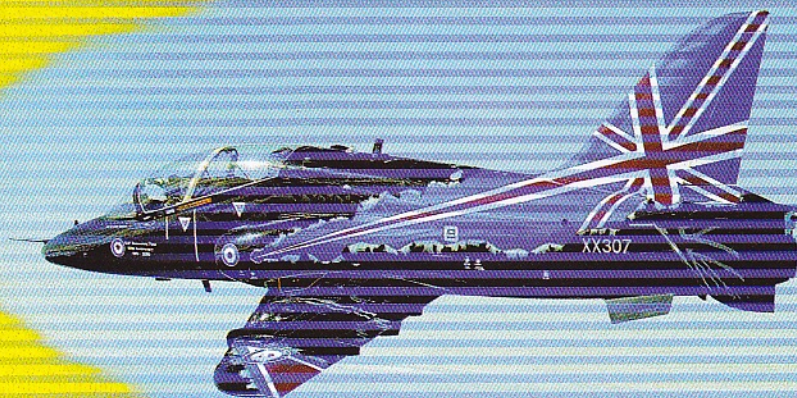


# NAVAL EIGHT 208 NEWS 2009

The Annual Newsletter of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association



## 208 Spreads its Wings



*An Argentine Air Force Pampa II based at Mendoza AFB*

Number 208 Squadron has truly been spreading its wings. Numerous visits to Europe, detailed elsewhere in this issue and one visit to South America.

Flight Lieutenant Rory McLaren visited Mendoza Air Force Base in Argentina, last August, and we hosted a couple of pilots from Chile in the Autumn. The aircraft shown above is Argentina's Hawk counterpart, the Pampa II, and Rory had the opportunity to fly in one and compare it with the Hawk.

Mendoza is Argentina's principal air base and has many different aircraft stationed there, including attack, fighter, trainer and transport types. The Pampa is a relatively new aircraft and is based on the European Dassault/Dornier Alpha Jet. Key differences are that the Pampa is now built by Lockheed Martin, which took over the Argentinian FMA company, and it is a slightly smaller airframe than its European counterpart.

Powered by a single Garrett turbofan the Pampa has local fit avionics and is now classified by Lockheed Martin as the type AT-69. So far only supplied to Argentina, Lockheed hopes to generate other markets for the type, which is considered to be a slightly less expensive option to the Hawk, though not in the same performance league. And with Hawk 128 coming up, the Pampa is not likely to displace it in world markets.





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## N8/208 Rumblings

### The President's Foreword:

This year sees the launch of the Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association Website, after a number of false starts over the years. Originally we had hoped to attach the Association Website as a link from the official MOD 208 Squadron Website, but that has proven impossible to realise, and thus we have had to go it alone. Tim Webb volunteered to take up the challenge of building the Association website and has done a magnificent job, for which we are truly very grateful. Through his great efforts, with a little help from others, we have close to 200 pages for our members (and prospective members) to browse through. For those of you with internet access you will see pages on the history of the squadron through the different eras, the Association Newsletter, and much more. I hope you enjoy your browsing.

At last year's Association Reunion Dinner Tim Webb (he has been busy!) gave a fascinating account of life (of the many detachments) through the early Hunter period (reprinted later in the Newsletter). Also this year we are privileged to have Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Stear as our guest speaker to give us the low-down on the later Hunter period. We were very pleased to receive the first report on the Squadron's activities by Wing Commander Jamie Hunter, even though he had only been in post as OC 208 for a four months.

Many members will remember the extremely successful Squadron Open Day at RAF Valley in 2006 and you will be pleased to know that there will be another Open Day this year, on Thursday 27th August 2009. The Open Day will follow a similar format to previous Open Days, but more details will be given later. I hope that many of you will be able to make the journey to Anglesey, where you can rest assured of a warm welcome and a great day out.

With my other hat on, as Controller of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund I am delighted that CAS and CINC Air Command have authorised the painting of the 2009 display Hawk in RAFBF colours to celebrate our 90th anniversary. More importantly, and many thanks to Jamie Hunter, 208 Squadron will be carrying this particular flag – a double celebration for me – 208 Squadron and the RAFBF in partnership. Jamie has promised me a trip in this aircraft but in the meantime watch out for 'our' Hawk throughout the 09 display season!

Finally, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Naval 8/208 Squadron Newsletter (whether reading it on-line or in paper copy) and I look forward to seeing and meeting as many of you as possible at the next Reunion Dinner at the RAF Club on Saturday 24th October.

### Ed Lines:

Ninety years since the establishment of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund! A proud anniversary commemorated by the colour scheme of the 2009 Solo Display Hawk - again flown by a 208 Squadron pilot - and with pride! We are equally proud to be reminded that our Association President, Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright, is the Controller of the RAFBF.

We need to remember that the RAFBF is a charity and depends on contributions from all quarters. In these times of conflict in the world, especially Iraq and Afghanistan, the Fund finds itself answering many more needs from Servicemen and their families. It does that in many ways, but at the core of it, always, is money. Sadly, nothing moves these days without the provision of adequate funding and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is no exception to that. Whilst we have no desire to be morbid in any way on these pages, it is appropriate to say that if any members are considering charitable bequests in the preparation of their wills, a small donation to the RAFBF will go a long way.

