

NAVAL EIGHT 208 NEWS 2013



The Annual Newsletter of the Naval 8/208 Squadron Association

Letter from the Squadron



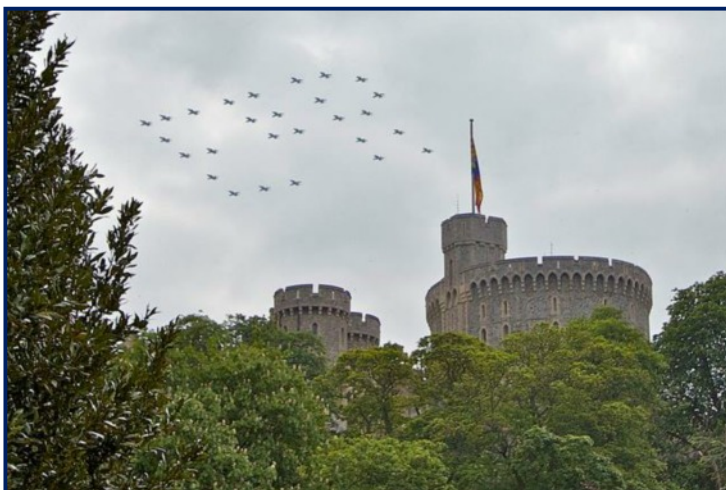
In the last letter from the Sqn, our future looked uncertain to say the least and it is a great pleasure to be able to write to you this year with far better news. Although I only assumed command of 208 in Dec 12, I am no stranger to life as a Hawk QFI at RAF Valley, having previously served as a Flt Lt on the Sqn ten years ago. With the Hawk T Mk 2 due to take over the flying training task from 208 Sqn, it had seemed almost certain that this would lead to disbandment at the end of last year. Thankfully the decision has now been made that 208 Sqn will continue in the flying training role as part of a contract to train fast jet pilots for the Royal Saudi Air Force. The first four Saudi students arrived at RAF Valley in Feb and have since completed ground school, and made a promising start to their flying training courses. We anticipate receiving another two Saudi students before the end of the year with numbers continuing to increase into 2014 while we also maintain our traditional task as the Hawk T Mk 1 OCU.

As in the past couple of years, 208 Sqn will continue to train students from the Tucano and deliver them direct to the front line OCUs. In order to complete this task it is vital that we rebuild the instructor cadre and as such the gradual decline in numbers over the last 12 months has now started to reverse with the arrival of several new instructors.

Despite the uncertainty of the last 12 months, the Sqn still has much to be proud of after another hard working year. Since the last newsletter,

we have flown 3633 hours over 3667 sorties and in the process we have graduated a range of students of which 19 have been ab intios going directly to the front line OCUs. At the current time we are still the only unit maintaining the flow of trained aircrew to the front line, although IV Sqn are expected to output their first students soon.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the last 12 months has been the EIIR flypast conducted to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, in partnership with IV Sqn and 100 Sqn. The formation was displayed to the public on two occasions, with the first being over Windsor Castle and the second during the Royal International Air Tattoo in July. On both occasions the Sqn performed very professionally in testing conditions and the results speak for themselves as you can see from the adjacent photo.



(Continued on page 3)

Naval 8 – 208 Rumblings



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The President's Foreword

It was a great relief to learn last autumn that the Squadron had been saved from the axe – at least for the immediate future; with many of the instructors posted to new appointments there was a scramble to recruit some new instructors to run the Squadron and train new pilots! OC 208 Squadron will say more in his piece and I would like to offer a warm welcome to Nick Gatenby who took up his appointment in December – his biography appears later in the Newsletter and as you will see he has served on 208 Squadron before – welcome back! I would like to thank Wing Commander Eugene Moriarty for his superb and unswerving support for the Association over the last 3 years and I would like to wish him every success in his new post in MOD. At last year's Association Reunion Dinner, Group Captain Bill Cope completed the Buccaneer era trilogy, where he described the role played by 208 Squadron and the Buccaneer in the First Gulf War and the final phasing out of the "banana" jet sporting 208 Squadron colours. To set the scene, Bill Cope's speech was introduced by Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Stear (AOC 18 Group at the time) and Air Cdre Jon Ford (RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander in 1991). Bill's fascinating account is reproduced later in the Newsletter (and on the Association Website - <http://www.naval8-208-association.com/>). In 2013 we move onto the next chapter, with the 208 Squadron name plate moving to RAF Valley and the Hawk aircraft. The first part of the Hawk story will be told by Monty Christy, the first Hawk squadron commander of 208 at the Reunion Dinner, which will be held at the RAF Club on **Saturday 19th October 2013**; I look forward to seeing you all there to reflect, to reunite and to offer thanks for our continuing survival, no mean feat in this day and age!

