



Ministry
of Defence

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██████████
Our Reference:
FOI2018/11642
Date:
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Dear ██████████

Thank you for your email of 07 September 2018 concerning disposal of Tornado hulks. It has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The information you have requested is provided below:

I would like some information regarding the disposal of Tornado hulks and also information regarding specific airframes. First of all, the following airframes were noted in storage (apparently separate from the main RTP hangar) in April 2017:

***ZA370/004
ZA550/042
ZA559/049
ZD713/081
ZD741/089***

Please confirm the status of these airframes. If still in storage, have any decisions been made re. their future? If they have since been through the RTP (reduce to produce) programme, have their hulks been disposed of? If so, where to?

I would also like information on the current status of the following airframes (all of which are understood to have gone to Leeming for RTP). Request is the same as above - i.e. are they stored at Leeming as complete airframes; have they been reduced to produce; if so, are their hulks still extant or have they been disposed of/scrapped? If so, where? Have any other decisions been made regarding their future (if not yet RTP/scrapped)?

***ZA369/003
ZA405/014
ZA406/015
ZA458/024
ZA462/027
ZA544/037***

ZA548/040
ZD739/087
ZD746/094
ZD843/106
ZG705/118
ZG707/119
ZG750/128 (Pinky)
ZG777/135
ZG779/136

Next, has a decision been reached on whether any Tornado GR4 airframes will be available for tender (allowing members of the public to bid) upon removal of the type from service in 2019. (Please note, I am aware that your disposals agency is responsible for disposing of surplus equipment (including Tornado) and your preferred contractors ensure cost effective removal of equipment/scrap, all for the best possible return for the UK taxpayer, etc etc etc. So no need to repeat that in your response. Presumably these decisions are made within the MOD and passed to the disposals agency to implement. So I'd like to know whether any airframes (or cockpits) will be made available to the public? Or whether all must be scrapped?

Next, following on from the above, are any restrictions in place governing the disposal of spares-recovered Tornado hulks? It's clear that many parts, large and small, are available to purchase via eBay and other public auction sites, including tail fins, wings, radomes, tailerons etc. Much of this equipment is disposed of through programmes like Project Hercules, for instance. But notably absent from the public realm are Tornado GR4 hulks and forward fuselage shells.

My understanding is that all redundant fuselage hulks have been (or will be) scrapped by a small number of contractors. Members of the public are not permitted to access or even photograph empty hulks, let alone purchase them (which is how many earlier aircraft and cockpit types were saved). Clearly there's a reason for this... What restrictions, if any, are in place to prevent Tornado GR4 hulks from passing into the hands of private buyers, including preservationists?

I'd also like to know why said hulks MUST be destroyed? Are there trade agreements in place governing the recycled metal from said hulks? If so, what are they and with which actors? Have any other restrictions been put in place governing the sale and disposal of scrap Tornado hulks? Though DESA is responsible for implementing the disposal of scrap Tornado hulks and other equipment, who is responsible for determining the rules and policy governing said disposal (specifically whether or not hulks must be destroyed)? Is it the MOD? The RAF? Another public body, Quango, or a private company/contractor?

Has the responsibility for determining the

The reason I ask is that a stripped Tornado hulk (or even a cockpit) can form the basis of a long-term restoration project, as much of the remainder is available for purchase. But without the fuselage hulk, preservationists don't have much to work with! And for the record - as a UK taxpayer and aviation heritage advocate - Tornado (specifically GR4) is one of the most important and iconic aircraft of the Cold War and post Cold War era, yet other than a small handful, the UK government is ensuring they're destroyed in a process which is, unfortunately, best described as opaque. I accept a lack of transparency where national security is concerned, but redundant Tornado hulks, stripped of any and all sensitive equipment and thoroughly demilitarised, present no national security risk whatsoever. And as I've noted previously, a small number of externally complete examples can be found on private premises.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds information relevant to your request.

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The following information provides the requested status of the first series of airframes:

ZA370/004 - Scrapped August 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZA550/042 - Scrapped June 2005 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZA559/049 - Planned to process by RTP at RAF Leeming in October 2018.
ZD713/081 - Planned to process by RTP at RAF Leeming in November 2018.
ZD741/089 - Currently being processed by RTP at RAF Leeming.

The following information provides the requested status on the second series of airframes:

ZA369/003 - Planned to process by RTP at RAF Leeming in December 2018.
ZA405/014 - Processed by RTP at RAF Leeming in February 2018 and excess components disposed of via Defence Equipment Sales Agency (DESA) licenced contractor, utilising De-Mil option to stay compliant with International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) requirements.
ZA406/015 - Scrapped February 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZA458/024 - Scrapped January 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZA462/027 - Planned to process by RTP at RAF Leeming in January 2019.
ZA544/037 - Scrapped July 2013 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZA548/040 - Processed by RTP at RAF Leeming in December 2017 and excess components disposed of via DESA licenced contractor, utilising De-Mil option to stay compliant with ITAR requirements.
ZD739/087 - Scrapped May 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZD746/094 - Scrapped April 2013 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZD843/106 - Processed by RTP at RAF Leeming in September 2016 and excess components disposed of via DESA licenced contractor, utilising De-Mil option to stay compliant with ITAR requirements.
ZG705/118 - Processed by RTP at RAF Leeming in November 2017 and excess components disposed of via DESA licenced contractor, utilising De-Mil option to stay compliant with ITAR requirements.
ZG707/119 - Scrapped February 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZG750/128 (Pinky) - Processed by RTP at RAF Leeming in January 2018 and excess components disposed of via DESA licenced contractor, utilising De-Mil option to stay compliant with ITAR requirements.
ZG777/135 - Scrapped August 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.
ZG779/136 - Scrapped March 2018 – DESA Specialist Contractor.

The following information is provided to answer your other questions:

No declarations of Tornado GR4 airframes have been made to DESA outside of the RTP process. The policy for controlled sales is under construction within DESA, however, DESA operates under three principles when considering disposal of crown assets:

- The first principle is to obtain the maximum receipt for Defence and this has been key, although MOD is under no obligation to sell its assets.
- The second principle is around UK Defence Engagement priorities.
- The third principle relates to UK Prosperity Agenda.

There is also a need to ensure there is no reputational damage to the RAF, and Governance arrangements in place within DESA come from the DESA Management Board and the RAF, who approve the disposal processes operated. Items of special control, such as airframes, do normally have their Main Control Unit and Engine stripped out as part of the de-militarisation activity.

You should also be made aware that Tornado GR4 contains a number of systems and assets which are subject to special controls, including ITAR and other governance regulations. This will mean that some systems must be removed from aircraft before any means of disposal.

It is not a case that hulks have to be destroyed, rather that this has proved to date to be the most cost-effective disposal option. Alternative disposal options could include Government-to-Government sales and gifting to authorised organisations.

The possibility of sale to private individuals has not been ruled out at this stage and, as such, no restrictions are in place. I am aware that we previously provided you with contact details of the Air Sales Team Leader within DESA, in a letter dated 29 January 2018, to enable you to pursue a Private Treaty sale if you wished to.

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 Deputy Chief Information Officer, 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


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