

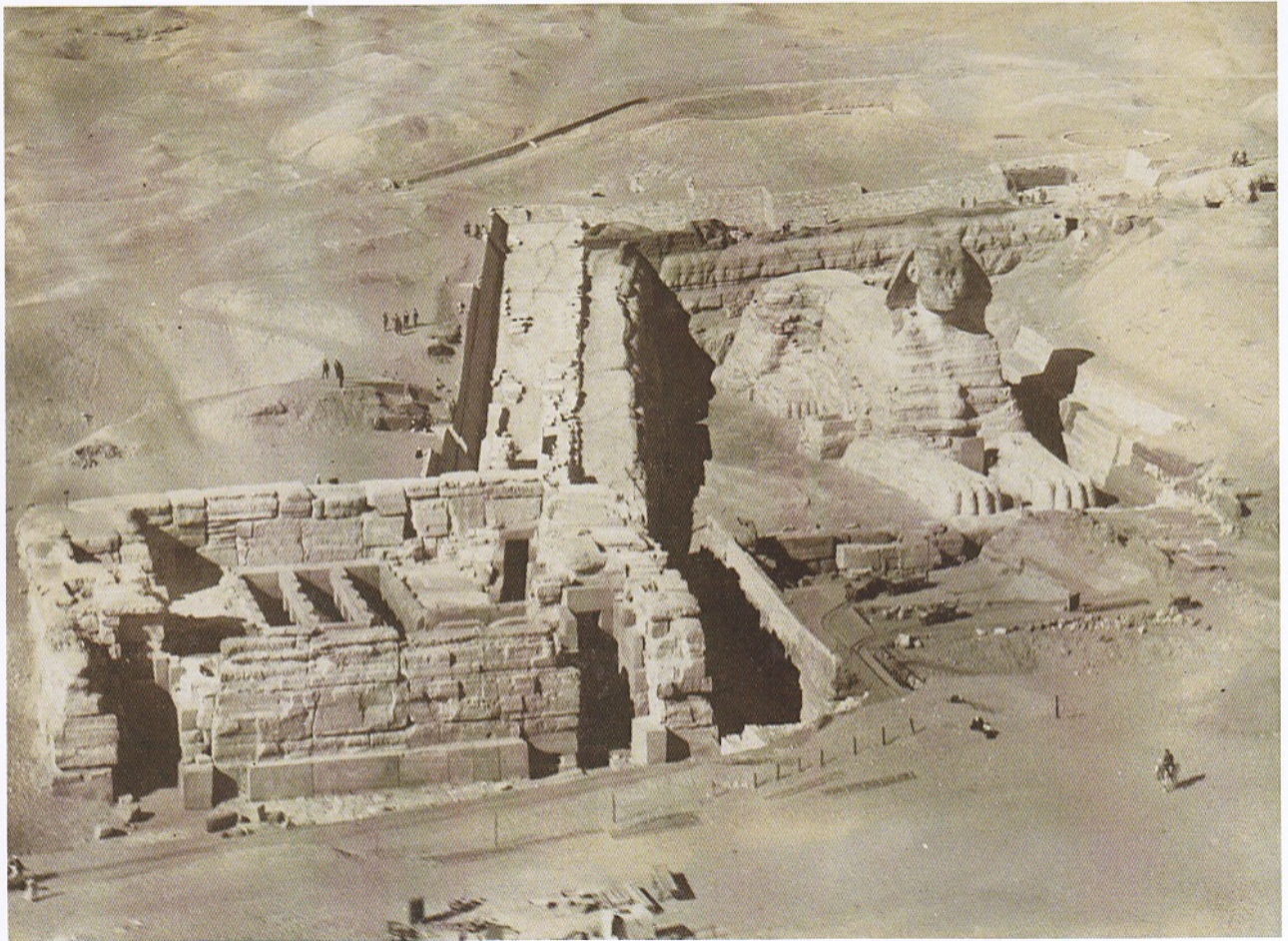
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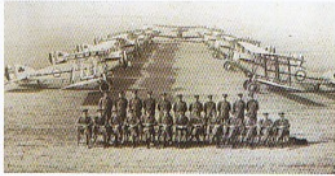
**208(R)
Squadron
Centenary**

1916 – 2016





Front Cover: XX188 in the vertical over Anglesey
Back Cover: XX188 tail and Industry Partners



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Compiled and Edited by
Flight Lieutenant Brown, 208(R) Squadron Adjutant

Produced by Air Media Centre, HQ Air Command

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208(R) Squadron flying over RAF Valley Airfield, Anglesey.



Welcome

Welcome to RAF Valley and the 208(R) Squadron Centenary celebrations. One Hundred years ago, on 26 October 1916, No 8 Sqn RNAS came into being at Le Vert-Galant, a small austere airfield just north of Amiens, Northern France. The squadron became No 208 Squadron on 1 April 1918 along with the birth of the Royal Air Force. From that day to this, the squadron has built up a proud history that is the envy of many comparable units. I hope that, as you read the pages of this souvenir brochure, you will get a real sense of that history and of the professionalism and dedication of the men and women who have served on 208 Squadron during this time.