Chairman's Chunter

I would like to thank Wg Cdr Eugene Moriarty for all his support (and that of his wife – Charlotte) for the Naval 8/208 Squadron Association, where because of his leadership we enjoyed excellent attendance at the Reunion Dinners from current Squadron members. Good luck in your new appointment and I hope we will continue to see you at the Reunion dinner. As mentioned by the President, a very warm welcome to Wg Cdr Nick Gatenby; I look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the current Squadron. I am pleased to announce that we have a new Buccaneer Chapter representative - Sqn Ldr Paul "Skids" Harrison, who served on Buccaneers on 208 Sqn between 1988 and 1994 and is the current OCA on 208 Sqn. I think Skids has served almost 10 years on 208, so I couldn't think of a more suitable representative. Welcome aboard.

The Newsletter is the lifeblood of the Association and we are very lucky that Wg Cdr Malcolm Ward continues in the tradition set by David Styles by producing a very readable and thoroughly professional product – thank you Malcolm. You may be interested to know that David Styles has a new book out on "The Tuskegee Airmen and Beyond" – you can view details via this [link](#), or simply search for the title on line. Of course, the editor is always on the lookout for material to fill these pages, so if any of you have memorabilia or anecdotes that you would like to share, please get in touch with Malcolm. Likewise, we always welcome contributions to the Association [website](#). Please contact Tim Webb with any material you may have, especially any new photos and written pieces that will fill the gaps in a particular era.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY – while the general financial situation of the Association is sound, with a reasonable balance sheet sufficient for our immediate needs, there is clearly a need to establish a modest surplus to ensure that we can fund the cost of future printing of the Newsletter. Currently we enjoy very favourable rates for the printing, but we must recognise that this may not continue. We do not charge any membership subscriptions (although this will be kept under review) so we rely on the very generous donations of our members, thus please keep the donations rolling in!

Letter from the Squadron

(Continued from page 1)



While continuing with the core task, 208 Sqn also supported the 2012 Hawk display with Flt Lt Phil Bird completing a very successful season and raising of over £10,000 for charity. Phil has since left 208 Sqn and is currently serving 12 months in the Falklands. Unfortunately as 208 Sqn was on the verge of being disbanded it has not been possible to support a display during the 2013 season but we remain hopeful if not confident for future seasons.

As the Sqn drew down over the course of 2012 we saw plenty of staff and students leave the unit with many of them moving onto new and exciting roles. Several members of the Sqn were selected for exchange posts, with Flt Lt Andy Watson heading to California to fly the F-18, Flt Lt

Nick Jewsbury heading to Canada also to

fly the F-18, Flt Lt Dave Griffiths heading to France to fly the Alpha Jet and Flt Lt Will Rickets heading to Holland to fly the F-16. One of the Sqn's 'creamie' instructors has also been selected for an exchange, with Flt Lt Will Macdonald due to take up a post later this year as an AV-8B Harrier pilot with the United States Marines. In due course Will should progress to fly the F-35 Lightning II. Several of the recent Navy students, including Lt Rob Hunt who provided the photo below, have now started their carrier training with the United States Navy on the Goshawk. They too should progress to the F-18 in the fullness of time.



Despite the long list of departed instructors those that remain have still managed to squeeze some opportunities for fun and adventure out of the Sqn, with detachments to Gibraltar for air combat training and tours for QFI training. There have been Overseas Training Flights to Sweden, Italy, Malta and Hungary along with a mountain bike expedition to Italy, sailing in the Channel Islands and skiing in Austria. Although there has been plenty of fun there has also been some serious work with Flt Lt Jules Fleming recently returning to the Sqn following an Out of Area Detachment to Qatar working in the Combined Air Operations Centre and Sqn Ldr Jamie Buckle recently returning on promotion after a short posting with the Marines in Plymouth.

So after a year of uncertainty and doubt, 208 Sqn can now start to rebuild its strength as we prepare to meet the new training tasks which should continue to grow over the forthcoming

year. I look forward to being able to update you about our progress at the annual dinner in October.

Nick Gatenby
OC 208 Sqn



Guest of Honour 2012

The guest of honour at the 2012 reunion dinner was Gp Capt Bill Cope. His presentation covered the end of the Buccaneer era, focussing on Sqn's deployment on Operation GRANBY.

