



Defence Air Safety Occurrence Report including Comments and Actions

**Reference Number
asor\Swanwick RAF (U)\ATC - Swanwick (Mil) -
78 Sqn\24\10541**

Auto Accepted: No

NORTH-AIRPROX-FNF417-Tac Left.

**CLOSED
Report Generated on
28/02/2025**



Reporter's Section

Occurrence Type			
Occurrence Type	ATC/ABM/ALI	Event Type	Incident
Service	Defence		

Details of Individual Reporting Occurrence			
Rank/Title	*****	Role During Occurrence	ATC - Area
Was this DASOR generated from an In-form/EMS report	No		

Injuries		
Injuries	Military Personnel	Civilian Personnel
Deaths (Number)	0	0
Specified Injuries (Number)	0	0
Over-7-day Incapacitation (Number)	0	0

Additional Reports	
Additional Reports	Airprox, Air Traffic Management

Occurrence Details			
Date of Occurrence	23/09/2024	Time of Occurrence	11:05 Zulu
Time of Day	Day	Place of Occurrence (No Operationally Sensitive Information)	East of D514 Ivo GOTGO
Country (No Operationally Sensitive Information)	United Kingdom	Station	Swanwick RAF (U)
Unit	ATC - Swanwick (Mil) - 78 Sqn	Exercise Name	-
Operation Name	-	Local Reference Number	-
Ordnance Munitions and Explosives Related	-		

Aircraft Involved			
Aircraft Type	-	Other (Please State)	-
Aircraft Mark	-	Aircraft Registration	-
Embarked on ship	No		

Meteorological & Environmental Conditions			
Workplace (e.g. cockpit, hangar)	-	Workplace Temp (°C)	-
OAT (°C)	-	Icing	false
Weather Conditions	-	Visibility Distance (m)	-
Working Light Level	-	Sea State	0
Wind Direction	-	Wind Speed	-
Cloud Cover	-	Cloud Height (ft)	-
Precipitation Type	-	Intensity	-
Altimeter/Pressure Setting	0 In Hg -		

Briefed Task	
ATC Area trainer for a UT returning to controlling after approximately 8 months away from the role. Transit for an FNF417 (C295 type) at FL220 from KLONN to EGXW. Other traffic expected was a transit from south of D514 towards EGPH to avoid D514 and then into EGQS and around a similar time a transit from EGQS to a NW entry point in D514.	

Description of Event	
Brief Title	
NORTH-AIRPROX-FNF417-Tac Left.	
Narrative Description of Event	

I was training a UT in North Bank with a north-south transit at FL220 callsign FNF417 under a Radar Control service. The UT had correctly scanned and assessed conflicts and had spotted a traffic conflict with a 2460 squawk, as the squawk was an Ex COBRA WARRIOR squawk belonging to 19 Sqn, the UT was unable to identify who at 19 Sqn was controlling to aircraft; we discussed calling 19 Sqn FA02 (supervisor for weapons controllers) to request coordination either by proxy or to be transferred to the controller.

FNF417 under a Radar Control was shortly to become DS due to entering a TRA on it's heading at that time. FA02 answered the call, the UT requested coordination and pointed out a 2460 Squawk with a mode C indicated height of 214 and used 'GOTGO' as a location to point-out to required traffic to 19 Sqn, FA02 was unable to locate GOTGO so I intervened and said that it was east of D514 airspace where the exercise was being conducted, they called contact on the 2460 traffic and the UT pointed out their own aircraft to then discuss coordination.

Coordination was not forthcoming from the FA and the tracks were getting closer (opposite direction), I requested that they stay inside the TRA as a solution and we would take a turn left to remain outside of the TRA and give them more freedom to manoeuvre; the FA advised that this would not be achievable and instead directed us to take up a heading of 200 degrees, in response I confirmed that if we took that heading they were the unknown factor and would be required to avoid our traffic by 5 miles, the FA agreed the course of action.

With the traffic coordinated, I instructed FNF417 to descend to FL180 as the FA had said the Air-Air refuelling levels were FL190-220; this would have meant they could have avoided us for less time.

Within approximately 3 minutes of the coordination being agreed and as the aircraft were separated by 10nm laterally west and east, with FNF417 being to the west of the 2460 squawk, I witnessed the 2460 squawk turn left towards FNF417; as FNF417 was slower than the 2460 squawk I issued an avoiding action (AA) onto 270 degrees, this required a repeated instruction for the aircraft to take the AA, on the final call of the AA FNF417 was 6nm NW of the 2460 squawk.

