

EREBUS: reducing risk through live flight testing

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Creating a capability that tests UK defensive aid systems (DAS) in real-world flight conditions before integration onto frontline aircraft.

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and QinetiQ have created EREBUS, a flight test capability for UK defensive aid systems (DAS).

DAS is fitted to military aircraft to detect and protect them from threats like radar and missiles.

This system allows real-world testing of DAS before being fitted onto frontline aircraft. This reduces risk, cost and time. It builds on laboratory and simulation testing by providing a real-world evaluation capability.

EREBUS helps the UK maintain world-class air protection technology by:

- reducing risk before DAS is fitted to operational aircraft
- optimising configurations for maximum protection
- supporting spiral development to enable rapid upgrades
- scaling capability to support UK and allied fleets
- improve longevity of the UK world-leading air protection solutions
- looking at ways to make simpler, cheaper DAS pods safer and more reliable, with fewer risks during development or use

How EREBUS reduces costs

Fitting DAS to aircraft is the most expensive part of DAS rollout. EREBUS helps reduce these costs by making development faster and smoother, and it could also let the UK share costs with NATO partners. Working with Leonardo, Thales, and Chemring has also helped protect UK jobs and encouraged future investment.

Sharing best practice

EREBUS is already attracting interest from NATO and European partners. The UK is sharing best practice and access to the test capability through the Four-Eyes Air Electromagnetic Warfare Combined Test and Evaluation Programme Agreement and reinforcing our reputation for world-class DAS development across NATO.

Progress so far

A flight test was completed in October 2025. Future work will focus on reducing the risks of fitting UK DAS to aircraft. This should make it simpler, quicker and cheaper to bring new systems and upgrades into service.

Find out how to work with us.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/erebus-reducing-risk-through-live-flight-testing>