INTRODUCTION

Never in the field of our association's recent presentations, has a speaker had so many people in his audience who already know what he is going to say! Nevertheless I must thank Kim Smith, who was my Exec in the Gulf, for giving me valuable (and very tactful!) advice in the interests of truth and diplomacy, in preparing this 21 years old short talk on Operation GRANBY, more widely known as part of DESERT STORM. I thought I would tell you how our people and our rather elderly aircraft performed in what was then, a very modern war.

DEPLOYMENT

At 4am on 26th of January the first 2 Buccaneers left Lossiemouth to rendezvous with a Tristar tanker over southern England, and then fly together, non-stop, to Muharraq Airport in Bahrain. 8.30hrs later we landed in Bahrain. Another 4 aircraft followed us over the next few days. Our arrival in Muharraq was uneventful, actually it was very uneventful! I was quite surprised when no-one from the base came out to meet us, just our own Groundcrew. If we had expected a welcome for bringing a much-needed additional capability to the RAF element in-theatre, we were to be disappointed. We were required to operate with RAF Tornados from 3 bases; Muharraq in Bahrain, and Tabuk and Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. I assigned one Sqn Ldr to liaise with each base, to ensure standardisation of Buccaneer/Tornado procedures, and to ensure prompt dissemination of good ideas.

OPERATIONS

We had no electronic interface between the aircraft's navigation system and the Pavespoke laser. Consequently we had no electronic means of directing the laser onto the target. We had to rely on the aircrew harmonising the laser bore-sight with the pilot's sight on an object in the foreground prior to taxiing. When airborne the pilot had to visually acquire the target, aim his sight at it, and then call "sight on" to the navigator, who then opened his view-finder, hopefully to see the target. This is what passed as modern technology! Nevertheless, it worked most of the time. However, very small alignment errors made on the ground, at short range, (typically 100-200 yards), could turn into significant differences in the air when the visibility was sometimes 20 miles or more, and particularly so when there were several examples of the same type of target clustered together. This caused problems on more than one occasion.

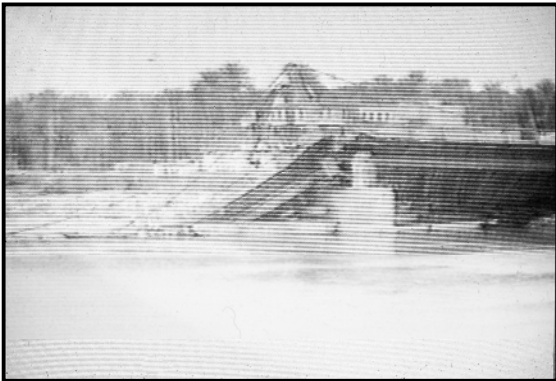
Virtually all logistic support for the Iraqi Forces in Kuwait came through Iraq by road. So, our first targets were to be the many bridges where main routes crossed the major rivers. We operated a standard "package" consisting of 2 Buccaneer laser designators (in case one Pavespoke failed) and 4 tornado bombers. We were protected by 2x US F-15 Eagle fighters. 2x Wild Weasel SAM suppression aircraft, (usually F-16 Fighting Falcons), one F-111 E "Raven" Jammer, and all this under the very comforting overview of an AWACS radar/surveillance aircraft which periodically transmitted a much appreciated "only friendly's airborne". Actually we met no Iraqi aircraft in the air at all.



I think most squadron commanders have a mental image of how they think they will go into battle for the first time. It usually consists of leading the aircrews and aircraft that we have trained with for months, or even years. On my first mission, reality was rather different. As we transited over Iraq, heading for the bridge at As Suwaira I wasn't leading at all - the Tornados were. We were at high level, not low-level and over land not over sea. The Middle East is always envisaged in burning sunshine! I was in cloud, staring at a Tornado's wingtip. I was listening to lots of soviet



radar systems just as I had in the simulator at home, but these were real signals coming from enemy radars. The thought running through my mind was "IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS!" We came out of cloud, as forecast, but still under cloud, into a flat, brown, landscape in a flat grey light. The roads were brown, the rivers (lots of them) were brown; there was no colour contrast at all. Both Buccaneers were late acquiring the target. However, direct hits from both salvos of 6 LGBs demolished the bridge completely, Strike ONE. This instance of bad weather was by no means unique; over the following weeks we were to lose several days operations due to cloud/rain and also sandstorms. So much for imagining the desert's endless burning sunshine!