The 2460 squawk continued to track directly towards FNF417 and close the lateral distance, the supervisor intervened and asked us to stop the descent, I kept calling the traffic and reassessed the AA, eventually updating the AA to turn onto 360 degrees.

The last call traffic call from myself to FNF417 before FNF417 advised that they were responding to ACAS RA was less than 1nm and co-level. I asked the aircraft to report ready to resume ATC instructions and eventually was able to turn back onto a southerly heading and requested vertical coordination with 19 Sqn.

What are / could be the Air Safety implications of this report?

This situation was completely unsafe in the relative distance between aircraft and could have resulted in a collision, ACAS RA was the only remaining barrier.

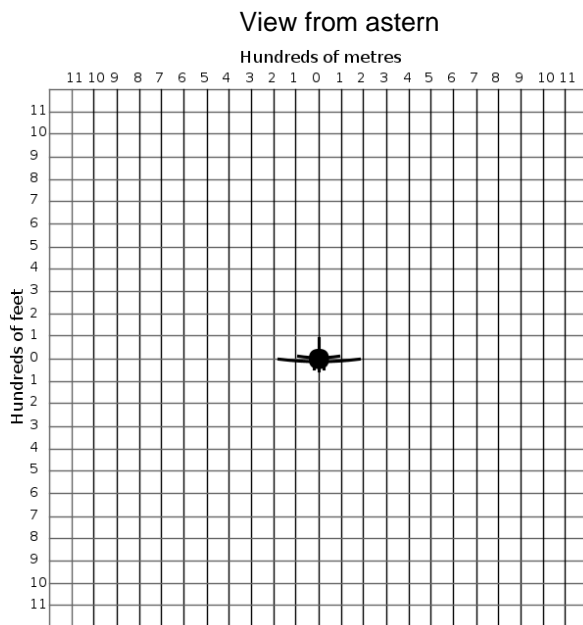
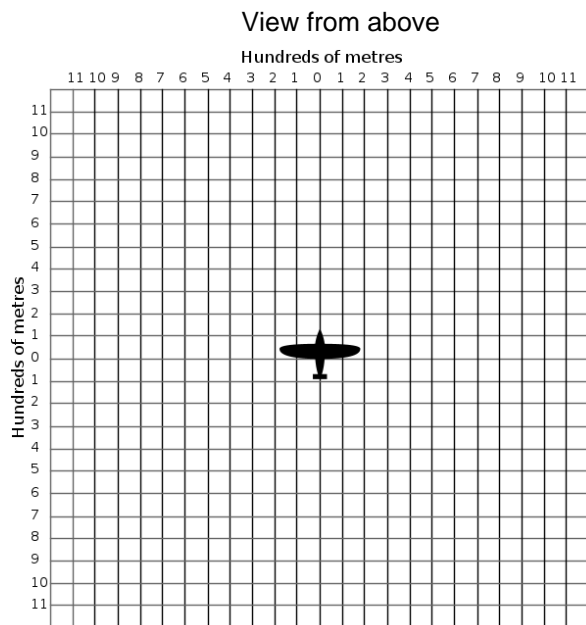
Perceived Severity

High

Airprox Report

Name of pilot in command	*****			
Flight deck crew compliment	-			
Operator - include address and phone number	Military Aviation Authority, Juniper, MOD Abbey Wood (Nth), BRISTOL, BS34 8JH			
Date and time of airprox	Date	23/09/24	Time	11:05 UTC
Aircraft registration and type	- (-)			
Colour scheme and external lighting (strobes, HISLs, nav lights etc)	-			
Radio call sign	Finforce417			
In communication with	Swanwick Military			
Type of ATC service	RC/DS			
RT frequency	234.500			
SSR transponder	Transponder Fitted	Yes	Transponder On	Yes
	Code	6107	Mode C	On Mode S -
Aerodrome of departure	-			
Aerodrome of first intended landing	-			
Classification of flight	Public Transport	-		
	-			
	-		Formation	-
Flight Rules at time of Airprox	Flight Rule	IFR		
	Low Flying Booking No.	-		
	CANP Filed	-		
	CANP Number	-		
	NOTAM Filed	-		
	NOTAM Number	-		
Position of Airprox	-			
Position of Airprox Lat/Long	Lat	-	Long	-
Aircraft heading	0		Magnetic	
IAS (Kts) or Mach No	-		-	
Altitude	-		-	
Altimeter/Pressure Setting	0	In Hg	-	
Aircraft attitude	-		-	
Flight phase	-			
Flight weather conditions at time of Airprox	Vertical Distance from Cloud	0	ft	-
	Horizontal Distance from cloud (km)	0.0		
	In	-		
	Own Aircraft relative to Sun	-		
	Other Aircraft relative to Sun	-		
	Flight visibility	0.0	km	