From a personal perspective, I know that I will look back on my time on 208(R) Squadron with great affection. In particular I will recall the tremendous camaraderie, exciting flying and the feeling of absolute confidence that everybody was focused on making sure that the squadron was the best it could possibly be. I am proud and honoured to be the Commanding Officer of this great squadron, especially during its Centenary year.



I am sure you will all join me in thanking Squadron Leader Paul 'Skids' Harrison and his team who have worked extremely hard to organize the Centenary functions. Special thanks also to Flt Lt Kev Brown for collating, editing and overseeing the production of this excellent memento.

Finally, I would like to welcome you again to RAF Valley and especially to 208(R) Squadron's Centenary celebrations. I hope that you enjoy your memorable visit.

Chris Kidd OC 208(R) Squadron



The Officers of 208 Squadron, Stree, Belgium, December 1918. Photo by Air Cdre Mann.



A Brief History of Naval 8/208 Squadron

No 208 Squadron was formed originally as No 8 Squadron Royal Naval Air Service at Dunkirk on 26 October 1916 to reinforce the Royal Flying Corps. Three flights of aircraft: Sopwith Pups, Nieuport Scouts and Sopwith 1½ Strutters operated with the 5th Brigade, initially from Le Vert-Galant near Amiens. The Squadron moved frequently around Northern France and later equipped with other types including the Sopwith Triplane before becoming No 208 Squadron on 1 April 1918 along with the formation of the Royal Air Force. At this time it was flying fighter and ground-attack missions with the Sopwith Camel on the Western Front where it remained until the end of the war before re-equipping again, this time with the Sopwith Snipe. During the war the Squadron pioneered the use of aerial photography and to recognise this task, the squadron adopted a crest of a winged eye looking from an azure sky. The badge is displayed proudly on the 208(R) Squadron Hawk aircraft today. After a short spell with the Allied Occupation Forces it returned to the UK in September 1919 and disbanded on 7 November.

The Squadron reformed at Ismailia, Egypt on 1 February 1920 flying the RE8 and began an

unbroken period of 51 years in and around the Middle East. In November 1920 it undertook Army Cooperation duties with the Bristol Fighter and in 1922 was sent to Turkey operating from San Stefano in the photographic and strategic reconnaissance role to help combat the Chanak Crisis as Kemal Ataturk, the Turkish dissident, fought the Greeks in his quest for independence. Returning to Egypt the Squadron received the Hawker Atlas in May 1930. Further Hawker types, the Audax and Demon were flown between August 1935 and March 1936 mainly in the Army Cooperation role but also practicing photo-reconnaissance and wireless telegraphy.

In January 1939 conversion to the Westland Lysander, the Squadron's first monoplane occurred. During World War II the Squadron was equipped with Hurricanes, Tomahawks and various marks of Spitfire and saw action throughout the conflict in Greece, Palestine, the Western Desert and Italy. During World War II the Squadron flew sorties in the Army Cooperation role where it was tasked to conduct artillery spotting, aerial photography and strategic and tactical reconnaissance, whilst using the aircraft as fighters and ground-attack platforms

when the situation arose. As one of few Squadrons not to be disbanded in 1945, it was involved in almost continuous operations until September 1971 based in Palestine, the Canal Zone, Eritrea, Sharjah, Cyprus, Aden, Iraq, Kuwait and Malta. The Squadron was initially equipped with the Spitfire, but on entering the jet-age with Meteor FR9s, the De Havilland Venom and finally the Hunter F6 and FGA9.

In September 1971, the Squadron disbanded for the second time. However, 3 years later 208 Squadron reformed at RAF Honington on 1 July 1974 with the Buccaneer S2A. 208 Squadron was part of No 1 Group, HQ Strike Command and undertook the role of Overland Strike carrying both conventional and nuclear weapons. A notable event during this period was that 208 Squadron was given the honour of being the first RAF Squadron to take part in Exercise Red Flag in the USA and due to its success the RAF continues to participate in that exercise to this day.

On 1 July 1983 the Squadron underwent a role change, moving from the overland to the maritime role, and was re-located to RAF Lossiemouth. 208 Squadron was one of 2 dedicated NATO Maritime Strike Attack squadrons and was armed with 1000lb laser-guided bombs and Pave Spike Targeting Pods and, in 1986, the Sea Eagle anti-shiping missile. In September 1983 the Squadron flew operational sorties over Beirut in support of the British peacekeeping force in the Lebanon.

The Squadron's final operation role was in 1991 when it operated as part of the Buccaneer Gulf detachment. The Squadron's role was to designate Paveway 2 Laser Guided Bombs dropped from Tornado and other Buccaneer aircraft. The Buccaneer retired from service at the end of March 1994 and 208 Squadron was the last squadron to operate the type.

On 1 April 1994 the Squadron was reformed at RAF Valley as a Reserve Status Squadron, this time equipped with the Hawk T1. The Squadron's role was to provide Advanced Flying Training to Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Foreign and Commonwealth ab-initio pilots, and International Defence Training, to ab-initio pilots from the Indian, Kuwaiti, Kenyan and Algerian Air Forces. Additionally the Squadron provided refresher training to pilots returning to fly the Hawk T1. This training included pilots joining the Royal Air Force Aerobatics Team, pilots returning to 100 Sqn and foreign exchange pilots undergoing United Kingdom Orientation Training. Due to the disbandment of 19(F) Squadron in 2011, 208(R) Squadron took on the additional role of Tactics and Weapons Training, providing the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and International Defence Forces mentioned above with fast-jet pilots ready for their respective Operational Conversion Units. 208(R) Squadron continues in that role today.