Iraqi bridges were all on a large scale and included both motorway and suspension types. We initially had some misgivings about the effectiveness of our rather ancient 1000lb bombs. In the event it transpired that, their rapid, successive impacts and explosions produced a synergistically-greater destructive effect; rather like a hammer-drill; they proved very effective at destroying bridges. However, not every mission went according to plan. The LGBs that we were using were guided by what was described as a BANG-BANG system, which meant that the fins went from zero to full deflection and back to zero again, nothing between the two. But if they jammed at full or no deflection, there was no means of controlling the weapon. That happened on an attack against a bridge near the town of Fallujah

large numbers of unintentional civilian casualties resulted when some bombs malfunctioned and ended up in a busy market square. On some suspension bridges, the bombs went right through the roadway before detonating in, or above the river below the bridge; that was soon corrected by shortening the fuse time delay.

We also settled an old argument as to which was the best aiming point on suspension bridges, the abutments or the suspension towers. Bombs striking the thousands of tons of concrete that make the abutments did little apparent damage, but surprise, surprise, when we hit the towers, the bridges came down. Actually we were being more effective than we knew. The Iraqis were using fibre optic cables to communicate with their troops in Kuwait and these crossed the rivers on the bridges. So we cut not only the supply routes, but also the communication links; two for the price of one! The Iraqis tried to reinstate their supply routes by deploying pontoon bridges. However, pontoon bridges do not have enormously strong abutments and we sent them floating rapidly down river towards the Persian Gulf.

As the time for our land forces to move came closer, we were switched to attacking runways, taxiways and ammunition storage to prevent the Iraqi Air Force from getting airborne and intervening against our land forces attack; this was a much more difficult task than it seemed; the Iraqi airfields were vast. We were also tasked with attacking their Hardened Aircraft Shelters, against which our LGBs again proved highly effective. The Iraqis tried to decoy us away from our assigned HAS targets by painting large black circles on intact shelters to try to fool us into believing that they had already been hit by someone else. It worked on some occasions.

With no enemy fighter threat, and the proven superiority of our fighter escorts, we were able to dispense with our Sidewinder missiles and instead carry two LGBs on each Buccaneer. During 40 degree dive-bombing there were instances of DNCO due to some of the Navs, mainly the youngsters, inadvertently hitting the park button whilst tracking under a 4G recovery from the dive, hardly surprising really, but then the bombs went unguided. Although most of our tasking was taxiways and runways, we did catch two transport aircraft in the open at Shayka Mazar airfield on 27th February. They may have been the only two "kills" recorded by the RAF in the conflict, but being on the ground, I suspect they did not satisfy the definition of "kills". The ceasefire was announced the next day.

THE AIRCRAFT

The Press made much of the age of the Buccaneers on their deployment, allocating them the soubriquet "The Golden Oldies", that is very much what they proved to be, albeit we were not the oldest RAF aircraft in theatre. The Tornado aircrews were initially quite sceptical of our ability to keep up with them: they were very much mistaken. Although our navigation accuracy was clearly inferior to the Tornado, the Buccaneer's aerodynamic performance was clearly superior. It out-climbed the Tornado, cruised faster and higher, could refuel at much higher altitudes and required less fuel from the tanker on all missions. Despite always being the last aircraft to leave the target area we invariably arrived home first. Newer is not always better.



As for battle damage, we were very lucky: the Buccaneers took no hits at all. I think it would have fared very well in this regard. By the time we reached the target area all remaining fuel was in the 8 tanks which were in the upper half of the fuselage. The wings of the Buccaneer carry no fuel inside them, and apart from electrical and hydraulic lines are virtually solid metal. Most modern twin-engined fighter-bombers mount both engines side-by-side at the very back of the fuselage. If heat seeking missiles destroy one then they are likely to destroy both. On the Buccaneer the engines are at the front of very long, separated jet-pipes; it was therefore highly unlikely that a heat-seeker could get both engines. I doubt that battle-damage survival is given much priority in the design of our modern aircraft; I am sure it receives none from politicians or treasury civil servants. Cost is the over-riding issue; it is a very false economy.

THE AIRCREW

The initial detachment consisted of the most experienced aircrews of 208 and 12 Sqns and also No 237 OCU. Our initial successes resulted in a doubling of our aircraft numbers by a second 6 aircraft tranche, bringing the unit up to 12 aircraft, 18 aircrews and commensurate extra groundcrews. That necessitated inclusion of more of our first-tourist crews and a resultant experience "dilution". However, I could still have put a senior officer on every mission; riches indeed! I was concerned that the evident anxiety present amongst the Tornado detachment would be transmitted to my crews. Inevitably there was a degree of concern amongst our crews, but thankfully no hysteria. I am very proud of the Maritime Buccaneer Wing aircrews' performance. They quietly and quite efficiently, got on with the task in hand.