We're planning to get this issue into the mailing system, for those who need a hard copy of the Newsletter, by the beginning of June, subject to print constraints and the postal system. For the first time, this year, we are anticipating having the Newsletter available on the web, via the Association website: [www.](http://www.)

### Chairman's Chunter:

I would like to say a BIG thank you to all those who made donations to the Association funds last year – that has kept the wolf a bay for the year and we were able to cover all our costs, with just a small surplus to carry over. Of course, we continue to rely upon the generosity of members to fund the Newsletter and we would very much welcome any further donations this year – so please keep the money coming in!

You will have seen that the President has announced the launch of the Association website – a great achievement, and may I add my sincere thanks to Tim Webb for his tremendous work. For those of you with the internet the Website is called "www.XXXXXXXXXX [placeholder to confirm website name]. Members who have agreed to see the Association Newsletter on-line will be sent an email to let them know when the latest version has been posted. If there are any other members who would like to see the Newsletter in this way please let the Membership Sec know and he will add you to the list. If you care to see any current issues affecting the RAF (and 208 Squadron in particular) you can visit the MOD website at: [www.raf.mod.uk/structure](http://www.raf.mod.uk/structure). You will need to select "squadrons" - 208 (Reserve) Sqn to get to the Squadron page.





Venom FB4s at Khormaksar in Aden to be the second Ground Attack Squadron. However, Khormaksar was undergoing extensive renovations so 142 was moved to Eastleigh near Nairobi, claimed its aircraft, and commenced workup. Three months later, they became 208. Their aircraft, the Venom FB4 were supposedly new aircraft out of the Maintenance Units but in fact, they were the last remaining Venoms collected from East of Suez bases. They had three categories:

A Cat – OK to fly normally,

B Cat - no more than 4 G

and C Cat - tighten the wing bolts after every sortie and no more than 2 G!

Sqn Ldr Bob Ramirez was in command and for the next year the squadron flew in all areas within the Middle East Command from Rhodesia to the Persian Gulf. These long transit sorties were flown with rudimentary navigation aids and to the limit of fuel endurance!

They even had time to form a formation aerobatic team that performed all round the region and actually looped 9 Venoms.

## 1960

In March 1960 the Squadron en masse, pilots and ground crew returned to Stradishall to convert to the Hunter FGA9. In May, they returned to Kenya by way of Malta, Cyprus, Diyarbakir [Turkey] Teheran, Bahrain and Khormaksar – 7000 miles in 21/2 days; at the time a record for RAF aircraft in transit. The Hunter could not operate off the 1500 yard strip at Eastleigh so they transferred to Embakasi the newly opened international airport. The 5000 yards of macadam at 5000 feet above sea level made life very much easier but on a hot day at the back end of a large formation, it was barely adequate as we found out three years later to much sucking of teeth by numbers 9 and 10.

The formation aerobics team was reformed and many of you will have seen the iconic photos of the 208 4 over Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro. The squadron flew displays throughout the Middle East gaining extremely good press.

## 1961

In March 1961 Mike Goodfellow took command of the Squadron and soon thereafter led a detachment to Cyprus for air-to-air Armament Practice Camp. On the way there they ferried via Teheran and on the return via el Adem and Khartoum. On 26th June, following the threat of an attack on Kuwait by the Iraqis, the Squadron was given notice to prepare for a deployment to Bahrain and Kuwait. Three days later, they ferried their aircraft to Bahrain via Khormaksar and Sharjah; the next day a reconnaissance of Kuwait was flown and two days later the squadron moved in and immediately went on patrol of the Kuwait – Iraqi border

The operating conditions in Kuwait in June were singularly unpleasant; there was insufficient accommodation for anyone; the only air-conditioned quarters were 15 miles away at the local oil company's HQ. Crews often took to sleeping on or under the wings of their aircraft and on one occasion Slash Slaney, one of the pilots, fried an egg on the wing of his aircraft at midday; there is no record of anyone having eaten the egg! The normal temperature in the operations area was 100 degrees F and 92% humidity – emergency water containers in the ejection seat were near boiling. The flying was, apparently, mundane and boring and very few training sorties were flown because HQ Mid East restricted the hours for supply reasons. The squadron was pleased to be stood down on 8th August and returned to Bahrain where they were able to carry out training flying. After a further spell in Kuwait, when the aerobics team did some work up flying, and a brief time in Bahrain the squadron flew back to Khormaksar and thence Kenya, in early December having been away for 5 months. A few days later they were told that they were to move permanently up to Khormaksar and they flew in on 31st December 1961; the wives and families followed some weeks later. The second GA squadron took up residence in Aden 3 years after the initial decision that such a squadron was needed!