“To train the combat
pilots of the future”



Hawk T1's training, 208(R) Squadron, Anglesey.



Naval 8/208 Squadron Commanding Officers

Squadron Commander G R Bromet DSO	25 October 1916
Squadron Commander C Draper DSC	28 October 1917
Major H G Smart	4 January 1919
Squadron Leader W J Guilfoyle OBE MC	1 February 1920
Squadron Leader A ap Ellis	17 February 1922
Wing Commander A C Winter	14 November 1923
Squadron Leader H M Probyn	8 March 1924
Squadron Leader A S C Maclaren OBE MC DFC AFC	12 December 1925
Squadron Leader V S E Lindop	14 March 1927
Squadron Leader M Moore OBE	14 April 1930
Squadron Leader J Whitworth-Jones	20 April 1933
Squadron Leader A H Flower	1 November 1934
Squadron Leader W A D Brook	2 December 1936
Squadron Leader G N J Stanley-Turner	1 December 1938
Squadron Leader R A Sprague	10 April 1940
Squadron Leader J R Wilson	16 December 1940
Squadron Leader L G Burnand DFC	16 October 1941
Wing Commander J K Rogers	23 June 1942
Wing Commander M A Johnson DFC	12 September 1942
Wing Commander E P H Wheller	21 September 1943
Lieutenant Colonel J P D Blaauw DFC	23 January 1944
Wing Commander J B A Fleming OBE	10 March 1945
Squadron Leader J F Norton DFC	22 October 1945
Squadron Leader RT Llewellyn DFM	28 February 1946
Squadron Leader F J Roder	26 June 1946
Squadron Leader C F Ambrose DFC	15 May 1947

Squadron Leader J M Morgan DFC	8 July 1948
Squadron Leader F V Morello	4 November 1950
Squadron Leader T F Neil	24 May 1953
Squadron Leader J N Thorne	10 November 1955
Squadron Leader J H Granville-White	21 March 1958
Squadron Leader R Ramirez	1 April 1959
Squadron Leader M Goodfellow	1 April 1961
Squadron Leader G N Lewis AFC	7 March 1963
Squadron Leader J Rhodes AFM	1 April 1965
Squadron Leader A J Chaplin	8 January 1966
Squadron Leader C Taylor AFC	1 June 1968
Squadron Leader G E Ord	25 May 1970
Squadron Leader I C H Dick AFC	25 May 1971
Wing Commander R F Rogers	1 July 1974
Wing Commander P G Pinney MVO	27 November 1976
Wing Commander G R Pitchfork MBE BA	15 June 1979
Wing Commander B C Laite	7 December 1981
Wing Commander J A F Ford	6 July 1984
Wing Commander B S Mahaffey	6 March 1987
Wing Commander A W Cope MBE	9 September 1989
Wing Commander N H Hucking MBE BSc	27 March 1992
Squadron Leader G Brough	4 April 1994
Squadron Leader M P Christy	25 September 1996
Squadron Leader P K Comer	27 March 1998
Squadron Leader S C Stocker BSc	11 September 2000
Wing Commander N Meadows AM BSc MRAS	5 March 2001
Wing Commander N Clifford MA LLB	9 August 2003
Wing Commander G S Kelly BSc	20 December 2005
Squadron Leader M A Simmons BEng	10 April 2008
Wing Commander J H Hunter MA BSc	19 June 2008
Squadron Leader A V Dow BEng	19 July 2010
Wing Commander E P Moriarty	6 October 2010
Squadron Leader P K Harrison	15 October 2012
Wing Commander N J Gatenby BSc	3 December 2012
Wing Commander C R Kidd BEng(Hons)	1 May 2015

1916 – 2016 Naval 8/208 Squadron Commanding Officers – Vigilant –





Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Rhodes Bromet KBC CB DSO DL

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Rhodes Bromet was born on 28 August 1891 and attended the British Royal Naval College Dartmouth in 1904 before serving as a Flight Commander in World War I. He was commended for his service in Gallipoli in 1915 and later commanded No 1 Squadron Royal Naval Air Service. On 25 October 1916 he formed and was the first Commanding Officer of No 8 Squadron Royal Naval Air Service. In 1919 he received a permanent commission as a Major in the Royal Air Force. After commanding the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment he was appointed Senior Engineering Staff Officer at Headquarters Coastal Area in 1931 followed by Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters Middle East in 1933 and Senior Air Staff Officer Headquarters Coastal Command in 1936.

During World War II he served as Air Officer Commanding No 19 Group and then as Air Officer Commanding No 247 Group before retiring at his own request in 1945, when he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man. He was largely responsible for reinvigorating the island's economy and is

fondly remembered there today. He held this post until 1952.

