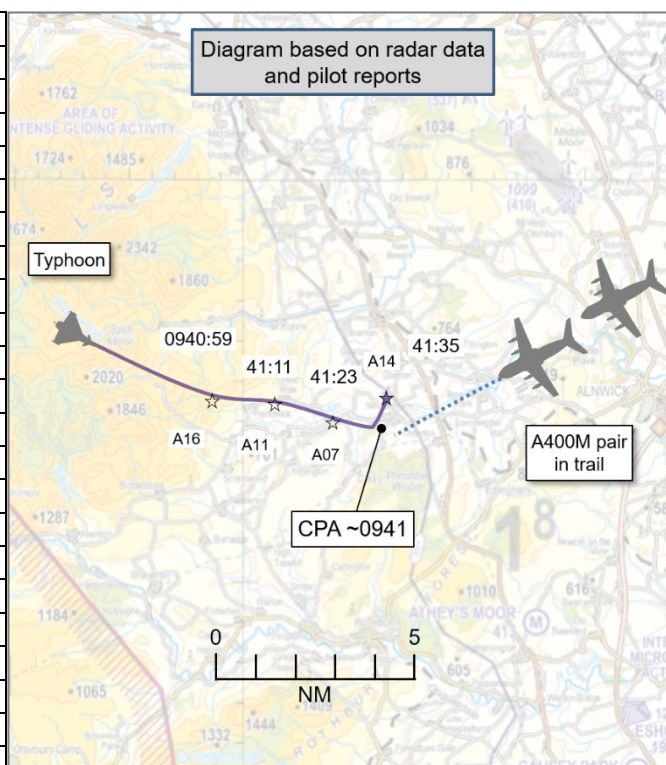


AIRPROX REPORT No 2026058

Date: 31 Mar 2026 Time: ~0941Z Position: 5524N 00155W Location: Whittingham

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	A400M	Typhoon
Operator	HQ Air (Ops)	HQ Air (Ops)
Airspace	Scottish FIR	Scottish FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Listening Out	Listening Out
Provider	LL Common	LL Common
Altitude/FL	NK	NK
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C
ADS-B Out	Observed	Not observed
Reported		
Colours	Grey	Grey
Lighting	'all on'	HISL, nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	300ft	250ft
Altimeter	QNH (1027hPa)	NR
Heading	220°	135°
Speed	180kt	420kt
ACAS/TAS	TCAS II (TA only)	Not fitted
Alert	TA	N/A
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/0.5-1NM H	200ft V/1NM H
Recorded	NK	



THE A400M PILOT reports leading a 2-ship formation of A400Ms, conducting low-level (LL) training in the northeast of England. A CADS entry was made for the planned LL formation routing the day prior, of which no significant conflicts were noted. CADS was checked again prior to briefing the flight at 0615, where 1 UAS conflict was noted and then deconflicted. Prior to stepping for the aircraft at 0700, CADS was checked again, with no additional conflicts noted. The formation departed [base] and entered the LL environment north of Newcastle within 10min of [the] CADS booking timeline. Initially operating in LFA12, the formation was made aware of a single Typhoon in the same LFA by both parties making calls on [the] LL Common [frequency]. Routing east at approximately 0930, near N5531 W00229, the formation made visual contact with the Typhoon in the 12 o'clock, at a similar altitude, [range] 10NM, tracking northwest. The Typhoon also appeared on TCAS and [its pilot] had made a LL Common call indicating they were tracking northwest. [The A400M] formation responded on LL Common as standard and turned southeast towards the next waypoint. During the next 8min the [A400M] formation slowed and configured for a simulated Air Drop [AD], [near] N5527 W00148. No further transmissions from the Typhoon [pilot] indicating a change in direction were heard. Immediately following the simulated AD event, the formation was in a post-drop configuration (slow and less manoeuvrable, with TCAS 'TA only' mode selected), turning southwest [near] N5524 W00154, when a TCAS contact was then noticed at 10NM, co-altitude in the 1 o'clock position from the lead aircraft and closing rapidly ([with the] contact heading southeast). At this point, the lead aircraft [crew member] was off the flight deck conducting post-drop procedures, limiting lookout [from] the flight [deck]. The formation was not visual with the traffic due to rising terrain in the 1 o'clock and, based on TCAS situational awareness, the lead aircraft began a turn to the south to ensure deconfliction. Due to the rapid closure rate, there was not time to make an additional LL Common call with the formation still in a busy phase of flight. At this point, a TCAS Traffic Advisory event occurred, whereupon the lead aircraft crew responded iaw SOP. Almost simultaneously, the second [A400M formation] aircraft (at this point approximately 1.5NM in trail of the lead aircraft also in the post-drop phase) gained visual with the TCAS contact as it crested the terrain

in the 1 o'clock and called the Typhoon sighting over the formation interplane frequency. As this occurred, the PF in the right-hand seat of the lead aircraft also visually acquired the Typhoon at less than 1NM separation, co-altitude, in a 90° angle of bank left-hand turn (belly-up) away from the lead A400M. No LL Common call indicating that the Typhoon [pilot] was visual with the formation was heard. The lead aircraft rolled out on a south-southwesterly heading (with the Typhoon on an estimated northeasterly heading) and [the A400M] formation then continued uneventfully in LL for approximately 35min prior to exiting LL [near] Scarborough at around 1015. Upon landing and subsequent crew-out at [base], [the A400M] crews checked CADS and noticed that a Typhoon routeing had been submitted to CADS [at 0725], after the [A400M] crews had already stepped for their aircraft, which did conflict with the [A400M] formation planned routeing. Neither the crews nor [Operations] were notified of the conflict.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE TYPHOON PILOT reports they and the [A400M] formation were aware of each other's presence through coordination on the Low-Level Common frequency. They were routeing southeast from the Cheviot Hills towards Teesside at low-level and detected [the A400Ms] on radar at about 4-5NM, then acquired them visually at 3NM. They executed a hard left turn to ensure safe separation and called "visual" on the LL Common frequency, estimating minimum separation to have been about 1NM and 200ft. Due to the earlier coordination on the LL frequency, which made them alert to the presence of 2 A400Ms in the same LFA, and the radar and subsequent visual detection, they assessed that there had been no risk of collision.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

