

# RAF aircraft designations



All RAF Aircraft have a system of designations, dependent on their functional role. Variants of each operational type are normally indicated by letters to indicate the current function of that aircraft and then a number indicating the sequence in which that variant achieved operational status. No number is reused with a different functional prefix.

For example, the first Lockheed Hercules in RAF service was known as the C1. A later version with a lengthened fuselage received the designation C3 because a single example adapted for weather monitoring purposes had already taken the designation W2. Aircraft with a long service life may find that their function changes from time to time and a change in the designation letters and sometimes the following digit will reflect such new roles.

<b>AOP</b>	Airborne Observation Post	<b>F</b>	Fighter	<b>HMA</b>	Helicopter Maritime Attack
<b>AEW</b>	Airborne Early Warning	<b>FA</b>	Fighter Attack	<b>HR</b>	Helicopter Rescue
<b>AH</b>	Army Helicopter	<b>FAW</b>	Fighter All-Weather	<b>HT</b>	Helicopter Training
<b>AL</b>	Army Liaison	<b>FB</b>	Fighter Bomber	<b>HU</b>	Helicopter Utility
<b>AS</b>	Anti-Submarine	<b>FGR</b>	Fighter Ground Attack Reconnaissance	<b>MR</b>	Maritime Reconnaissance
<b>ASaC</b>	Airborne Surveillance and Area Control	<b>FG</b>	Fighter Ground Attack	<b>MRA</b>	Maritime Reconnaissance and Attack
<b>B</b>	Bomber	<b>FGA</b>	Fighter Ground Attack	<b>NF</b>	Night Fighter
<b>B(I)</b>	Bomber Interdictor	<b>FR</b>	Fighter Reconnaissance	<b>PR</b>	Photographic Reconnaissance
<b>B(K)</b>	Bomber Tanker	<b>FRS</b>	Fighter Reconnaissance Strike	<b>R</b>	Reconnaissance
<b>B</b>	Bomber Photo Reconnaissance	<b>GA</b>	Ground Attack	<b>S</b>	Strike
<b>C</b>	Transport	<b>GR</b>	Ground Attack Reconnaissance	<b>SR</b>	Strategic Reconnaissance
<b>CC</b>	Transport & Communications	<b>HAR</b>	Helicopter Air Rescue	<b>T</b>	Training
<b>COD</b>	Carrier - Onboard Delivery	<b>HAS</b>	Helicopter Anti-Submarine	<b>TF</b>	Torpedo Fighter
<b>D</b>	Drone / Pilotless	<b>HC</b>	Helicopter Cargo	<b>TT</b>	Target Towing
<b>E</b>	Electronic Surveillance	<b>HCC</b>	Helicopter Transport and Communications	<b>TX</b>	Training Glider
<b>ECM</b>	Electronic Counter-Measures	<b>HF</b>	High Fighter	<b>W</b>	Weather

When major modifications are made to an aircraft the designation can change - example when the Harrier GR7 was upgraded with more powerful engines and electronics it became a Harrier GR9. Minor modification that require the aircraft to be operated or maintained differently can result in a suffix to the designation - example a VC-10 C1 modified for in-flight refueling becomes a VC-10 C1K.