During his military service Sir Geoffrey received the following honours and awards:

- Legion of Honour, Chevalier (France) – 1917
- Distinguished Service Order – 12 May 1917
- Order of the British Empire – 1 January 1919
- Companion of the British Empire – 17 March 1941
- Mentioned in Despatches – 1 January 1941
- Companion of the Order of the Bath – 1 January 1943
- Polonia Restituta 2nd Class (Poland) – 12 June 1945
- Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire – 14 June 1945
- Order of the White Lion, 2nd Class (Czechoslovakia) – 6 September 1946
- Commander of the Legion of Merit (United States of America) – 17 August 1948
- Deputy Lieutenant of Kent – 1958

Sir Geoffrey was married to Air Commandant Dame Jean Conan Doyle, the daughter of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He died on 16 November 1983.



Wing Commander C R Kidd BEng (Hons) RAF

Wing Commander Chris Kidd was educated at King Edward VI School in Bury St Edmunds and was awarded both RAF Sixth Form and Flying Scholarships before gaining a Private Pilots License at Dundee Airport in 1994. He was awarded a University Bursary and commissioned into the RAF in 1998 after graduating from the Nottingham Trent University with a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Mechanical Engineering and completing Elementary Flying Training on the Bulldog as a member of East Midlands Universities Air Squadron.

Following Officer Training, Wing Commander Kidd completed flying training on the Tucano and Hawk, gaining his wings in October 2000 prior to being selected to fly the Tornado GR4. After graduating from the Tornado GR4 Operational Conversion Unit in 2001, his first frontline tour was on 14 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth. During this tour he completed multiple large force exercises including both Red and Maple Flag in addition to operational deployments to the Middle East, where he flew combat sorties over Iraq in support of Operation RESINATE (South) and Operation

TELIC. In 2005 Wing Commander Kidd was posted to 19(F) Squadron at RAF Valley where he became both a Qualified Flying and Tactics Instructor, and a Qualified Weapons Instructor on the Hawk T1 before returning to the frontline in 2008, where he was appointed as the Training Officer and subsequently the Instrument Rating Examiner for 31 Squadron at RAF Marham. During this tour he flew combat sorties over Iraq, in support of Operation TELIC, and Afghanistan, in support of Operation HERRICK before posting, on promotion to XIII Squadron as OC Training, where he returned in short order to Afghanistan for another operational tour. However, as part of the 2010 SDSR, XIII Squadron was scheduled for closure, and in 2011 he was posted to IX(B) Squadron. Whilst serving on IX(B) Squadron Wing Commander Kidd again flew on operations, mounting Storm Shadow missions from the UK and deploying to Gioia Del Colle all as part of the Tornado GR4 Force's contribution to Operation ELLAMY.

In 2012, Wing Commander Kidd was posted to HQ Air Command, RAF High Wycombe, where

he served as the Attack Desk Officer within A3 Operations providing support to global RAF Operations. Promoted to Wing Commander in 2014; he deployed to ISAF Joint Command, Kabul, where he served for 6 months as

the Deputy Chief of Fixed Wing Plans. Wing Commander Kidd returned to RAF Valley and took command of 208(R) Squadron in May 2015. He is married to Elise, an RAF Logistics Squadron Leader and they have two sons, Jack and Oliver.

Composition of No 8 Naval Squadron Royal Naval Air Service – 26 October 1916

Headquarters

Acting Squadron Commander G R Bromet -

In Command

Flight Commander B L Huskisson -

2nd in Command

Lt J H D'Albiac -

RMA Records Officer

Flight Sub-Lieutenant N R Cook -

Spare Pilot and Ground Officer

Sub-Lieutenant H O'Hagan RNVR -

Armament Officer

2nd Lieutenant W P Spurway RFC -

Equipment Office

WOII T G Brice -

Stores Officer

A Flight 6 80hp Le Rhone Nieuport 17B

Flight Lieutenant C R Mackenzie

Flight Sub-Lieutenant R J O Compton

Flight Sub-Lieutenant H L Wood

Flight Sub-Lieutenant G G Simpson

Flight Sub-Lieutenant Hon. A C Corbett

Flight Sub-Lieutenant A H Lawson

B Flight 6 80hp Le Rhone Sopwith Pup

Flight Lieutenant S J Goble

Flight Sub-Lieutenant E R Grange

Flight Sub Lieutenant W H Hope

Flight Sub-Lieutenant D B M Galbraith

Flight Sub-Lieutenant S V H Trapp

Flight Sub-Lieutenant R A Little

C Flight 6 110hp Clerget Sopwith 1½ Strutters

Flight Lieutenant J C P Wood

Flight Lieutenant C E Hervey

Flight Sub-Lieutenant G Thom

Flight sub-Lieutenant C D Booker

Flight Sub-Lieutenant H Jenner-Parson

Flight Sub-Lieutenant R R Soar

120 Chief Petty Officers, Petty Officers and Ratings



Sopwith Camels operating in France 1917.