## 1962

By recent standards, the year of 1962 was a mundane year: the cycle of periodic detachments to Bahrain was established but now there were three Hunter Squadrons because 43 had joined 8 & 208, so every two months in six was in the Persian Gulf and while in Aden periodic detachments to East Africa were carried out. The flying in Aden was regular patrols along the Yemeni border and up and down the coast looking for gun running and smuggling. The squadron's roles at this time were close support, interdiction, counter-air, air defence and visual reconnaissance and they were all routinely practiced.

During this period the Sqn flew many long range transit sorties and on many of the routes there was very little to see and the No.2s in each section had difficulty in keeping their attention on the task in hand. Mac MacDermid along with most of the leaders, took up the suggestion of asking the No 2s where the formation was relative to the planned route. This practice came to an abrupt halt when the JPs came up with a merry gape! At each 10 minute point along the route they wrote down the 12 figure Lat/Long co-ordinate and when they were asked the question; a quick check on the stopwatch and they had the answer!

## 1963

I joined the squadron at the same time as the new squadron commander, Gordon Lewis in early 1963. By the middle of that year the experience level of the squadron had changed dramatically. When I joined as a 20 year old the Squadron had had a majority of experienced pilots with a sprinkling of JPs. However, by late '63 there were the 6 senior pilots: the Boss, the Flight Commanders, a QFI and a PAI [a pilot attack instructor] and the remaining twelve were on their first tour on Hunters. The JPs were mainly under 25 and one or two of us were much younger than that. We were extremely lucky as JPs because the senior pilots ran a tough but very fair system and we learnt quickly. The senior pilots were all graduates of the Day Fighter Leader School [DFLS], knew their job, and applied the rules with a strict discipline but made allowances for our inexperience. We were a highly spirited bunch of youngsters and were constantly in the "poo", or "dwang" as we called it, for some reason or other but the Squadron spirit was second- to-none. The other two Hunter Squadrons tended to look down on us from their lofty perch of experience but our results in all facets of flying were of a very high order thanks to the wit and wisdom of our leaders.

The JPs ran a "Dwang Ladder" and if you had behaved your 'effigy' had its head above the dwang but if in trouble it sunk lower and lower - and if in real trouble you were represented upside-down. Being a South African I just took being upside-down as a natural state of affairs for an antipodean! It was only when another antipodean came onto the Squadron that I realised the error of my ways. Visitors had usually heard of the ladder and would come in and refer to it before joining in the conversation. The Boss and Flight Commanders would refer to it at times as well – I presume to check its accuracy! On one occasion I sent the Wing Commander Tactical Wing home from the range having twice transgressed the minimum firing ranges: on my return to the squadron I expected the worst. However, the Executives were very supportive but the dwang ladder had my effigy hanging upside down 6 inches below the bottom of the chart!

The operating conditions in the Middle East were tough: the temperatures in anything other than the cool season were very hot and humid. Most of us changed their flying suits for a clean one at least twice a week and even then, they became very uncomfortable. You drank copious amounts of water and as your time went on the amount of salt, you added to that water increased markedly. The standby pair never sat in the cockpit during readiness – the cockpits were just too hot to touch. Consequently you were allowed 10 minutes even on ordinary sorties prior to engine start and taxi. One of the Recce Flight's pilots persisted in rolling his sleeves up between sorties and on one hurried start up, having omitted to roll his sleeves down, received severe burns on his fore arms from the cockpit sides.

The desert sand got into everything and the outer surfaces of the aircraft were sand blasted to such an extent that for all we used temperate camouflage the sand blasting ensured that all the aircraft were well disguised. The canopies needed frequent changes if we were to see anything outside!

In December 208 was detached to Embakasi for Kenyan Independence and that completed the full house because the Sqn had flown the independence celebrations for the three ex British colonies: Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda!

## 1964

Operation Nutcracker – commenced April The terrain of the Radfan area was inhospitable to all. It covered an area 20 miles by 15, was largely unexplored and certainly without any form of administration; it was rocky and mountainous with peaks and plateaus of 7000 ft split by deep wadis. Rainfall is very heavy during the hot season and travel in the wadis became dangerous since flash flooding often occurred. The 12 tribes occupying the area were lawless and fiercely independent and with the assistance of Yemeni dissidents had closed the main trade road.

The Federal Authorities had failed in their attempts to restore some form of order and called on Britain for assistance. A headquarters with a brigade air support cell was established at Thumeir on the Dhala Road and the prime aim was to use aircraft as much as possible to reopen the trade route. Thumeir was re-supplied by air with the Twin Pioneers and Beverley's flying throughout daylight hours restocking the Brigade. The Hunter squadrons kept a constant crew room standby in case close air support was needed. An ex 208 Sqn member Roy Bowey, deputy to the OC Tactical Wing and I were up in Thumeir very early on. I had broken my hand playing rugby for the Middle East Combined Services on their tour of Kenya – and was deemed 'disposable' so went up into this somewhat inhospitable terrain with my right arm in plaster from the knuckles to above the elbow!