THE GROUNDCREW

Our groundcrews played a blinder. Albeit we had more groundcrew than a squadron at home would have had, and 2 SENGOS as well - the results were still impressive. So much so that, on at least one occasion Gen de la Billiere stopped his morning briefing on aircraft serviceability statistics to ask why his briefing staff always emphasised the availability of the Tornados when the statistics for the older Buccaneer and Jaguar were nearly always better. I do not know how they replied. The Buccaneer serviceability rate in theatre was second only to the Jaguar. We never lacked a spare aircraft at crew-in; the groundcrew stoically put up with stressed aircrews' foibles, errors and even rejection of serviceable aircraft when sometimes pilots failed to properly set up the Havequick radio - one of which was me! The technical support from Lossiemouth was better than I could have hoped for - exemplary. If we had fallen short in our task it would not have been RAF Lossiemouth's fault.

The aircrews walking back from a mission were understandably much happier and relaxed than those walking out. Some of our youngsters on the way out were perplexed to meet Mike Scarffe walking in looking quite dejected. On asking him why, he said "I have been tasked with bombing a disused airfield." After a few seconds to let that sink in, he broke into a mischievous grin and added: "Well it is now!" Scarffy was the originator of several little pearls which can be found in the Squadron's line book.



ACHIEVEMENT

Some 21 years after the First Gulf War, that heading seems, in some ways, inappropriate. However, it accurately sums up what we did. At our pre-deployment briefings I expressed a sincere wish that we would bring back everyone we took. I got my wish. All came home - that is a more pleasing definition of achievement. And we returned to a splendid welcome from our families and the local populace who had turned out to greet us - and a month's leave! Whilst I did not believe that there were any particularly heroic achievements by our people, I believe they made one of the most significant contributions to the RAF's participation in Desert Storm. That also applies to the then still experimental, 2 aeroplane TIALD Detachment. I was very disappointed when, in both cases, these contributions were largely ignored when the post-war decorations were handed out.

That was somewhat remedied, a few years after the War, when I met General Sir Peter de la Billiere, at Bentley Priory at a dinner to mark Sir Paddy Hine's retirement from the RAF. I had not previously met him, so I introduced myself as "the commander of the oldest frontline aircraft unit under his command in 1991". His response was: "Young man.." (I knew I was going to like him) "...your aircraft saved the RAF's reputation". I have Sir Peter's permission to use that quote.

AFTERWARDS

In 1992 I handed over to the last Buccaneer Squadron Commander, Nigel Huckins. The Buccaneer OCU had by then been closed, and aircrew conversion to type was carried out on 208 Sqn. Nigel believes that it was a highly efficient method of training, in that some conversion training could be carried out within normal squadron training formations, rather than specially generated ones, and submitted a paper on that subject. 2 pilots achieved successful conversion to type and went on to achieve front-line full status on the squadron.

However, the age of the Buccaneer was made very evident during this period. The tragic loss of Jim Henderson and Clive Lambourne (both experienced and skilful operators) was attributed to a catastrophic malfunction of a rudder powered-flying-control-unit at very high speed and very low-level. In this particular accident we were lucky to find the



rudder PFCU ram at an extension which was way beyond any possible pilot input. We lost a very capable and experienced crew on a beautiful day which posed no apparent difficulties. There were similarities in this fatal accident to other previous accidents and incidents in past years and there had been recent concern about possible failure of the cable lines which actuated the controls. Shortly afterwards John Fraser did a very good job of bringing his aircraft home safely with one half of his airbrake literally hanging off following failure of the supporting rear fuselage structure. Many of us believed that the 'Bucc' could have gone on for years more; but perhaps it was for the best that The 'Bucc' stopped when it did.

OC 208 Sqn, Nigel Huckins and his staff gave the Buccaneer and all the 'Oldies' a spectacular send-off in a spectacular weekend (not to mention some spectacular hangovers!) and that was THE END.

And 208 Sqn moved on to fly the Hawk - but that is another story.

Bill Cope

OC 208 Sqn 1989 – 1992



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"B" Dispersal, Honington open day 1982.



Left: Not an Audax, but the very similar Hawker Demon.

Below: The genuine article: the ex-208 Sqn Bristol Fighter, now in the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden.

(Photos: Copyright Geoff Collins, used by permission)



Hawk – and Hawker: The 2012 Display Hawk, flown by Flt Lt Phil Bird and a Hunter T7, as flown by 208 in both the Hunter and Buccaneer eras, the latter for pilot conversion and refresher training, as there were no two-stick Buccaneers. The Display Hawk was splendidly decked with the RAF Benevolent Fund HEART logo on the underside - emphasising the Association's close links with the RAF's leading welfare charity and the Association's President, the former Controller of the RAFBF!