Description of other aircraft if seen: 1 Type, high/low wing, number of engines 2 Radio callsign, registration 3 Markings, colour, lighting 4 Aircraft attitude & other details	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
First sighting distance/radar/TCAS/TAS contact	-				
Minimum horizontal and vertical separation at time of Airprox	-				
Form of avoiding action taken; if none, state reason	-				
Assessment of risk of collision	Low				
Other relevant factors, i.e. workload, emergencies, vision from cockpit, etc.	-				
Airborne Collision Avoidance or Alert System (e.g. TCAS, TAS or FLARM)	TCAS Fitted	-	TA indicated	-	
	RA indicated	-	RA followed	-	
How did you report the Airprox, or hear about the Airprox report	By radio	-	To/From whom?	-	
	FREQ?	-	By phone	-	



Incident Description

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Air Traffic Management Report

Is this a mandatory report	true	Type	AIRPROX
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Location of Event	Ivo reporting point GOTGO.	Airspace Classification	Class C
Lat	-	Long	-
Runway in use	-		

Aircraft Involved			
Aircraft Registration	Aircraft Type	Aircraft Mark	Aircraft Type (Other)
-	-	-	-

Callsign	Type	SSR	Height/Altitude/FL/NM C	Pressure Setting	Type of service	Hdg or Track	Climbing/Descending/Level	Under Control of (Unit)
FNF417	C295	6107	220	1013	DS	200	180	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

RT Frequency	234.500	Radar Equipment in Use	P451-453
Equipment Serviceability	F/S	Number of Aircraft Involved	2
Number of Aircraft on Frequency	2	Were the aircraft co-ordinated?	Yes
Was traffic information given by you?	Yes	Was avoiding action given by you?	Yes
Did either pilot receive a TCAS RA?	Yes		
Details of ATC System Alert (STCA, DAIW etc.)	STCA		

Shift Start Time	09:00	Time Since Last Break	20 minutes
Days Since Last Day Off	2	Workload	Medium
Task Difficulty For Controller At Time Of Occurrence	3 - Increasing Difficulty		

Details	-
Aircraft or Vehicle Type	-
Specific Vehicle Details	-

ATS Facility	-	Duration of Outage	-
Equipment Location	-	Equipment Type	-
Equipment Status	-	Works Reference Number	-
Facility Configuration	-	Previous Defects/Occurrences	-
Operational Impact	-		

Supervisor Section

Rank/Title	*****		
Did You Witness the Occurrence	Yes	Controller Workload	Medium to Low
Units Workload	Low	Unit Cdr Informed	Yes
DAATM Informed	No	RAC (Mil) Informed	No
Tapes Impounded	No		

Supervisors Narrative

I was the Supervisor at the time of the occurrence. I had recently called the UT in for a training session where at the time, only the FNF417 was on frequency transiting down the East of the D514. Very shortly afterwards, East bank prenoted a CBY01 wanting a transit around the west side of D514 for a transit into Lossiemouth. The UT was being sat with an experienced controller who is a BMUE on a separate bank. I was asked by the instructor if I could organise a CFP with DCS for CBY01 which I sorted with no problem with the relevant civil sector. Once I passed the CFP agreement to the TAC, I returned to look at the Supervisor radar feed and could see the potential issue with a HOTSPUR squawk and FNF417, and could hear the discussion taking place between UT and Instructor. I continued my Sup tasks and my attention was alerted when I heard the Instructor intervene and take control of the situation, issuing a heading of 200 degrees. The instructor then informed me that HOTSPUR would be taking 5. Very soon after the HOTSPUR squawk started turning left directly towards FNF417. I saw the selected FL on their tag, and asked the instructor to stop their descent. I then heard further headings being issued and a reaction to an RA. Once clear, I saw that the Mode C of FNF417 was below the HOTSPUR squawk. A few moments later, the HOTSPUR FA called me and asked me to turn left with FNF417 and they would continue to turn right. I said negative to this request, that I was going to instruct my TAC to continue their right turn and that they were continuing a descent to FL180 as they were now at least 2000ft below the HOTSPUR track. The FA acknowledged and hung up. Shortly after the TAC called back to further co-ordinate as they were shortly to handover to East which was agreed and organised the UT and instructor to be relieved from controlling iot complete DASOR action. I then organised for myself to get relieved shortly after.