It was on just such an occasion when support was requested that a 208 Squadron Flight Commander gave a demonstration of air to ground gunnery of the very highest order. On 30th April the SAS had sent out a scouting party that had been spotted and surrounded by a large number of the enemy. The call came over the army ground net explaining their difficulties and the BASO staff called the Hunters in. The SAS never carried ground to air radio equipment so they had to speak to their HQ on their discreet net, who passed the information to us and we passed it on to the aircrew – long winded but it worked. 208 were the duty squadron on that day and a constant cover was maintained during daylight hours. At one point the SAS leader called to say that some of the opposition were creeping up on them and they could be heard but not seen "could the RAF do something about them". Anthony Mumford was leading the flight and reported that he could see the immediate attackers but they were extremely close "about 25 yards" – "OK Go Ahead" was the response". A brief pause and then a very laconic "Bloody good shooting". A few days later the Minister of Defence (Air), Mr. Hugh Fraser, on a visit to Aden told the correspondents and I quote "I think that it is amazing that the troops in the forward area have been calling down RAF fighters to strike dissident strongholds only 25 yards from their own positions. This not only emphasises the skill of the Hunter pilots, but also underlines the confidence of the troops on the pilot's ability to press home their attacks with pinpoint accuracy". The great sadness of this event was that following the SAS patrol's break out under cover of darkness their leader Capt Edwards and their signaller Signaller Warburton were killed and then decapitated and their heads stuck on stakes in Taiz the capital of the Yemen. A sobering thought for all those involved in the operation

A few days later 8 Sqn were called in to attack a suspected arms dump at the base of an extensive cliff. The problems of firing into a cave at the bottom of a cliff from a 30 degree dive all done at about 5000 feet above sea level bears some thinking about but the 8 Sqn team did the job and the resultant explosion and increase in the cave's size was a "joy to behold".

Our main offensive weapon on the Hunter at this time was the 60lb rocket – a weapon developed in the Second World War to be delivered against shipping from Blenheim and Beaufort aircraft. Originally they were fired at 240 knots in level flight from a range of 400 yards whereas we were firing them at 400 knots in a 30 degree dive against hard rock and therefore required a firing range of no closer to 800 yards; nonetheless shrapnel was still picked up. Initially the aircraft were firing the HE variety but they appeared to do no damage to the mud forts because the heads were penetrating the mud and detonating on the hard ground within the fort. Someone then came up with the good idea of using our practice rockets equipped with concrete heads and these became 60lb 'supersonic sledgehammers' with devastating effects on the mud walled forts.

It is not often that the RAF can get the upper hand over the British Army out in the field but in the early stages of Operation Nutcracker we did just that and it worked out very well to our mutual benefit. Shortly before this Operation the RAF had introduced the UHF radio onto the Hunter Force and the early installation did cause us many problems in the Middle East – due mainly to the extremes of temperature. The BASO ground UHF installation came built into a refrigerator; but sadly, it had little effect upon the efficacy of the radio so we borrowed three of the Army's FAC backpacks and set up our radio centre. The question now arose as what to do with the white elephant sitting in the corner of our tent. The follow-up question was put to our tame signaller as to whether or not he could extract the electronics but retain the refrigerator. In a flash we had a refrigerator waiting to be stocked! A day or so later the Brigadier in command came into the BASO tent having, quite obviously, suffered a bad day! "How would you like an ice cold beer served in a frosted glass Sir". The look on his face when just such a luxury was proffered will live with me forever. Roy Bowey had requested the assistance of the Hunter Wing and 'Twin Pin Air' had flown the beer and the tankards in that very morning. The outcome was that before long our tent was the focal point for meetings and the nightly 'O' Group was held there; the stock of beer was constantly topped up from anonymous donations from around the Base Camp

For sometime there had been discussions about one of the three Sqns going up to Bahrain on a permanent basis – there were plus points - mainly they would be a long way from Command but many negative points – mainly regarding the social scene and the flying could potentially be less fun and less demanding.

In late May it was decreed that 208 was to be the Squadron to go and take up permanent residence in the Persian Gulf. Someone told Dilys, the Boss' wife of this move on the beech and it can be well imagined what points he scored in the dining-out night from the Khormaksar Mess. That was a dining-out night of immense proportions with all 11 flying squadrons represented and all required 208 to compete against them – we did and won most of the encounters but there were very many battered bodies and extremely sore heads the next morning

The reasons for the decision were never made known and to this day, I cannot find out who made the decision and why it was made! That having been said we were the beneficiaries of the decision.

We spent two thirds of our time flying from Muharraq, the international airfield in Bahrain, flying long range trips and the rest of the time in Sharjah using the local air to ground range on short sorties. From Bahrain we usually did high-low-high sorties: transiting at high level then letting down to low level of 250 feet above the ground for simulated weaponry followed by a high level recovery. On many occasions, another pair from the Sqn would provide the opposition aiming to intercept the four ball for combat with the normal rules. In essence these rules stated a minimum height of 7000 feet above ground level. Great fun and hard work! However, on one detachment to Sharjah the rules all changed!