208 hot & cold

Right:

Hot. Arriving at Cold Lake for Exercise Maple Flag in April 1983

Below:

Cold. Taxiing in at Goose Bay in February 1982



Right:

Stone cold. XV865 is immaculately presented in the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, but a Buccaneer that is not smeared with OM15 hydraulic oil and reeking of AVTUR is somehow just not right.



Squadron & Association News

SQUADRON COMINGS AND GOINGS April 2012 – March 2013

Arrivals:

Wg Cdr Nick Gatenby
Sqn Ldr Jamie Buckle
Flt Lt Jules Fleming
Flt Lt Tats Greenhalgh
Flt Lt Neil Staite
Fg Off Peirs Dudley
Fg Off Geraint Kingman

Departures:

Wg Cdr Eugene Moriarty
Flt Lt Jamie Buckle
Flt Lt Philip Bird
Flt Lt Olli Fleming
Flt Lt Dave Griffiths
Flt Lt Jon Mulhall
Flt Lt Will Ricketts
Flt Lt Peter Smith
Flt Lt Andy Watson

Sqn Ldr Dunc Laisney
Lt Ben Stubbs
Flt Lt Steve Caryer
Flt Lt Scott Griffith
Flt Lt Nick Jewsbury
Flt Lt Scott Noyes
Flt Lt Geoff Sheppard
Flt Lt James Spoor

NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE - CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES'

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HON SEC	M W Brown.
HAWK	Flt Lt T Sawle, c/o 208 Sqn, RAF Valley.
GROUNDCREW	D Gill.
EDITOR	Wg Cdr M M Ward.
HISTORIAN	Dr D G Styles.
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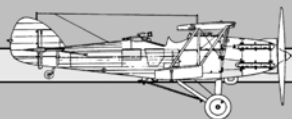
(Information on potential new members and enquiries from existing members seeking contacts should be addressed to the Membership Secretary)

COMMITTEE/CHAPTER NEWS:

Meteor. The Meteor Chapter had a successful gathering at the 'Coach and Horses', 1 Great Marlborough Street, Soho on Wednesday, 1 May 2013. Attendance was slightly depleted from previous years, but included Mike Bradley from Devon and Peter Large from Huddersfield. If you wish to join the gathering on Wednesday 7th May 2014, give Desmond Penrose a call.

The first Old Comrades gathering of Naval 8/208 took place in 1919 in a pub in Soho. The Meteor Chapter continues that tradition of an all ranks get together where old comrades can recall their time on the squadron. The Meteor Chapter meets on the first Wednesday in May, no longer in the original pub (where you might have been propositioned or, now, receive a marriage proposal!) but in an equally salubrious establishment!





In Memoriam



The Association records with regret the passing away of the following members:

Eric Beedham
Terry Boughton
Terry Gibson
Gordon Hodson
Graham Hounsell
Ray Offord
Douglas Simmons

Hurricane/Spitfire
Meteor
Hunter Armourer
Hawk Associate
Hunter
Hunter
Associate



Membership News

The Association welcomes the following new members:

John Francis
Mike Lake
Geoff Gibson

Hunter Ground Crew
Hunter Ground Crew
Hunter Ground Crew



Members Lost Contact:

F C M Robinson
M Shaw
R Anstead

Meteor
Hunter
Hunter

A R Tyler
R G Watson

Hunter
Unknown

Members Found Again:

Mike Snelling

Hunter

Terry Heyes

Buccaneer

Current Membership:

Full 350
Honorary 3

Associate 0
Lost contact 68
Total Full Members 418



Ben Laite
Membership Secretary

Squadron Snippets



75 COURSE GRADUATION

The members of TW75 Course, which was very nearly the final, final course to graduate from 208, passed out in fine style at the end of 2012.

From left to right:
Flt Lt Roger Cruickshank
Flt Lt Scott Noyes
Sqn Ldr Skids Harrison (Acting OC 208)
Mr Budgie Martin
Gp Capt Adrian Hill (Stn Cdr)
Flt Lt James Turner
Flt Lt Will Macdonald

FIRST SAUDI COURSE

The first course of students from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be trained on 208 Sqn arrived at Valley in February 2013. Salaam alaikum and welcome, gentlemen!