Composition of No 208(Reserve) Squadron – 26 October 2016

Squadron Executives

Wing Commander C R Kidd -

In Command

Squadron Leader D J Arlett -

Officer Commanding A Flight

Squadron Leader J M Taylor-Head -

Officer Commanding B Flight

Squadron Leader P K Harrison -

Officer Commanding C Flight

A Flight – Advanced Flying Training

Flight Lieutenant R E Frick

Flight Lieutenant D A Stark

B Flight – Tactical Weapons Training

Squadron Leader N P Wesley

Flight Lieutenant P J E Kershaw

Flight Lieutenant J W Rigg

C (CFS) Flight –

CFS Training, Standards, Refresher Training

Flight Lieutenant T W Sawle

Flight Lieutenant N E Wharmby

Operations Support Flight

Flying Officer M R Jones

Sergeant C Loughran

Corporal S Casey

Senior Aircraftman F L K Hanslip

Senior Aircraftman R M Northedge

Administration

Flight Lieutenant G R K Brown - Adjutant

Mrs S Roberts

Students

Tactical Weapons Course 84

Lieutenant Commander M Brayson RN

Lieutenant Commander R M Jameson RN

Lieutenant N Baker RN

Lieutenant A Vines RN

Flight Lieutenant D C French

Qualified Flying Instruction COURSE H 451

Major Omar Al Hasan KAF -

Major Abdullah Al Kandari KAF





The Squadron Standard

All squadrons, whether their history is long or short undergo changes in Commanding Officers, personnel and aircraft, and 208 Squadron is no exception. However, one thing that does not change over time is the Squadron Standard.

On the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force, HM King George VI announced his intention to award a ceremonial flag to be known as the 'Standard' to operational squadrons. There were 2 qualifications required before its award. The squadron must have completed 25 years of service in the RAF, the RAuxF, the RFC or the RNAS, and it must have achieved the Monarch's appreciation for outstanding service; 208 Squadron met both requirements.

On 18 November 1955 at RAF Abu Sueir, Egypt the Squadron was presented with its Standard featuring its battle honours, by Air-Vice Marshal Sir Geoffrey R Bromet KCB DSO RAF Retd - our founding Squadron Commander. The presentation party included Air Marshal Sir Claude B R Pelly KCB CBE MC RAF, Commander-

in-Chief Middle East Air Force and Air Officer Commanding 205 Group, Air-Vice Marshal D H F Barnett CBE DFC RAF. There was a full Squadron parade and the Standard was consecrated by the Assistant Chaplain-in-Chief, Middle East Air Force, the Reverend F H Trevor. After the presentation ceremony, Sir Geoffrey gave the following speech:

"This is an inspiring and emotional occasion for all of us here today. A proud and unforgettable one for me personally.

Your squadron was formed in October 1916, as a Royal Naval Air Service reinforcement to the hard-pressed squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps on the Somme Front, and since that date it has taken an uninterrupted and front-line part in the peace and war activities of the Royal Air Force; first in a Fighter role, then as Army Co-Operation and now as Fighter Reconnaissance:

A succession of air and ground crews, and of aircraft, representative of the best Air Forces of Britain and the Commonwealth can give,

have worked in harmony with, and in support of, our Armies in France, Germany, Egypt, Iraq, Western Desert, Greece, Syria, Palestine and Italy.

The Squadron's reputation in World War I ensured for it a permanent place in the post-war squadrons of the RAF and today – 39 years on – the Squadron has received its Standard in recognition of meritorious service rendered to the Sovereign and our Country, since its formation in 1916.

To myself, and those who have come with me today, I would say this – Today our memories are alive with the names of our

squadron mates of old and those who flew and lost their lives with the Squadron, and are so much in our minds as to seem to be actually here.

You have achieved what we set out to do in 1916 – to establish a great and enduring tradition of Service discipline, good fellowship and fighting efficiency.

The memory of this day and what your Standard symbolises will remain with you, I am sure, all your lives”.

I am sure that you will agree that his words are as pertinent today as they were in 1955.





Squadron Memorabilia

The 208 Squadron crest was born during the inter-war years. In the early 1930s, the Royal Air Force began to create badges after formal permission was given by the Air Ministry. The badges were displayed on aircraft to give a stronger squadron identity, and to identify the particular squadron and its role. Fighter squadrons utilized an arrowhead, bomber units a round bomb with a fuse-head and army cooperation squadrons a 6-pointed star.

The connotations of the Star of David and the Squadron's long association with Egypt and the Arab dominated Middle East was considered inappropriate and therefore 208 Squadron chose a disc. As our role at this time was both Army Cooperation and Reconnaissance a suitable emblem representing this was sought. Flight Lieutenant Arthur Fowler, a Flight Commander who had spent over 6 years with the Squadron suggested the ancient Egyptian symbol of the Eye of Horus to signify the Squadron's identity.

Horus is the hawk-headed God of Egyptian mythology, son of Isis and Osiris he was the guardian against evil spirits. The badge was

incorporated in April 1930 by the then Officer Commanding, Squadron Leader Maurice Moore, and the Atlas aircraft that left the Armstrong-Whitworth works in Coventry destined for delivery to 208 Squadron had this emblem painted on their tail fins. The badge was perfect for 208 Squadron. The eye represented observation and had obvious links with Egypt, our home at this time. The wings denoted flight and the colours, blue and yellow were rumoured to represent the original colours of the Great Sphinx of Giza whilst also portraying the Egyptian sky and desert sand.

Unfortunately, 6 years later, the Squadron was made aware that the use of an eye was not acceptable in English Heraldry, in view of its connotations with evil spirits. Ergo, the Sphinx, together with the motto 'Vigilant' became the official emblem on the Squadron crest in 1936.