The Execs on the Sqn briefed us that we were spend a fortnight at Sharjah doing intercepted low level sorties with

effectively no height limits and combat was not limited to above 7000 feet. When low flying over the desert height judgement becomes extremely difficult because the vegetation is sparse and can be of a very variable height – 4 to 10 feet or 40 to 50 feet and you could seldom see your own shadow because the sun was usually high in the sky so your shadow was below you. We found that by flying really as low as you could there was little or no need to evade a fighter coming in on a guns pass. He was more concerned at the approaching ground and he had to do his own terrain clearance: so even the best weaponeers had the greatest difficulty in achieving a "killing burst" of cine film

Doing combat from low level was a very good brain clearing exercise – you inevitably climbed a little when you started and we usually finished up in the region 5000 feet.

In the preparation for this talk I approached Dickie Dicken and asked the reason for the change of clearances and his comment was that the Execs thought it a good idea and Commander RAF PG was in full support of the suggestion. So, once again, it paid off being a long way away from Command.

In the preparation to fly two Mk 9 back to Bahrain from Aden an old friend on 8 Sqn and I decided that to help pass the time we would play battleships – little realising the mayhem we were about to cause. We duly set off and started the game and finished it by the time we past Salallah and landed at Masirah to find one of the Intelligence types beside himself with anxiety. Apparently, they had a requirement to listen to our R/T whenever we ferried anywhere. On this occasion being at the extremes of R/T range they only heard garbled messages with the occasional 'submarine' or that was a 'Krivak' or something similar! They surmised that we had found a large Russian fleet at sea in the Indian Ocean which they knew nothing about! A few beers later all was revealed and two Flying Officers were cleared!

There was no beach to speak of in Bahrain, which was a great sadness, but in the hot season we did not swim even in the pool on the base. The water was almost at blood temperature and it was a real effort to swim a length even for strong swimmers. What we missed out in Bahrain we made up in Sharjah where we went down to the coast as often as we were able which were most afternoons. After a good swim we would often go down to Dubai a little fishing port, where Gold smuggling was rife and wander round the Souks there.

As you have heard there were many advantages to being away from Command on the flying side but it also had other advantages! In the early 60s officers were expected to marry after their 25th birthdays and no allowances were paid to any officer under that age. Furthermore, in Aden, where accommodation was very scarce, no under age officer could be accompanied. So those of us married under 25 in Aden were enforced bachelors!

However, in Bahrain, the OC Admin Wing, an ex South African Air Force wartime pilot, thought that this was a stupid rule especially for aircrew and went out on a limb by stating that Under 25s could bring their wives out – another advantage of being far away from Command!

Our preferred form of transport was the scooter while most of the pilots favoured the Honda 50cc, Tim Webb had decided on a 150cc Vespa and Jock Watson decided that no scooter was the way to go and so had to rely on the Vespa to get about! Now, whenever the pilots were invited to a party the "Wee Jock" would always take his bagpipes and whenever he had them he had to play them but playing bagpipes on the back of a Vespa Scooter was impossible unless facing backwards. Once we had mastered the dynamics of fore and aft facing seating, rather like the Defiant in WWII, it became much easier. From the front all that was seen was a rider with some funny looking pipes sticking out over his right shoulder but the noise generated kept the pedestrians out of the way and the traffic directors allowed us to maintain steady progress!

In early 1964 the squadron once again came under the command of one of its wartime commanders; as an integral part of 285 Wing in Italy they had served under Group Captain Millington and now 20 years later the new Commander RAF Persian Gulf was Air Commodore Geoffrey Millington. He soon became a very popular commander who had not lost his sense of fun. On one particular evening he came to the Mess for a Dining-in Night and in the banter prior to the meal he was invited to become an Honorary One Stripper [ we had been having a lot of trouble with the Two and More Strippers] he accepted the invitation with alacrity. Later that evening a certain One Stripper was asked by the PMC to leave the meal; as I went into the bar and ordered a drink a voice behind me said "Better make that more than one" - I turned there was the Air Commodore and the other one Strippers; apparently the Air Commodore had said "One One Stripper out all one strippers out"!

Some months later we had a very serious incident and we saw the other side of this very popular officer. The Squadron, on detachment at Sharjah, had been invited by the Commander Land Forces Persian Gulf to attack the Para's encampment as they broke camp following an exercise. This was done with great gusto and by the time the second four were "on task" the Paras were less than happy to the extent that they started firing air burst mortars at the aircraft! The Air Commodore had just flown in when the '4-ship' landed and an extremely irate Commander was driven to meet the Para Colonel. By all accounts the subsequent discussion was very one-sided and extremely chilly!

#### 1965

Squadron Commander: Sqn. Ldr. Dave Rhodes took over the Squadron from Gordon Lewis but soon thereafter was promoted to Wg. Cdr.....

and the story will continue next year with Sir Mike Stear presenting the last 6 years of the Hunter on 208

Thanks must be given to; David Styles, Roy Bowie, Pete Biddiscombe Dick Dicken, Mike Goodfellow, Eric Sharp and Tommy Thompson for their inputs into this presentation



All six Hunters from the BritForJor detachment to Amman in 1958. The farthest pair are on QRA standby.



