



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref. 2016/10480

[REDACTED]

8 November 2016

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 November 2016 asking for copies of Typhoon pilots documentation. You requested the following information:

"... a paper copy of all literature issued to the RAF's Eurofighter Typhoon pilots to carry with them on sorties, this includes the book of checklists and the Quick Reference handbook. I believe both of these items are protectively marked "Official-Sensitive" so I completely understand if these are not able to be released."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am writing to confirm that we hold information on the subject you have requested. However, the documentation carried by Typhoon pilots changes for every flight according to the exact individual sortie, e.g. flight path etc. It is therefore not possible to provide you with a copy of every document carried by pilots on every Typhoon sortie.

I am able to provide you with copies of the Flight Crew Checklist, the Aircrew Landaway Flight Servicing Schedule and Mission Operating procedures. You will note however that some information within these documents has been withheld under Section 26(1)(b) of the Act which provides that we should withhold information which would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of relevant forces. The Act requires that we have to carry out a public interest test (PIT) in this respect to show that the reasons for withholding the information outweigh reasons for releasing the information.

Public Interest (PI) factors in favour of disclosing the information requested:

- The public interest in understanding the role and skill levels of RAF Typhoon pilots.

Public Interest (PI) factors against disclosing the information requested:

- If precise or comprehensive information relating to Typhoon capabilities, systems and operations were released, any potential aggressor wishing to attack the UK or its

interests would be able to extrapolate this information to identify defence weaknesses.

- This in turn would be likely to enable potential aggressors to exploit any weaknesses and reduce the effectiveness of Typhoon aircraft and would be likely to place service personnel in danger.

The disclosure of information that would compromise the effectiveness of our armed operational capability, would also be a disclosure prejudicial to the defence of the UK. A limited disclosure of the documentation carried by Typhoon pilots would provide a reasonable level of overall understanding of the military aviation. There remains a very strong public interest in preserving the RAF's ability to defend the UK through the effectiveness capability and safety of our Typhoon capability.

I conclude that the balance of the public interest for providing full copies of documentation carried by Typhoon pilots is firmly in favour of maintaining the exemption under S.26(1)(b) and thus of withholding some of the information. Additionally, Section 40(2) has been applied to some information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no need requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

The documents can be found at the government website at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-responses-published-by-mod-week-commencing-7-september-2015>

If you require paper copies, please provide me with your name and address and I will forward them to you.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely


Secretariat 3a1
Air Command