The Arabic verb 'shouf' means to look. This was colloquialised by English speakers in Egypt to 'shouftie'. To 'have a shouftie' means to 'have a look'. 208 Squadron became known as 'The Flying Shouftis'.



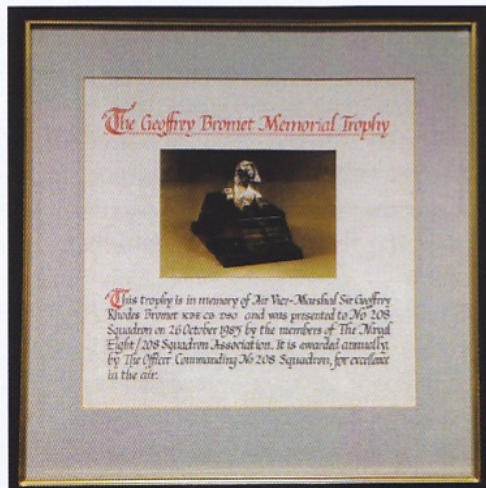
The Bromet Trophy

The Bromet Trophy is awarded annually to the pilot who has achieved 'Excellence in the Air'.

The Trophy was originally cast in silver by Squadron Leader Rob Wright in 1985, when it was presented to the Squadron on the occasion of the Annual Reunion at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London on 26 October of

that year, our 69th Anniversary. The trophy was named after the first Squadron Commander, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Rhodes Bromet KBE CB DSO DL.

It has been presented every year since 1984 and in 2015 was awarded to Flight Lieutenant P J E (Paddy) Kershaw.





208 Squadron Unofficial Memorabilia

Over the years, the Squadron has had many unofficial mascots and motifs, but none were more controversial than the 'Naked Lady'. This badge was originally reserved for the ground crew; however, in 1987 the Squadron junta decided they liked it and tried to get fitted to their flying suits. They were overruled at the time by the Boss, Wg Cdr Mahaffey. Not to be deterred, immediately prior to the 75th Anniversary a second attempt was made, this time successfully and a scaled down version was allowed on the helmet visor.

The saga continued when the Squadron moved to RAF Valley. The badge was worn by



all student pilots during the course, however, despite the aircrew loving the badge, due to its controversial nature it was finally banned in 2001 with much media coverage.

The story doesn't end there though.

Many squadron briefs continued to have the badge on them and at one time the Squadron even had some cufflinks made in her honour.

Now in our 100th year, and some 15 years after being banned (and after buying up all of the old stock available) 'The Lady' still makes an appearance from time to time, normally only on special occasions such as graduations or when the squadron is in the bar – old habits die hard!



208 Squadron Operations

208 Squadron has a long and distinguished operational history. Here are some examples of those operations from 1916 to the end of our front-line role following the retirement of the Blackburn Buccaneer in 1994.

Combat Report Filed By Flight Commander R B Munday RN

(Copy from the original)

Squadron: No.8. Naval

Date: 29th September 1917

Type and No. of Aeroplane: Sopwith Camel.392

Time: 10.00p.m

Armament: 2 Vickers Synchronised Guns

Duty: Special Mission

Pilot: Flight Commander R.B.MUNDAY

Height:

Locality: Between QUIERY-la-MOTTE & BREBIERES

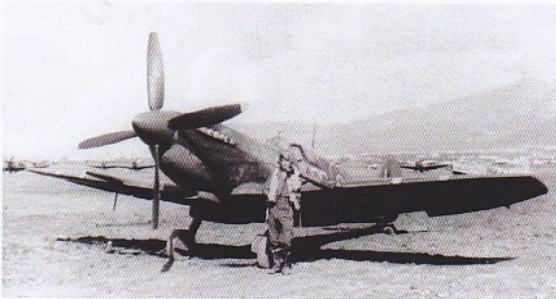
Remarks on Hostile machine: Type, armament, speed etc.

Narrative

Having located the position of the shed of No 12 Kite Balloon between QUIERY la MOTTE and BREBIERES during a previous but unsuccessful attack on this balloon on Sept 15th I proceeded to attack same at 9.45p.m. tonight. No difficulty was experienced in finding the shed, the SCARPE being followed to BREBIERES and then proceeding along the BREBIERES-QUIERY la MOTTE railway. I shut off my engine at about 5,000 feet over BREBIERES and came down to XXXX the XXXXXXX(sic) shed, opening out and continuing with full engine for the last 1,500 feet. Fire was opened at a very close range and I had to hoik over the shed as I passed it, being then within 20 feet of the ground. Only 50 shots were fired from each gun. On zooming over the shed I noticed what where apparently small point of fire on the walls of the shed and as I passed over the DROCOURT line of trenches at 10.10pm and the whole shed was bursting into flame, which continued for some considerable time. As I crossed the front lines the shed was then burning brilliantly there being obviously a balloon inside as flames seemed to be two to three hundred feet high.