## New Boss for 208 Squadron

Wing Commander Hunter joined the Royal Air Force in 1984 on a University Cadetship. After completing his degree in Civil Engineering at Nottingham University, he undertook flying training in Texas, USA, as part of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet-Pilot Training programme. After his return to the UK in 1989 and completion of Advanced Flying Training at RAF Valley, Wing Commander Hunter was selected to undertake instructor training at the Central Flying School and thereafter became a Qualified Flying Instructor on the Hawk back at RAF Valley on No 2 Squadron.

Wing Commander Hunter completed Tactical Weapons training at RAF Brawdy on No 234 Squadron in 1992 before being posted to the Tornado GR1. Following conversion training at RAF Cottesmore and RAF Honington, he was posted to 31 Squadron at RAF Bruggen, Germany. In 1996, Wing Commander Hunter crossed over to the Harrier GR7 and after OCU training, he was posted to No 1(F) Squadron at RAF Wittering, where he became the Sqn Qualified Flying Instructor. On promotion to Squadron Leader and a brief detachment to the NATO HQ in Vicenza as the UK air-asset tasker for the Balkans, he was posted to No IV(AC) Squadron as a squadron flight commander and squadron executive officer. During this 9 year period, Wing Commander Hunter undertook operational flying in the Middle East and the Balkans.

In 2003, Wing Commander Hunter was posted to the Ministry of Defence where he was responsible for Harrier and Jaguar procurement, as well as leading the Kill Chain

Development Initiative to improve Time-Sensitive Targeting in the Joint environment. On promotion to Wing Commander in 2004, he remained in the MOD where he joined the Directorate of Operational Capability, writing the first phase-4 report on operations in Iraq. In 2005, he undertook advanced staff training at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, at the USAF Air Command and Staff College, and thereafter remained on the faculty instructing in leadership and strategy for 2 further years.

On his return to the UK in April 2008, Wing Commander Hunter regained his instructional qualifications on the Hawk prior to taking command of 208 Squadron in June 2008.

Wing Commander Hunter is married to Jessica and has 3 sons, George, Douglas and Alexander.

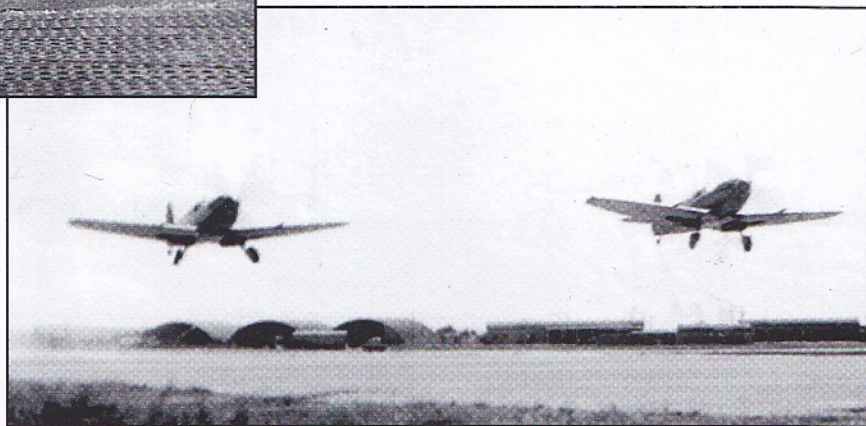


## Odds 'n' .....

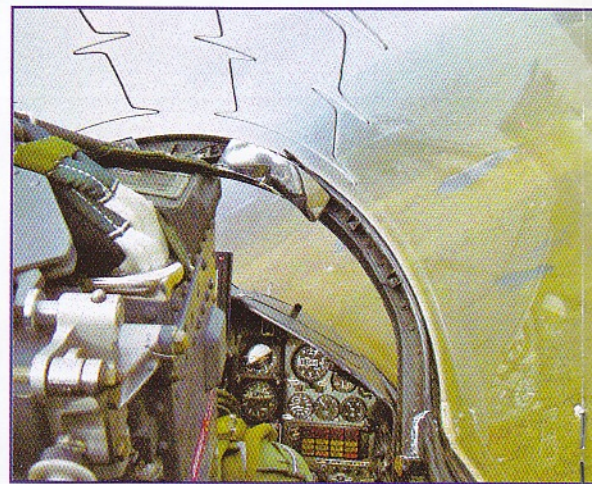


More of Ken Pugh - on the left, sitting on the tailplane of his Spitfire at Villa Franca in Italy, during a brief respite.

Demonstrating the fact that different variants of Spitfire served with 208. The aircraft on the right is an LFIXe, with clipped wings for low-level attack work, while Ken Pugh's aircraft, on the left (PT705), is a conventional Mark IXc, with the more conventional "C" Type round-tipped wing. We think that the aircraft on the right is being flown by Reg Porritt, as he and Ken often flew as a pair.