From left to right:

Lt Jarallah Al-Muzini
Lt Mesrea Al-Shamri
Lt Sultan Al-Ghamdi
Lt Rabah Al-Harbi



THE DESMOND PENROSE ATRIUM



Desmond Penrose, our esteemed Meteor Chapter Representative, graduated from Loughborough College in 1951. Some six decades later, the now University of Loughborough honoured their erstwhile student by naming the atrium of the aeronautical and automotive engineering department after him. A plaque to record the occasion was unveiled on 2 October 2012 by Professor Bob Allison, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University. Before the unveiling ceremony, invited guests were greeted by Dr Martin Passmore, Head of Aeronautical and Automotive Engineering, who gave a short resume of Desmond's long career, initially as an RAF Officer on 208 Sqn and subsequently as a Test Pilot with the Royal Aircraft Establishment and the deHavilland Aircraft Company, concluding with Desmond's more recent activity as a display pilot, having over 350 types of aircraft in his logbook. Desmond was quoted as saying: "Loughborough made me."



The Buccaneer Bosses

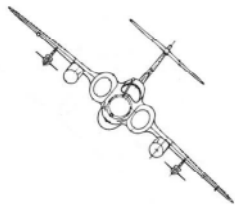
Seven of the eight Squadron Commanders from the Buccaneer era were present at the 2012 annual dinner of the Association at the RAF Club in London on 27 October 2012.



The Magnificent Seven
(L to R)
Nigel Huckins (1992-1994)
Graham Pitchfork (1979-1981)
Brian ("Boots") Mahaffey (1987-1989)
Phil Pinney (1976-1979)
Ben Laite (1981-1984)
Bill Cope (1989-1992)
John Ford (1984-1987)



Not to be outdone, their ladies rounded up the Association's Life Vice-President for another unique photograph.



The Buccaneer Belles (L to R):
Mrs Brenda Ford
Mrs Sarah Huckins
ACM Sir Michael Stear (Life VP)
Mrs Margaret Cope
Mrs Helen Laite



Keeping in Touch

The Squadron Association is always striving to update its records of former members of 208 Squadron. If you know of anyone who served with the Squadron and is not in touch with the Association, please let us know. It would help if you would take a moment to enter the details below. We will do the rest.

I believe that the following person served with No. 208 Squadron in (approximate year)

at RAF: The Squadron was flying.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Telephone: eMail:.....

Please forward to the Membership Secretary: Air Cdre Ben Laite.

Naval 8/208 Association Annual Dinner

62 Members and guests attended the Naval 8/208 Sqn Association Dinner at the RAF Club, Piccadilly, on 27th October 2012, including no less than nine OCs 208:

ACM Sir Michael Stear, AM Sir Robert and Lady Wright, Air Cdre and Mrs J Ford, Air Cdre and Mrs B C Laite, Air Cdre G Pitchfork, Mr and Mrs W Cope, Mr and Mrs N Huckins, Mr and Mrs B Mahaffey, Mr P Pinney, Wg Cdr and Mrs E Moriarty, Wg Cdr N Gatenby, Mr D T-Ryder, Dr D Styles, Ms M Brooks, Mr and Mrs J D Penrose, Mr and Mrs M W Brown, Sqn Ldr and Mrs S Harrison, Mr and Mrs P Smith, Dr and Mrs H Bashaarat, Wg Cdr and Mrs M M Ward, Flt Lt and Mrs T Sawle, Flt Lt and Mrs P Smith, Mr and Mrs K Smith, Mr and Mrs I Ross, Mrs J Abell, Mr F J Nicoll, Mr R Gittins, Flt Lt and Mrs P Bird, Flt Lt O Suckling, Mr and Mrs M Bradley, Flt Lt B Goodwin, Miss K Benko, Flt Lt G Sheppard, Miss J Smith, Flt Lt K Brown, Mr K M Whaley, Mr and Mrs J Swain, Mr T M Webb, Mr and Mrs E Sharp, Mr and Mrs P Gallagher.

The following members were unable to attend, but sent their best wishes:

K Allen, P W Armstrong, M Asher, H W Barber, M Bradshaw, W G Brooks, R Calvert, N Champness, C M Draper, T Erskine-Legget, H Field, R Hills, S Jefford, Gp Capt M Jeffery, M McGrogan, D Mee, G Moodie, J Parker, L Phipps, W F Plumpton, J Pratt, N Rivett, B Robinson, D Simmons, A G Smith, T A Smith, E A Thompson, K Trow, R Turner, B Weskett, D Wilby.

The 2013 Reunion Dinner will be held at the RAF Club at 6.00 for 7:00 pm on **Saturday 19th October 2013**. (Please note that this is one week earlier than the usual date.) Tickets cost £45 per head for the three course dinner, including port and coffee; this is the same price as last year. Please reserve your place via the Association Website or by using the booking form below.