Occurrence Manager Section

Occurrence Manager Details	
Prime DASOR for Occurrence	Yes
Rank/Title	*****
Full Name	*****
Job Title	*****
Contact Details	*****
Occurrence Manager Notes	-

Further Action	
Further Action	Nil Further Action;
Investigators	*****
Investigation Type	LI
DG DSA Convened	No
Transferred to another EMS (In-Form, MySafety etc)	No

Operating Duty Holders or Accountable Managers		
ODH / AM	1. 2 Gp	2. -

Additional Information	
FOD Related	No
Age of Report	2nd - Second Age Reports focus on issues with them

Reports

Assessed Severity	
Assessed Severity	High
Assessed Severity Justification	-

DDH/AM Comments
From OC78 on behalf of the Air C2 Fce DDH RG: With an in depth investigation conducted by 19 Sqn into this AIRPROX 78 Sqn carried its own LI to confirm if it could have done anything better. In hindsight 78 Sqn could have planned earlier to maintain outside the TRA until co-ordination was achieved or begin descent earlier so as to drop below the tanker block. The controllers were debriefed and reminded of the importance of keeping co-ordination phraseology standard and the need to point out tracks explicitly. I recommend closure.

ODH/AM Comments
-

Investigation

Investigator Rank	*****	Full Name	*****
Job Title	*****	Contact Details	*****
Date Investigation Started	14/10/2024	Date Investigation Completed	18/11/2024
Workforce Hours Expended on Investigation	10:15		

Aircrew

ATC

Maintenance

Other

Summary of Investigation

This DASOR is being investigated convened to investigate the events leading up to the AIRPROX between a CASA C-295 (FNF417) and KC135 (QUID54).

The radar replay was viewed to ascertain the fuller picture.

Sequence of Events

Swanwick Mil North were handed Finnish Air Force (FNF) 417 from the Civilian sector due to their original routing having a track mileage of 319nm but a direct route from KLONN to NATEB was 251nm. 5 minutes later after negotiating with Swanwick Mil North, it was transferred to the military controller for a more expeditious routing.

FNF417 was tracking south down the Eastern side of the D514 complex enroute to RAF Waddington at FL220. The controller spotted a conflictor squawking 2460 (QUID54) with a MODE C indicating FL214 which was being worked by HOTSPUR. The controller initiated a call to HOTSPUR Fighter Allocator 2 to initiate co-ordination either by being put through to the controller or co-ordinating by proxy. At this time, the aircraft were approximately 45nm apart in opposite directions. The tape transcript is attached for awareness of the controllers workload and specific details of the conversations.

It took just under 2 minutes from initiating the call to HOTSPUR to be put through to the relevant controller due the HOTSPUR FA's assistant trying to locate who was working QUID54 squawk. When HOTSPUR Controller One Trainee (HC1T) answered, the Swanwick Controller Trainee (SCT) initiated a request for coordination, they pointed out their track which was FNF417, HC1 replied "copied" and then queried if it was staying inside or outside the TRA. Swanwick Controller Instructor (SCI) then said that they were routing around the D514 airspace. At this point, the 2 tracks were ~22nm apart.

SCI then said that FNF417 would turn to the right, if QUID54 came no further left and they'll take 5nm laterally. HC1T stated that FNF417 would come into their tanker block of FL190-FL220. SCI offered that if they turned FNF417 left and QUID54 turned left, that would deconflict the tracks. HC1T seemed unsure of this course of action so HOTSPUR Controller One Instructor (HC1I) intervenes and said the best course of action would be for FNF417 to turn right onto a heading of 200 degrees to deconflict the traffic. SCI confirmed that if they turned FNF417 onto a heading of 200 degrees, QUID54 would avoid them. SCI issued the turn for FNF417 to turn right onto heading 200 and both parties stated their contentment with the course of action.

