

# Royal Air Force Pilots Test Advanced Weapons and Software Upgrades for Eurofighter Typhoon Combat Jet

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A new package of advanced weapons, software and avionics enhancements for the Eurofighter Typhoon combat jet is being trialled by Royal Air Force Test and Evaluation pilots at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire, ahead of roll-out across the UK fleet.

The work forms a major part of Project Centurion - the programme to ensure seamless transition of capability from the Tornado GR4 to Typhoon.

Operational testing and evaluation of the upgrades, known as the Project Centurion Phase 1 capability package, includes trials of MBDA's Meteor 'beyond visual range' air-to-air and Storm Shadow deep attack air-to-surface missile software systems. The test work is being supported by BAE Systems.

Meteor will bring an extreme 'beyond visual range' air-to-air capability to Typhoon. It is an active radar guided missile designed to provide a multi-shot capability against long-range, moving targets, such as fast jets, small Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and cruise missiles, in dense electronic warfare environments. Storm Shadow will introduce a stand-off air-to-surface capability, enhancing Typhoon's abilities against well-defended infrastructure targets.

The test work follows trial installation work and subsequent upgrade of six aircraft. The work was completed by the Royal Air Force's 41(R) Squadron – the Test and Evaluation Squadron - and supported by teams from BAE Systems in Warton, Lancashire. The aircraft and support products used in the trials were generated by Eurofighter GmbH and the Eurofighter Partner Companies - Airbus and Leonardo - supported by MBDA.

James Glazebrook, Head of UK Centurion and Eurofighter Capability Programmes at BAE Systems Military Air & Information, said: "Planned testing and evaluation by 41(R) Squadron is now well underway. This is another important milestone on the Project Centurion programme and has been achieved through hard work and excellent collaboration between our teams and the Royal Air Force."

The work also includes a number of new UK-only national capabilities, which will bring additional human machine interface and other improvements, specifically required by the Royal Air Force, to the aircraft. Operational testing and evaluation will include ground test and flight test work as well familiarisation for the pilots and ground crew with new features introduced by the upgrades.

BAE Systems will continue to increase the capability of the Phase 1 package ahead of scheduled customer firings of the Meteor and Storm Shadow weapons. This will lead to eventual entry into service of the upgrades, scheduled for early 2018. The next and final stage of Project Centurion includes the integration of the Brimstone high precision, low collateral air-

to-surface missile on to the aircraft. The first live firing of a Brimstone missile from a Eurofighter Typhoon was successfully completed in early July 2017.