

# ITALIAN THUNDER 2008



No 29 (Reserve) Squadron, the Royal Air Force's Typhoon Operational Conversion Unit (OCU), has just completed Exercise Italian Thunder operating from Grosseto Air Base. A 2-week detachment, the Squadron has been conducting its Basic Fighting Manoeuvres phase as part of the Basic Counter Air Module with 2 courses of students. The Detachment, lead by Squadron Leader Steve Formoso, comprised 5 Typhoon aircraft , 9 staff pilots together with in excess of 70 support and engineering personnel.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of July I visited the 20° Gruppo at Grosseto Air Base and below you can see the results of my visit. The serial numbers of the 5 visiting Typhoon F2 of 29( R) Squadron of Coningsby are:

- ZJ800 / BC
- ZJ802 / BB
- ZJ803 / BA
- ZJ805 / BD
- ZJ808 / BG

Also seen on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July:

- |                    |      |         |
|--------------------|------|---------|
| • EF2000 Typhoon T | 4-26 | MM55128 |
| • EF2000 Typhoon S | 4-12 | MM7278  |
| • EF2000 Typhoon T | 4-33 | MM55130 |
| • EF2000 Typhoon S | 4-16 | MM7285  |

During my visit I spoke to Richard Neasom (Officer Commanding Mission Support Flight) of 29(R) Squadron. He explained me why it is important to exercise with other countries who also fly the Eurofighter Typhoon. In a press document (below) you can read why this exercise was important for 29(R) Squadron from Coningsby as well as for 20° Gruppo from Grosseto.



- 29(Reserve) Squadron is the RAF's Typhoon Operational Conversion Unit (OCU).
- Based at RAF Coningsby, near Lincoln, in England.
- RAF Coningsby is the first RAF Typhoon station and is also home to 3 other Typhoon squadrons: 3(Fighter), XI and 17(Reserve) which is the Operational Evaluation Unit.
- The RAF Typhoon Force has just achieved Multi-Role Operational Employment Date on 1 July 2008.
- The OCU is taking part in Exercise ITALIAN THUNDER 2008 operating from ItAF airbase Grosseto with 5 x Typhoon aircraft.
- It is a 2-week detachment with the Squadron's primary objective to deliver training sorties within the Basic Fighting Manoeuvres phase.
- There are 2 courses of student pilots on the Exercise as part of the Basic Counter Air Module (BCAM).
- In addition to the BCAM flying the Squadron is undertaking bilateral training with the ItAF to develop Typhoon tactics.
- The Squadron is also gaining benefit from operating in different airspace.
- The Squadron's engineering and support functions are also developing deployed operating knowledge and procedures.

Officer Commanding: Wing Commander Johnny Stringer  
Detachment Commander: Squadron Leader Steve Formoso

R J NEASOM  
Squadron Leader  
Unit Press Officer

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In Grosseto you can find a large horse-race track called “Ippodromo del Casalone” on the Via Aurelia Antica 35, Since a few weeks they preserved a F-104G of the Italian Air Force over there. It's the F-104G (c/n 6505) MM6505 “4-1”

For pictures see below.



In week 30 (21st until the 25th of July) I visited Grosseto Air Base several times (outside the fence). On both sides of the runway it is possible to make nice pictures.

I spotted the following Typhoons and visitors:

- EF2000 Typhoon T 4-31 MM55093
- EF2000 Typhoon T 4-24 MM55097
- EF2000 Typhoon T 4-23 MM55095
- EF2000 Typhoon S 4-2 MM7286
- EF2000 Typhoon S 4-21 MM7284
- North American T6G Texan 4-06 MM54101

- Piaggio P180 M Avanti                    c/n 1041            MM62199
- Sikorsky HH3F Pelican                15-38              MM81350



I want to thank a few people:

Andrea Truppo, Luca Farina, Michele Santangelo, Vittorio di Serio, Daniele (thanks for calling to Rome and writing the small letter) and all the other guys from 20° Gruppo. I also want to thank Richard Neasom and the rest of the crew of 29( R) Squadron of Coningsby.

I hope you enjoyed the Grolsch beer!!

Credits: Paul Kiewik