

208 Squadron 'Valley Wings' Article September 2015

A warm welcome from the Classic Squadron here at RAF Valley. With the Anglesey Summer drawing to a close, 208(R) Squadron are batting down the hatches for the long winter ahead.

Since the last issue, the mighty 208 have deployed for a week long detachment to Lossiemouth, one of our former homes. Exercise Tartan Sphinx consisted of 6 Hawk T1's deploying to complete low level tactical training as part of the SAP phase, whilst operating from - and flying in - an unfamiliar location. The students flew a total of 74 sorties in the 6 day detachment, a testament to the high serviceability rate of the Hawk T1 and the excellent support of the squadron's Babcock engineers.

In addition to the flying, 208(R) Squadron made the most of the Scottish highlands and conducted several force development and adventure training events, including mountain biking, sailing and – of course – golf! The squadron also took the time to remember fallen comrades by paying their respects at the Califer Viewpoint Memorial, established to honour the two former 208(R) Squadron students killed in the Moray Firth Tornado crash in 2012. Whilst not flying, the students and staff were ably hosted by 6 Squadron, who gave them a flavour of what the Tranche 2 Typhoon is capable of - and for some, a look to the future after their fast jet training at RAF Valley, oh and did we mention owning happy hour?!

On returning to Valley, 208 hosted a Squadron of Pilatus PC-21 training aircraft from the Swiss Air Force. The shiny red airplanes flew to Valley to make use of the excellent airspace and the breathtaking low level environment on our door step. These aviators flew a range of sorties including: air combat, air policing and low level navigation. Both squadrons interlinked seamlessly, making sure every back-seat was full so the pilots from both air forces could see how each other operate. Away from flying, the social side was well supported with a British Night (ploughman's lunch and Welsh real ale), a Swiss night (meat, meat, cheese, chocolate, red wine, meat) and a sports evening – we're not sure of the final result that day, so lets call it a draw? Hopefully we can return the favour and beat them on their own turf!

Moving onto the sqn's primary role, TW83 consisting of Mike, Paddy, Rob, Tris and Taggy have, after completing their SAP phase in Lossie and the evasion phase (with a few tears and some 'extra fun' thrown in) at Valley, finally made it into the 2v1 Air Combat arena. The constant 2v1 comm, echoing down the corridor is starting to frustrate the Creamies who'll be starting their Tactical Weapons (TW) refresher at the end of the autumn and only hope that they can be as good!

V150 course, the pair of salty sea dogs, are still fighting through Advanced Flying Training (AFT) as BV's partner in life has only just returned to flying after a prolonged injury. The hunched back of Y-Fali took the summer off to realign his spine after some sort of navy night went wrong in the mess. After asking Bins and BV what 'Navy Nights' consisted of, I was curtly told where to go whilst being reminded that 'traditions are traditions'. Hopefully the pair will progress onto TW in October before they return to their family home at Culdrose early next year.

In A Flight news, it was a 3-0 home win for Team Cream and Rich "The Don" Frick vs CFS with their A2s. The not-so-grumpy-after-all CFS examiner Fruitbat, was subjected to all three tests and the subsequent ground school. His personal low was, when Creamie Clown 1, *anon*, was given free reign to teach a lesson of his choice, and chose to subject him to an hour long seminar on the Hawk transponder.....zzzzzzzz! Anyway guys, a massive congrats on surviving the A2 pain (for Fricky that's the 3rd ac type he's an A2 on!) and enjoy having your lives back. Charlie Butterbean...your time has come...again...

In other news: Squadron Leader Wes Wesley has happily relinquished his tyranny over B Flight to Squadron Leader James 'TED' Taylor-Head – welcome back to Valley after your ground tour on 41(TES) Squadron, Squadron Leader Dan Arlett was actually seen doing some admin AND desk time thus allowing the A Flt junta to do some flying, Sawley turned up for met brief on time, the Deputy Flight commanders proved that sqn execs *can* be done in an hour and finally Team Cream will start their TW refresher whilst on detachment at French Air Force Solenzara, aiming to escape from the clutches of the island of dreams by the end of the year ...or so they think...until next time, stay classy y-Fali.

Gus Turbine