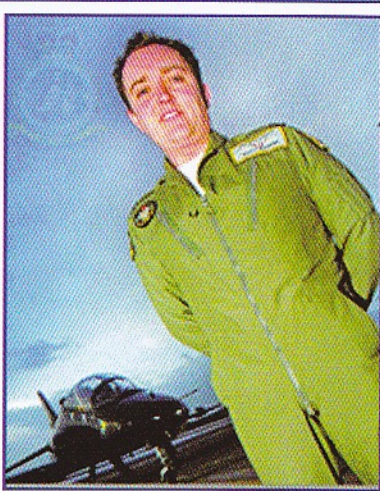


208 Squadron in Pictures



Above and right: the 2009 Solo Hawk Display aircraft in a stunning establishment of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. Clearly, a large RAF roundel was depicted on the underside of the aircraft. The RAF Benevolent Fund put a roundel on the underside again, but this time it was the RAF Benevolent Fund's simple disc of the normal roundel. The unfurling flag effect running along the fuselage and rudder is hugely impressive. The aircraft is being flown this year at air shows all over the country. The picture immediately above left and on the immediate right come from the RAF Benevolent Fund's 'Wurwal'. The one above is not an easy shot to get, as your editor was almost to the point of touching the canopy above your head - and the picture is a close-up! Stef's picture on the right is a beautifully evocative shot depicting a clean, tight, formation and a fabulous sky in the background.





...in a stunning colour scheme to mark the 75th Anniversary of the...  
 ...ly, a lesson was drawn from the 2008 aircraft, on which the Royal Air...  
 ...aircraft. This year, the design team decided to follow that theme and...  
 ...the RAFBF roundel, with the heart-shaped centre in red, instead of the...  
 ...running from just behind the standard fuselage roundel up to the fin...  
 ...this year by Flt Lt Matt Barker (immediately above right) and will be

...ht come from the camera of our Squadron Representative, Flt Lt Stef...  
 ...ditor remembers, because the photographer has to raise his camera...  
 ...- and to actually touch is not something you want to do with an mdc...  
 ...cative shot of a pair of Hawks going into the sunset. It's a fine shot,...  
 ...background.



## Letter From the Squadron

Squadron greetings from its new Officer Commanding, Wg Cdr Jamie Hunter – well its almost a year since Gary Kelly left RAF Valley, so while I have been around for a while now, this is my first update to the Association. Since Gary departed, there have, in fact, been 2 officers commanding the Squadron, first, Sqn Ldr 'Badger' Simmonds held the reins for a couple of months while I remembered how to fly again (after 5 years in various staff appointments!), and he begrudgingly handed over the mantle in June 2008 once my own training was complete.

Since that time, the Squadron has been at close to full strength and has output some 37 students into Tactical Weapons training on 19 Sqn, the other Hawk squadron at Valley. Sadly, 3 RAF and 3 RN pilots have not made the grade and are continuing their training elsewhere...Nonetheless, standards remain as high as ever, and the front line is working hard to absorb our output, which remains at around 40 new fast-jet pilots each year.

During the last 12 months there has been considerable change amongst the instructor cadre, with around 50% of the staff changing posts. Furthermore, this instability will continue throughout the year, as many of the most experienced 'A2' Qualified Flying Instructors also reach their end-of-tour. Most will be returning to the front line where their talents are clearly in high demand. Nonetheless, the less experienced instructors continue to advance their own qualifications such that Squadron will be able to continue in its role unabated.

And this is a role that will see some changes during the next few years. As most of you will know, the new Hawk, the TMk2, has started to arrive at RAF Valley, and work has started to evaluate the new syllabus. This 'glass-cockpit' trainer will replace 19 Squadron's aircraft and the first student course will start in around 2 years. In the mean time, here on 208 Squadron we will be figuring out how to fill the gap between the Tucano and the Hawk T.Mk2 with current Hawks, at least until the Tucano is replaced, which is expected to be somewhere between 2015 and 2020. Much to be done...

On the Hawk Display front, Flight Lieutenant 'Horse' Davies completed a very successful season last October, and left in haste to join the Red Arrows (and who could blame him!), but not before being presented with the Geoffrey Brommet Memorial Trophy at the last Association dinner. While it was rumoured that this was to be the final Hawk Display, I am happy to reveal that the Display lives on for yet another season. This year, Flight Lieutenant Matt Barker won a fiercely contested fly-off and he is already settling down to aerobatics



Wing Commander Jamie Hunter,  
OC 208 Squadron

at 500 ft, before final accreditation in late April. The 2 aircraft are in the Valley paint-shop as I write, and I'm hoping that one will be ready to be photographed in time for this article, but if not, keep an eye on the Display website [www.RAFHawkDisplay.com](http://www.RAFHawkDisplay.com) in the near future. You will notice that this year's paint scheme commemorates the 90th Anniversary of the RAF Benevolent Fund (see centre spread), which of course, is fitting since our own Association President, Air Marshal Sir Robert Wright, is the Fund's Controller.

But 'Horse' wasn't the only pilot to get away in 2008. The Squadron continued its exchange programme with the equivalent French squadron of Alfa-jets in Tours Air Base last



Association members and guests at the 2008 Reunion

October. This was a very worthwhile detachment enabling 12 squadron pilots and a few of our engineers to indulge in all the Loire Valley has to offer...Yes we did a lot of flying too! There is now a well-established relationship between the 2 squadrons, helped much by our French exchange officer, Captain 'George' Lucas. The French visited us here at Valley early last summer (and we never saw a cloud!) and we hope to have them back again this May. Further to this relationship, the Squadron has also had ties with the South America.