FNF417 requested a deconfliction service upon entering the TRA and SCT put a range and bearing on the two tracks which showed 12 miles of separation. SCI issued a descent to FL180 to FNF417 to get them beneath the tankers block however FNF417 did not start the descent, but MODE S showed it selected. 9 seconds after the pilot read the level change back, SCI issued an avoiding action turn right onto 270 degrees calling the traffic (QUID54) Southwest, (QUID54 was actually Southeast) at 10nm indicating 600ft below. The pilot asked for the heading to be repeated and SCI restated an avoiding action onto 270 degrees. 9 seconds after reading this back, the white Short Term Conflict Alert (STCA) highlighted the two tracks together showing a potential conflict.

At the same time, "the crew received a confusing transmission about traffic and keeping something. The crew did not understand this transmission and asked Thunder to say again. They did not have any receivers in formation". QUID54 believed that FNF417 was being controlled by HOTSPUR and as such, they commenced their left turn as planned which brought the two tracks onto a converging heading.

SCI spoke to CBY07 who they were also working letting them know that they can expect to maintain their current heading for 10 miles before turning them onto a heading of 360 degrees (this aircraft checked in at the start of the phone call to HOTSPUR). SCI then updated FNF417 as to QUID54s position as Southwest (it was South East), 6 miles, tracking North West, 600ft below. FNF417s reply was unintelligible due to static. SCI instructed FNF417 to conduct another avoiding action turn with a right turn onto a heading of 360 degrees as they started to descend. SCI then told FNF417 to stop their descent whilst the turn onto North continued. They then updated the FNF417 that QUID54 was now Southeast, 1nm and co-level.

After QUID54 had initiated their turn, HOTSPUR instructed QUID54 to turn right onto a heading of 010 degrees which would have reversed the turn and brought them into further confliction with FNF417. The crew elected not to take the right turn as they assessed that doing so would cause them to go further into confliction, so they continued the left turn as FNF417 was in and out of cloud. When FNF417 reappeared, they deemed the left hand turn insufficient to increase separation from what they originally assessed and so initiated an immediate right turn and stated their intentions to HOTSPUR. With no communications between the two aircraft, they then assumed that a right turn was also given to FNF417 which led to both aircraft being issued a turn in the same direction. Of note, QUID54's radio that was being used for ATC comms was intermittent/poor and also a QUID52 also working in the area causing some occasional callsign confusion.

23 seconds later, FNF417 told Swanwick that they were responding to a TCAS RA. SCI acknowledged the TCAS RA and to report ready to resume control instructions. At this point, the red STCA was highlighted between the two tracks with the system highlighting an imminent risk of collision. 11 seconds later, FNF417 reported visual with QUID54. 35 seconds after reporting visual, FNF417 requested vectors, with Swanwick keeping them on a 360 degree heading and confirming that they were under a deconfliction service explaining that there was traffic (QUID54) manoeuvring towards them and they would keep them clear. Swanwick then issued a right turn to 090 degrees and to descend to FL160 before turning them south and they recovered to Waddington.

