringer CBE whose next appointment is yet to be announced.

Acting Air Vice-Marshal M Quigley was promoted Air Vice-Marshal on 1 April 2017 in the new role of Director Safety & Environment, Quality and Technology in Defence Equipment & Support.

Air Commodore D R Alexander CBE to be Head Defence Support Chain Operations & Movements in Defence Equipment & Support in June 2017 in succession to Brigadier D F Capps CBE.

Air Commodore J E Linter OBE to be Air Attaché Washington with effect from 1 September 2017 in succession to Air Commodore R J C Powell CBE who is retiring from the Service.

Group Captain T N Jennings OBE to be promoted Acting Air Commodore and to be Deputy Director Legal Services (RAF), Headquarters Air Command with effect from 1 May 2017 in succession to Air Commodore A Mardell whose next appointment as Director Legal Services (RAF) has previously been announced.

Group Captain M Hunt OBE to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Director Ground Training (RAF) and Senior Air Staff Officer, Headquarters No 22 (Training) Group with effect from 12 June 2017 in succession to Air Commodore W A W James CBE whose next appointment as Air Officer Commanding No 22 (Training) Group has previously been announced.

Group Captain R J Dennis OBE to be promoted Acting Air Commodore and to be United Kingdom Air Component Commander and Air Officer Commanding No 83 Expeditionary Air Group, Al Udeid, Qatar in November 2017 in succession to Air Commodore J J Stringer whose next appointment is yet to be announced.

Group Captain T J P Burke to be Officer Commanding Royal Air Force Waddington in November 2017 in succession to Group Captain A P Marshall OBE.

Group Captain A T Martin OBE to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Deputy Commander & Chief of Staff NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force Command, Geilenkirchen with effect from 21 July 2017 in succession to Air Commodore I D Teakle DSO OBE who is retiring from the Service.

Group Captain S N Perkins to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Deputy Commander & Chief of Staff, Headquarters British Forces Cyprus in August 2017 in succession to Brigadier J N N Orr.

EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER

End of an Era at RAF Lossiemouth XV(Reserve) Squadron, the Tornado Operational Conversion Unit, completed its final formal flying on Friday 17 March 2017. The disbandment of the Squadron, after 102 years' of service, on Friday 31 March 2017 will see the end of the Tornado GR4 era at RAF Lossiemouth. To mark the end of this period in the Station's history, Tornados from XV(Reserve) Squadron carried out a final sortie that included flying by Aberdeen and Leuchars airfields and Tain Air Weapons Range. These sites have all been instrumental in the training of aircrew at RAF Lossiemouth to operate the Tornado. The aircraft returned to RAF Lossiemouth in the early afternoon and carried out a series of fly pasts over the Station.



The Tornado Weapons Conversion Unit was based at RAF Honington in Suffolk when it received the XV (Reserve) Squadron title in 1992. It moved to RAF Lossiemouth in November 1993 and then with the closure of the Tri-national Tornado Training Establishment in March 1999 XV (Reserve) Squadron assumed responsibility for the training of all of the RAF's Tornado GR4 pilots and Weapon Systems Operators in both initial training on the aircraft and in post-graduate courses. Over the past 24 years the Squadron has been the life-blood of the front line ensuring the squadrons were provided with combat capable aircrew. The final ab-initio pilot finished his training at the end of January, and the last refresher pilot, returning from a tour instructing at RAF Valley, graduated at the end of February.

Whilst the Tornado Operational Conversion Unit will cease from 31 March, the RAF will continue to utilise the Tornado GR4 until it is finally withdrawn from service in 2019. RAF Marham in Norfolk is the base of the RAF's front line Tornado squadrons from where aircraft and personnel are deployed to support current operations.

Three frontline Tornado squadrons have been based at RAF Lossiemouth since the early 1990s:

12 (Bomber) Squadron was already based at RAF Lossiemouth with the Buccaneer when it was re-equipped with the Tornado GR1B in October 1993 in the Maritime Strike role. The Squadron was disbanded at RAF Lossiemouth on 31 Mar 2014, however it was resurrected on 12 Jan 2015 at RAF Marham.

14 Squadron was based at RAF Bruggen with the Tornado GR1 before returning to the UK and was based at RAF Lossiemouth from 1 Jan 2001. The Squadron was disbanded on 1 Jun 2011. The number plate was passed to a new ISTAR unit which had been operating as part of V(Army Co-operation) Squadron at RAF Waddington.

617 Squadron was equipped with the Tornado GR1 at RAF Marham when it relocated to RAF Lossiemouth in May 1994. It was at this point that it adopted a Maritime Strike role as well as its overland strike role. The Squadron was disbanded in March 2014, however it has since been reformed and is re-equipping with the F-35 Lightning II.

Each of these squadrons deployed personnel and aircraft to Operations TELIC, HERRICK and ELLAMY where the Tornado GR4 exploited its range and payload in the Close Air Support and Interdiction roles.

RAF Lossiemouth will maintain the provision of Quick Reaction Alert (Interceptor) North, or QRA as it is commonly called, as its primary role. The strategically important position of the Station on the northern Scottish coastline makes it an ideal location to maintain aircraft and crews on high alert, in order to scramble and intercept unidentified aircraft approaching UK airspace. This is the basis of QRA and is a duty that has been maintained by the Royal Air Force on a 24/7 basis for decades. The Station will also see growth in the near future as a fourth Typhoon squadron is formed here and 9 P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft are based here.

Storm Shadow DE&S has awarded £146 million contract for the regeneration of the Storm Shadow missile system so that it remains fit for purpose. Storm Shadow has been combat-proven in service on Tornado as a long range precision cruise missile for targeting substantial targets, control centres, bunkers etc. The contract should keep the missile in service for at least the next ten years.

Unmanned Rotary Air systems Following successful naval trials last year, the focus on unmanned rotorcraft capabilities has shifted to the army which is now heavily involved with Leonardo Helicopters (used to be Westland) in a 2 year programme to research possibilities for unmanned air systems supporting front line troops.

D-Day Memorial The MOD welcomed the Prime Minister's and Chancellor's announcement that a new memorial commemorating the British servicemen and women who gave their lives in the D-Day landings will be built. Supported by £20 million of Government funding from LIBOR fines levied on the banking industry, the monument will be built at the site of the fierce fighting during and after D-day, and will be unveiled in Normandy on 6 June 2019 – the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

As ever, if there is anything you would like information on, please e-mail me or send your correspondence via the Area Director or BSO.

Yours, In friendship

Ady Morris