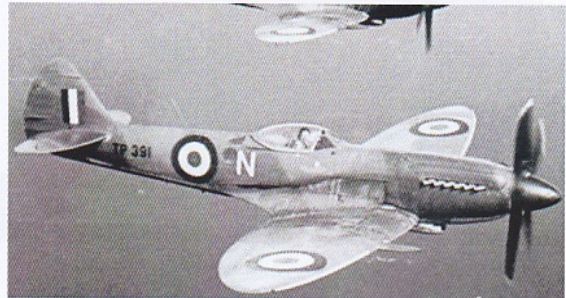
208 Squadron - Italy 1945

I am indebted to Squadron Leader Dennis Sawden for giving me permission to quote from his book 'The Distinguished War Record of Wing Commander D F Perrens DSO OBE DFC MA'.



After serving in the Suffolk Regiment Wing Commander Perrens underwent flying training in 1942 and joined 208 Squadron on his second operational tour in November 1944. The following is a précis of the mission that he flew on 22 January 1945 during which he won his DSO.

As one of the Squadron's more experienced tactical reconnaissance pilots he was selected to fly an artillery spotting mission to direct fire on an enemy ammunition dump, the fire delivered from the Royal Artillery's new US made 8-inch gun. A formidable weapon with a 17 mile range. Perrens was instructed to fly at 8,000 feet, this would keep him clear of flak and enable him to direct fire. Arriving in the area 15 minutes after take-off he correctly directed the fire but was engaged by German 88 mm guns which stopped his engine and holed his fuel tanks. Rather than bale out he glided 12 miles back to allied lines and crash landed in a snow-covered field. He sustained compression fractures of the spine, fractured his skull and suffered multiple lacerations. After a period in hospital he returned to 208 Squadron and was airborne on 5 April 1945, less than 4 months after his crash.



He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, the citation follows:

Air Ministry 6 April 1945.

The King has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations: Distinguished Service Order.

Acting Squadron Leader Donald Frank Perrens DFC (47493)

This officer has completed many sorties on his second tour of operational duty. He has displayed exceptional tactical skill, great bravery and a determination to complete his mission with success which has won the highest praise. In January 1945, Squadron Leader Perrens was detailed for an artillery reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of Bologna. Whilst over the target area, he was engaged by heavy and light anti-aircraft fire. His aircraft was repeatedly hit but he remained over the target for nearly another hour to direct our artillery fire onto enemy positions. He was forced to turn away however, when the engine of his aircraft failed. Nevertheless, he effected a successful crash landing in our forward defence lines. His coolness and courage in the face of concentrated enemy fire set a fine example.

The Jet Age

208 Squadron converted from the ageing Spitfire XVIII in August 1950 when a Gloster Meteor Mk IX was supplied for training. This second-generation aircraft was fitted with a 'bubble canopy' and a nose camera, spoiling its elegant lines. Conversion was different in those days and was carried out by 2 pilots who had previously flown the Meteor.

In January 1953 Flying Officer Greensmith had a lucky escape when his aircraft went out of control following a 1v1 combat training sortie fighting a Vampire. He ejected over Sinai and was found with minor injuries by Bedouins who looked after him until the Desert Rescue team arrived. Ten days later Squadron personnel met the Bedouins and presented them with sandals, blankets, beans, flour and the £25.00 promised to anyone who aided a downed pilot.

Incidentally, that £25.00 equates to about £525.00 today. Nowadays, allied aircrew fly with dollar bills or gold and the 'Goolie Chit' is worth considerably more!

After the end of the Second World War the Squadron was involved in just about every minor war, insurrection and police action that took place around the Middle East, the Lavent and Africa. The Aden Emergency of 1963 to 1967 was no exception.



The seaport city of Aden was originally of interest to Britain as it was ideally located to protect and supply the Royal Navy en-route to and from British India via the Suez Canal. After Indian independence in 1947 Aden became less important but remained a valuable staging post for the RAF as it gave and protected access East of Suez. RAF Khormaksar was, at the time, the RAF's busiest airbase in history and was home to ¾ of Middle East Command's aircraft. Yemen however wanted independence and the Anti-British feeling was supported by Egypt. 208 Squadron found itself flying live-armed anti-dissident operations and good-will gestures such as the aerobatics team supporting Khormaskar's Open Day and the Queen's Official Birthday Parade. Operationally 208 Squadron Hunters flew patrols firing both 4 inch rockets and cannon at rebel tribesmen in the Radfan mountains. Some strikes were impacting only 25 yards ahead of British troops on the ground.



Gulf War 1

Within 3 days of the call to deploy, RAF Lossiemouth had prepared six Buccaneers to depart for Bahrain to provide laser designation for the Tornado. Newly painted desert-pink, fitted with new secure radios and more up-to-date chaff and flare dispensers, six others were to follow. After in-theatre training, the first mission was carried out on the 2 February. Having refined the tactics with 2 Buccaneers escorting 4 Tornados, the regular battle rhythm commenced. Sqn Ldr Skids Harrison recalls one unusual sortie during the war:

'The target was Al Taqqadum airfield, 74 kms to the West of Baghdad. Prior to the start of the war this had been one of jewels in Saddam's arsenal. With two enormous main runways, it was home to his last remaining Tu-22 Blinders. We had destroyed most of the bridge targets thereby degrading Saddam's C4 capability

and the campaign had moved on to destroying runways and targeting hardened aircraft shelters. The weather had turned and we had to adapt our tactics accordingly. Having topped up from the Victor tankers, the

formation pressed into Iraq. Flying at 20,000ft, we were still in thick cloud on the final run-in; in order to find and illuminate the target, the Buccaneer navigator, Flt Lt Clive 'The Bone' Lambourne had to be clear of cloud. This meant that the lead Buccaneer had to descend and leave the front two Tornado GR1s. We eventually saw the ground at 14,000ft, much lower than recommended, especially as INTEL said there was still an SA-3 somewhere on the airfield. The Bone found the target and called on the radio that he was lasing.