Findings

Outcome 1	Air Operations -> Loss of Safe Separation -> Airprox -> Co-operating
Narrative Description of Outcome	As both aircraft were converging, Swanwick initiated avoiding action onto a heading of 270 degrees against QUID54, turning further right to 360 degrees. The HOTSPUR controller issuing a right turn unknowingly increased the risk as they were no longer aware of Swanwick's intentions to also turn further to the right.
Cause 1	Human Factors Performance -> Action/Execution -> Control/Handling
Narrative Description of Cause	The poor radio communications between QUID54 and HOTSPUR meant that HOSTPUR's turn to the right wasn't initiated sooner with the reasoning to explain the turn. This could've meant that before QUID54 turned left to maintain their tanker orbit, separation could have been maintained. QUID54 not taking the right turn due to assessing the flight path of an aircraft in and out of cloud, on TCAS and not having the fullest picture of track vectors of the aircraft that radar provides may have increased the risk of collision exacerbated by the poor radio communications degrading awareness for both the pilot and controller.
Cause No Recommendations(Justification of No Action)	Recommendation in casual factor 1.1
Causal Factor 1.1	Technical Factors -> Aircraft -> Function
Causal Factor Type	Contributory Factor
Narrative Description of Causal Factor	QUID54 having intermittent/poor radio communications with ATC meant that calls/full reasoning behind descisions were missed and the tanker pilot's situational awareness was degraded.
Causal Factor No Recommendations(Mitigation)	QUID54 rasied the matter with the maintainers and the UHF comm 2 radio was subsequently placed inoperable.
Outcome 2	ATC/ABM/ALI -> Oversight/Procedure Error -> Checklists/Procedures -> Not Followed
Narrative Description of Outcome	The coordination that was agreed was non-standard and FNF417 was not referred to as required in RA3230, with FNF417 operating under a deconfliction service, it was the responsibility of the Swanwick controller to maintain 5nm separation laterally or 3000ft vertically. With QUID54 turning to the left and towards FNF417, best effort was made to maintain separation however it was not acheived.
Cause 2	Human Factors Performance -> Action/Execution -> F2FP - Unintentional Deviation From Suitable Process/Procedure
Narrative Description of Cause	In a high pressure situation where co-ordination was the chosen course of action. The co-ordination was non-standard and due to the fact that Swanwick although pointing out HOTSPURs track (QUID54) using a correct method of identification under RA3227 (i.e. SSR data). FNF417 was not referred to explicitly as detailed in RA3230 although it was evident to both parties which aircraft were involved due to no other relevant traffic in the area.
Cause No Recommendations(Mitigation)	Controllers were debriefed and reminded of the importance of keeping co-ordination phraseology standard and the need to point out tracks explicitly.
Causal Factor 2.1	Individual Factors -> Performance -> Perceived Pressure/Stress
Causal Factor Type	Contributory Factor
Narrative Description of Causal Factor	The pressure of two tracks in opposite directions and the aim of agreeing a suitable course of action may have rushed controllers to not deviate from the correct phraseology and also the duration from the call being initiated to the course of action being agreed was over 3 minutes in duration.
Causal Factor No Recommendations(Mitigation)	Mitigation in Cause 2
Observations	The controllers on both sides were trainees with the Swanwick controller having recently come back from an extended out of area.
Effects	Reputational Impact

Description	This event could impact the reputation of 78 Sqn. An airprox such as this, suggests potential lapses in decision making and co-ordination, casting doubt on 78 Sqn's ability to manage traffic levels and conflictors. This could lead to partner nations being less willing to accept a shortcut or service from 78 Sqn when transiting GAT.
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Comments

[REDACTED] (19 Sqn Dep FSO)	24/09/2024 14:24
<p>C2 acknowledges this event and will conduct investigation.</p> <p>Once DASOR raised by C2, reports will be linked.</p>	
[REDACTED] (ATCO + Supervisor)	25/09/2024 15:25
<p>As North BMUE, I was asked to complete a radar replay of the airprox.</p> <p>After seeing the radar replay and speaking with Hotspur i can state co-ordination was agreed by both parties and both fully understood the co-ordination. Hotspur issued a turn right to the tanker and the tanker took his own turn into the Swk ac. This appears to be a case of the pilot not hearing or following the instructions given leading to the airprox..</p> <p>In hindsight SWK could have also planned slightly earlier to maintain outside the TRA until co-ordination was achieved or begin descent earlier so as to drop below the tanker block , however co-ordination was still agreed prior to 10nm so the main causal factor for this airprox appears to be the actions of the tanker pilot.</p>	
[REDACTED] (19 Sqn Dep FSO)	28/09/2024 07:42
<p>Posting on behalf of [REDACTED] who was FA02 for this event.</p> <p>"[REDACTED]"</p> <p>Thanks for the information raised below. The only element I wanted to clarify was every reference to FA/FA02 in your narrative is actually referring to the FM (WC). The first interaction I had with Swk Mil was a call to the North Sup to explain we were continuing QD's right turn onto 010 to achieve lateral separation.</p> <p>I hope this clears the narrative.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
[REDACTED] (78 Sqn Occurrence Manager)	21/10/2024 10:20
<p>Comment from USAFE LO 18/10/24-</p> <p>As noted in the previous email I sent a query to the Maintainers for QUID 54.</p> <p>The maintainers have investigated the problem and have detected that the comm 2 UHF radio on the aircraft ins not performing as expected. The aircraft is still offline due to the inop radio (CAO 18 OCT).</p>	
[REDACTED] (MAA Air Ops Assurance)	24/10/2024 10:30
Airprox Number: 2024241	