DEFENCE

RAF starts Buccaneer

update
LONDON ~

Royal Air Force plans to
update its British Aerospace
Buccaneer S.2s have been set
in motion with the award of a
contract to Ferranti for a new
inertial navigation system.
Buccaneers will be fitted
with the FIN1063 INS, a
derivative of the FIN1064
which equips RAF Sepecat
Jaguars. The 1063 is similar to
the Jaguar INS but lacks the
weapon aiming system.
As yet it is unclear whether
the entire Buccaneer update
programme has been funded
by the UK Ministry of

Defence. The programme
(reported in Flight, February
4, page 316) calls for upgraded
avionics, armaments, and
electronic countermeasures,
and a modified cockpit. But
award of the Ferranti contract
means the programme has
progressed from an Air Staff
Target to a full Air Staff
Requirement,designatedl012.

The programme is in line
with the RAF's decision to
convert 60 of its 65 Bucca-
neers into the maritime strike
role, armed primarily with
BAe Dynamics' Sea Eagle
anti-ship missile. Four of these
will be carried on upgraded
Buccaneers, backed-up by the
TV-guided Martel anti-ship
missile.

Upgraded Buccaneers could
also be equipped with a new
Hud and a combination of the
existing Westinghouse AN/
ALQ-101-10 and the Marconi

Sky Shadow ECM pods. The
radar warning receiver/
electronic surveillance suite
will be updated, and the Nato
Link 11/14 digital datalink
will be fitted for secure
communications.

Flight also understands
that the RAF's operational
requirements committee has
endorsed the mid-term update
of the Tornado. The RAF is
understood to be dubious
about Tornado's present
attitude/heading reference
system, and is keen to see
inclusion of global positioning
as well as terrain reference
navigation.

A leading feature of this
upgrade programme will be
the fitting of a twin INS
system. Two options for the
INS are being considered. The
first is the fitting of two of the
existing Ll0605s or two ring
laser gyros.

USAF sets

up TAV office
WRIGHT-PATTERSON ~

The United States Air Force's
Aeronautical Systems Div-
ision has established a trans-
atmospheric vehicle (TAV)
project office at Wright-
Patterson AFB. Lt Col Vince
Rausch will run the project
office, and Dr Jerry Arnett is
TAV programme manager.
The TAV is envisioned as a
rocket powered aircraft which
would take off and land at
conventional airfields. Flying
in the trans-atmospheric
region, the TAV would be
capable of reading any point
on the globe within 90min.
Phase I TAV studies started
in May 1983, with a $600,000
study contract to Battelle
Colambus Laboratories.

X-29 flight
Grumman's chief test pilot
Chuck Sewell lifts the X-29
Advanced Technology Dem-
onstrator off from Edwards
AFB for its first flight. In a
lOkt wind the aircraft lifted
off at 156kt—20kt slower than
predicted. Grumman X-29
programme manager Glenn
Spacht said: "It climbed like a
homesick angel".
Chuck Sewell took the
aircraft up to 15,000ft, where
he completed a series of turns
at up to 235kt and 1 • 7g Sewell
described the handling as
"absolutely flawless, out-
standing".