However, at the desired bomb impact time, there was no splash; he kept tracking the target while I scanned for stray bomb impacts, none were seen. We circled for what seems like ages but was actually 3 minutes. Concerned, we called to the formation leader asking for his position but there was no reply. We climbed

back into the cloud and headed for home trying to speak to 'Magic'; then it became apparent that we had a total radio failure. Without the positive confirmation of our call, the Tornado crew hadn't dropped their Paveway 2s and

had headed for home; without our radio we were very much alone. We climbed, eventually reaching 38,000ft and "belly-checked" all the way out of Iraq, arriving back at Bahrain after the main formation had landed.'

In 216 sorties, the Buccaneers designated targets for 169 Tornado-delivered LGBs and also dropped 48 LGBs themselves, thankfully with no losses whatsoever.



Flying Training

CURRENT 208(R) SQUADRON OPERATIONS

Flt Lt Stu Roberts joined 208(R) Squadron as part of V147 Advanced Flying Training course on 13 January 2014. There follows an account of his first solo.

As one half of the latest Ab Initio course on 208 Sqn I have been asked to write a short article to give a student's perspective of their first solo trip in a Hawk. I think the best way to start is by giving a short history of my RAF career to date. Having joined a 'surge' course of 150 students on IOT in 2009 a significant percentage of which were recruited as pilots all was looking good for my chosen profession. Approaching 5 years later I have completed Elementary flying training at RAF Cranwell on the Tutor and Basic fast jet training on the Tucano at RAF Linton-on-Ouse. With the operational delays on the Hawk T2 and 4(R) Squadron my course mate and I jumped at the opportunity to join a Hawk T1 course and arrived on the Isle of Dreams to start with 208(R) Squadron in January 2014.

Being on ground school as a course of 2 has benefits and draw backs, on the plus side it guarantees focused tuition however it does also guarantee you getting asked at least 50%

of the questions so there really is nowhere to hide! Following 5 weeks of tech lectures, introductory sims, advanced aerodynamics and being unceremoniously dumped in Holyhead harbour we left the classroom and moved over to the Sqn. Day 1 on 208 we got kitted up in our immersion suits for the first time and clambered into the back of the jet for our familiarisation trip around North Wales including low level battle turns and formation aeros. After an hour of being baggage we both arrived back hot, sweaty, slightly nauseas and under no illusions as to what we faced before completing the course.

Following our rather leisurely progress through flying training so far, we were slightly shocked to arrive on Monday morning to find ourselves feature for 3 sorties in a day. This tempo turned out to be the norm and after 4 sims and 5 flights during our first 4 flying days on the Squadron we found ourselves prepping for

our first solo flights! Now comes the slightly awkward sortie brief where the same QFI who so confidently cleared you solo on the previous sortie has to put his career on the line and actually stick his initials in the authorisation sheets to clear you off on your own. With a gin clear February afternoon waiting for us (a precious rarity in North Wales) and having warned the other Squadrons at Valley we crewed in for our first solos.

We taxied out and set off in 10 minute trail for the obligatory high speed trip around the island followed by climbing for some aeros in the local area. Once clear of GA traffic in the Menai Straights there was a quick chance to fully take in your new surroundings and you

suddenly realise the jet is eerily quiet without a QFI onboard. Luckily the rest of the Station got the memo and had the good sense to stay on the ground as the 2 of us recovered to terrorise the circuit. Following demonstrations of our best Ryanair style landings we taxied back in after our first solo jet flight. The experience was well worth 5 years in the RAF along with a considerable amount of hard work and it won't be something either of us forget in a hurry. We count ourselves lucky to have been given the opportunity to join 208 Sqn and train on the 'Classic' Hawk. After chatting with some Hawk T2 students who had been on course for almost a year we worked out we achieved nearly 20% of their total trips in just one week on the Squadron!





The Naval 8/208 Squadron Association

The Association was formed in 1919 by Sir Geoffrey Bromet and he remained its President for 2 long periods until his death at the age of 93, in November 1983. It meets annually for dinner, usually at the RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly, London on the nearest Saturday to the 26 October.

It is a vibrant organization, free to join, and is open to anyone who has served on the Squadron throughout its illustrious history, from its formation at Le Vert Gallant near Amiens on 26 October 1916 to its current flying training role at RAF Valley today.

The President is currently Air Marshal Sir Robert Wright KBE AFC FRAeS and the Secretary is Malcolm Brown MRAeS. Air Commodore B C Laite is the Membership Secretary.

Our former Squadron Commander, Group Captain Neil Meadows MA BSc MRAeS is the Association Webmaster and the website can be found at www.naval8-208-association.com





100 YEARS VIGILANT



1916-2016



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