Factual Background

The weather at Newcastle was recorded as follows:

METAR EGNT 310950Z 29013KT 9999 FEW012 12/09 Q1026=
METAR EGNT 310920Z 27017KT 9999 FEW012 12/10 Q1026=

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The NATS radar replay and CAA Airspace Analyser Tool were reviewed and the A400M formation and Typhoon were identified by reference to radar and ADS-B data sources. The lead A400M did not appear on the radar replay.

The A400M and Typhoon pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.¹ If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the A400M pilot was required to give way to the Typhoon.²

Occurrence Investigation

The RAF Coningsby Occurrence Investigation found the following Outcome, Cause and Causal Factor:

Outcome: Air Operations -> Loss of Safe Separation -> Airprox -> Non-co-operating. Airprox between Typhoon and A400M (deemed by the A400M crew).

Cause: [The] Typhoon [pilot] was routeing [southeast] from the Cheviot Hills towards Teesside at low-level and detected the A400M on radar at [about] 4-5NM, then acquired them visually at 3NM.

¹ MAA RA 2307 paragraphs 1 and 2.

² MAA RA 2307 paragraph 12.

Mitigation/Local Actions: [The] Typhoon [pilot] executed a hard left turn to ensure safe separation and called “visual” on the LL common frequency, estimating minimum separation to have been [about] 1NM and 200ft.

Causal Factor: Due to the earlier timing of the A400M’s departure, the crew were unable to see the Typhoon’s entry on CADS and use that information to pre-emptively deconflict themselves from the Typhoon. That said, the Typhoon [pilot] was able to see the A400M on CADS and so anticipated their presence in the area and deconflicted appropriately.

Comments

HQ Air Command

Both the A400M crew and the Typhoon pilot were operating in Class G airspace under VFR in VMC; both had ensured their sortie details were promulgated on CADS, and both were using the Low-Level Common frequency as it is intended to be used. However, due to the line-of-sight limitation of VHF communication in undulating terrain it seems likely that there was a call of “Visual” from the Typhoon pilot which was not received (or assimilated) by the A400M crews. This meant they were concerned that the Typhoon pilot was manoeuvring close to them without situational awareness, when in fact the Typhoon pilot had acquired them both with onboard sensors and visually at range, and was turning to increase separation. It is understandable that the A400M crews assessed the risk of collision as high as they were in a vulnerable stage of flight, but in fact there was no risk of collision, and the Typhoon pilot had full situational awareness. Nevertheless, the Typhoon pilot might consider giving a low slow transport aircraft a wider berth in future to avoid potential consternation to the crew, just in case they hadn’t heard the ‘Visual’ call.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an A400M and a Typhoon flew into proximity near Whittingham at about 0941Z on Tuesday 31st March 2026. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, neither in receipt of a FIS.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD’S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the appropriate operating authority. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board’s discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board members quickly agreed that the A400M crew had been startled by the sudden proximity of the Typhoon and, having neither heard nor assimilated the Typhoon pilot’s ‘visual’ call and having received a TCAS alert, had become concerned about both the proximity of the Typhoon and extent to which its pilot had been aware of the A400M formation. Additionally, because the A400M crews had departed before the Typhoon route had been entered into CADS, they had not been aware of its planned proximity to their own routeing. In fact, having departed later, the Typhoon pilot had been aware of the A400M formation’s planned route through CADS and of its proximity, had detected the formation on radar and had established visual contact at a range of about 3NM. Members considered that although the Typhoon pilot had made a hard left turn to ensure separation, this had been done with full situational awareness of the A400M formation, that the circumstances had fallen within the normal parameters of the low-level training environment and that the risk of collision was therefore assessed as Risk E.

CF1: The A400M TCAS alerted, which may have heightened the A400M crew’s sense of proximity to the Typhoon.

CF2: The A400M crew were concerned by the proximity of the Typhoon.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK**Contributory Factors:**

2026058				
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
Flight Elements				
• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance				
1	Contextual	• ACAS/TCAS TA	An event involving a genuine airborne collision avoidance system/traffic alert and collision avoidance system traffic advisory warning triggered	
• See and Avoid				
2	Human Factors	• Perception of Visual Information	Events involving flight crew incorrectly perceiving a situation visually and then taking the wrong course of action or path of movement	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft

Degree of Risk: E.

Safety Barrier Assessment³

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the relevant barriers had functioned as intended.

Airprox Barrier Assessment: 2026058						Outside Controlled Airspace					
		Barrier		Provision	Application	Effectiveness Barrier Weighting					
						0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	
Ground Element		Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance		●	●						
		Manning & Equipment		●	●						
		Situational Awareness of the Conflicition & Action		●	●						
		Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance		●	●						
Flight Element		Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance		✓	✓						
		Tactical Planning and Execution		✓	✓						
		Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft & Action		✓	✓						
		Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance		!	✓						
		See & Avoid		✓	✓						
Key:		Full	Partial	None	Not Present/Not Assessable	Not Used					
Provision		✓	!	✗	●	○					
Application		✓	!	✗	●	○					
Effectiveness		■	■	■	■	□					

³ The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).