

# RAF lets secret-missile pictures slip out

BY DOUGLAS BARRIE

The Royal Air Force has inadvertently released details of a sensitive GEC-Marconi Dynamics family of precision-guided munitions (PGM), believed to be based on the Hakim family of guided weapons developed for the United Arab Emirates.

Two variants of the PGM family have been shown in an RAF News photograph of an RAF Panavia Tornado GR1 at the Boscombe Down test centre. The weapons have been shrouded in secrecy and no pictures have ever been published, despite their being in development since the 1980s.

## Alcazar demise benefits EQA

SAS, Swissair and Austrian airlines are to strengthen their European Quality Alliance (EQA) co-operation following the failure of the Alcazar deal, which would also have included KLM.

The EQA agreement began in 1989 and has, according to SAS senior business vice-president, Vagn Sorensen, survived the collapse of the far more ambitious Alcazar deal. "It has achieved concrete results which, although not of the planned magnitude of Alcazar, have given us a working co-operation. We want to keep on developing it."

Austrian's renewed commitment to the EQA is the result of its lack of progress in talks on co-operation with Lufthansa. "We were afraid we would lose them, but they seem to be back again," says Sorensen. He wants the EQA to widen its scope to put more emphasis on sales.

"We have joint organisations for the three of us in the CIS and we would like to expand that into other areas of Europe." He adds that there are "no plans for code-sharing" among the three. □

The model on the Tornado inboard wing pylon is thought to be a 250kg-class laser-guided stand-off bomb with a blast variant warhead. The two on the fuselage shoulder pylons are larger 900kg-class weapons, again with a blast warhead.

GEC-Marconi Dynamics is offering the UK Ministry of Defence a variant of the 900kg PGM, called the Lancelot, to meet the RAF's Staff Requirement (Air) 1242 for a low-level stand-off bomb. It is competing with Texas Instruments, which is offering the Paveway III laser-guided-bomb kit.

The company refuses to discuss any aspect of the PGM programme in relation to its overseas customers, but it admits that a laser PGM is already in production. GEC-Marconi Dynamics says that the Lancelot for the SR(A)1242 is equipped with a penetrator warhead: a blast warhead variant is also available.

The terminal laser-guidance Lancelot also includes mid-course navigation. Two rear-fuselage mounted rocket motors provide boost power for the weapon. The company refuses to disclose the range, but this is thought to be well in excess of 20km (10nm).

The system accepted for the SR(A)1242 will be fitted to the RAF's Tornado GR1/4, British



Two variants of GEC's PGM family (above), inadvertently revealed by the RAF, and Lancelot (below), GEC's bid for the RAF laser-guided bomb



Aerospace Harrier GR.7 and Sepecat Jaguar GR1A, along with the Eurofighter, when it eventually comes into service.

Work on the PGM family was begun by US company International Signal and Control. The weapons family was acquired by Ferranti International as part of a disastrous 1987 merger, which eventually forced the company into bankruptcy earlier this year. In 1991, Ferranti's missile business was acquired by GEC.

GEC is also using the PGM

family as the basis for its contender for Staff Requirement (Air) 1236 which would provide the RAF with a conventional stand-off missile.

Under the programme, known within GEC as the Pegasus, the largest variant of the PGM family would be fitted with either a turbofan or a turbojet engine to meet the range requirement.

Although no range requirement has yet been released by the company, it is believed to be in excess of 220km. □

## France rules out Aerospatiale sell-off

French prime minister Edouard Balladur has ruled out privatisation of Aerospatiale in the near future.

With heavy losses incurred in 1993, and a poor outlook for military and civil sales for the next two years, the Government has, in the short term at least, given up on near-term hopes of selling the state-owned aerospace giant to the private sector.

Aerospatiale is some Fr15 billion (\$2.6 billion) in debt, and lost Fr870 million in the first six months of 1993, after a Fr2.38 billion loss in 1992.

Aerospatiale asked for a Fr3 billion cash injection from the Government earlier this year and was given Fr2 billion. Its president, Louis Gallois, said in January that he expects the company to return to profitability in 1995. "So we certainly won't be privatised before then," says the company.

In a speech on 28 February at Toulouse, where Aerospatiale is based, Balladur said that the French Government was "...determined to ensure the defence of the national interest...and our injection of Fr2 billion into Aerospatiale,

during a difficult budgetary period, is proof of our willingness to do that".

He added that the money would "...help Aerospatiale to nourish the alliances necessary for its development".

Other state-owned French aerospace manufacturers, such as engine company Snecma, which is also being re-capitalised by the Government, are still apparently up for privatisation. Snecma says that it expects the sale to the private sector to proceed, although it adds that there are still no concrete plans. □