Naval 8/208 Squadron Association – Reunion Dinner Booking Slip – 2013

Please return slip to: M W Brown.

From (Name)Chapter/Period with 208.....

Full Address.....

.....

.....

Telephone: eMail:.....

I will / will* not be attending the 2013 reunion dinner on Saturday 19th October 2013.

Please reserve places.

Names of guests:

Special dietary requirements (if any):

Payment: Reunion Dinner (£45.00 each) £.....

I also wish to make a donation to the Squadron Association Funds: £.....

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....

*** Please delete as appropriate**

Please make cheques payable to: 208 Squadron Association

OC 208 Sqn



Wing Commander Nick Gatenby joined the Royal Air Force in 1993 after reading Geology at Durham University. On completion of his flying training on the Tucano and Hawk aircraft his first operational tour was as an Air Defender on 111(F) Sqn at RAF Leuchars flying the Tornado F3. During this tour he completed operational deployments to the Middle East, flying combat sorties over Iraq in support of Operation Southern Watch and also to the Falklands Islands flying Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) sorties over the South Atlantic.

In 2001 Wing Commander Gatenby was posted to 208 Sqn at RAF Valley where he became a Qualified Flying Instructor on the Hawk T1 and ultimately finished this tour as the Central Flying School Hawk T1 Examiner. In 2004 Wing Commander Gatenby was promoted and posted to 56(R) Sqn, the F3 Operational Conversion Unit, at RAF Leuchars. During this tour he completed Qualified Tactics and Flying Instructor duties on the Standards and Evaluation Flight. This tour was then followed by a posting as the Executive Officer on XXV(F) Sqn at RAF Leeming during which he time was involved in multiple UK QRA launches against Russian long range aviation sorties by Bear and Blackjack aircraft.

In 2008 Wing Commander Gatenby was posted to HQ 1 Group into the newly established Joint Strike Fighter Role Office. During this post he developed the UK Lightning II Operational Conversion Syllabus. This was followed by a short tour in the Air Warfare Centre working as the Lightning II Trials and Test Pilot. Promoted to Wing Commander in 2011, he worked as the Fast Jet Desk Officer in the Directorate of Flying Training within 22 (Training) Group, responsible for the supervision of RAF and RN Fast Jet Flying Training before returning to RAF Valley on appointment as Officer Commanding 208 Sqn on 7 December 2012.

Wing Commander Gatenby is married to Janet and they have 2 children, Tom and Abi. His interests include mountaineering, generally keeping fit, and a new-found obsession with gardening.



Lunch in Iceland

I was asked if I fancied lunch in Iceland (not the supermarket) in the morning of 7th March 1989 – “of course” I replied! Actually, we planned to do a little more than have lunch. HQ 18 Gp had been requested by COMICELAND to task some aircraft to take part in a mini exercise to test the air defence forces protecting Iceland and the Greenland-Iceland-Faroes gap. A pair of Buccaneer aircraft were tasked to carry out a simulated attack against ground targets on Iceland as part of Exercise North Star, with USAF F15's as the defenders. Sqn Ldr Rick Phillips and I were number 2 to a junior crew to monitor their leadership as part of their 2-ship lead work-up. We departed RAF Lossiemouth and climbed to high level for a high-level transit. At approximately 350nms from our target we descended to 100 ft for our run-in to our simulated target (a little



hut/transformer station) on the south-east coast of Iceland. Even though we picked up the electronic emissions of the defending F15's they failed to “lock-up” and we appeared to make it through to our target unscathed (we will never know as we didn't get any feedback). After the target we stayed at low-level and had an enjoyable sight-seeing trip over the Icelandic ice-cap (see the photos). After a 2½ hour flight we landed at Keflavik, where the Americans helped us to turnaround our aircraft. Well it was lunchtime and we were hungry so we strolled off the “O Club” for a bite to eat. In traditional American fashion we ate pizza and drank coke-cola. The return journey was an uneventful straight flight back to Lossiemouth (1 hr 45 mins) and we were back in time for tea!



Scenes from the Dinner



Left: The Sqn Association Annual Dinner at the RAF Club on 27th October 2012 – time for a quick chat in the bar, before the dinner gong is sounded.

Below: Closing the Buccaneer Era:
(Left to right) Guest Speaker Bill Cope and his warm-up act John Ford and ACM Sir Mike Stear



The Sir Geoffrey Bromet Trophy for 2012 was awarded to Flt Lt Phil Bird. Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright, the President of the Association, presented the Trophy at the Association Dinner to Flt Lt Ollie Suckling, on behalf of Flt Lt Bird, who was unable to attend.