The Squadron also participated in several overseas training flights, the aim of which is to broaden the experience of particularly the younger pilots, enabling them to detach Hawks around Europe with confidence. This year, we visited Laarbruch in Germany, Cazeau and Cognac in France, and Ursel in Belgium. Furthermore, 2 Hawks deployed to Tanagra in Greece to provide static display aircraft in support of the Hellenic Air Day. Although this required 3 sorties each way, the trans-Europe experience was invaluable for all involved.

Beyond flying, the Squadron has also had a busy year in what is now termed 'Force Development', which broadly speaking, is training designed to expand the knowledge and awareness of RAF personnel in matters relating principally to Air Power. In April 2008 the Squadron visited Berlin, with additional stops in Dresden and of all places, Colditz! The Squadron also undertook its first visit to RAF Spadeadam in the Borders last December, designed to introduce the students to Electronic Warfare and how the RAF trains its pilots to deal with Surface-to-Air Missiles. And finally, we have just returned from a visit to Rome, where 18 pilots undertook to study the Italian Campaign of 1943 onwards, focussing on Anzio, Cassino, and the part Airpower played therein.

Yet it hasn't been all work (o.k. Italy wasn't that arduous...) and the Squadron has still found time for some adventurous

Lake District and North Wales including rock climbing, white-



Right - Looking up at Monastery Hill which Allied Forces assaulted between January and May 1944 in an attempt to break through the 'Gustav' line.

water rafting and participation in the RAF Skiing Championships in France this January. Such was the Squadron members' success at this event that a quarter of the RAF Ski Team is now formed from 208 pilots (well, that's 2 out of 8!), a statistic helped by the recent arrival to the Squadron of Flt Lt Roger Cruickshank, who represented Great Britain at the last Winter Olympics! While he naturally focuses more on flying than skiing these days, he still left the competition standing during the Inter-Services Championships...

For those of you at the Association Dinner last October, you will recall me tentatively inviting Association members to RAF

Valley as some point this year. I'm delighted to confirm that all members are welcome to attend the RAF Valley Families Day on 27 August 2009, which I am combining with a 208 Squadron Association Day here on the Squadron. We will also be holding a Squadron dining-in night that evening in the Officers' Mess and I hope that many of you will be able to attend that as well. I trust that you have already received invitations with all the detail, but if not, please contact Flight Lieutenant Stef Wurwal on

This

only leaves me to thank, as always, the Association for its continued support during the last year and I very much look forward to seeing many of you here at Valley in August, or back in London later this year.



Above: Members of the Squadron outside Colditz Chapel (Ex Berlin Falken) following a night in the Castle. A similar shot of British Servicemen had been seen inside the Museum during the morning tour.

training as well. This has taken the form of exercises in the

Below: Inside the main courtyard of the Benedictine Monastery (Ex Roman Avalanche) at the summit of Monte Cassino.



## Ken Pugh 1922-2009

by Graham Pitchfork

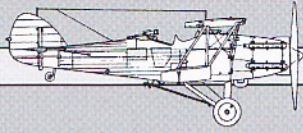
The Association lost one of its most devoted, supportive and friendliest characters with the passing of Ken Pugh on 16 March 2009 after a short illness. Ken was in great spirits at the last Reunion and was already looking forward to this year's events.

Ken joined the squadron in Palestine during late 1943 and after a brief spell on Hurricanes, he converted to Spitfires and left for Italy when the Squadron moved to Trigno in March 1944. He flew almost 150 tac recces, sweeps and occasional ground attack operations during the hard slog up Italy. He flew in support of the ground forces attacking Monte Cassino and was with the squadron when it finally reached Florence. He spoke with great pride and fondness of his time on 208 and this was born out in later years when he rarely missed a Reunion for 60 odd years. He was always at the centre of the 'Spitfire' table and his infectious laugh and bonhomie was unmistakable. He always showed a great interest in the Squadron's activities and enjoyed visits to Honington, Lossiemouth and the wonderful time at Valley when he attended the marvellous Squadron 90th in 2008, which he attended with his son.

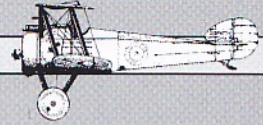
No-one who attended the Reunion four years ago will forget his stunning talk about the Squadron's wartime Spitfire years. In effect, he launched the highly successful 'Chapter' talks, which have become a popular feature of the Reunion.

There was never a more devoted member of 208 Squadron and its Association and he is a great loss to us all. Graham Pitchfork represented the Association at a packed Thanksgiving Service held at Upper Slaughter in the Cotswolds where he farmed for so many years.





# In Memoriam



Since the last Newsletter and Reunion, we regret to have to report the passing of the following Association members:-

Gwilliam E R  
Tomes J N  
Evans N

Hurricane  
Atlas  
Hunter

Pugh K  
Bowie R

Hurricane/  
Spitfire  
Spitfire

## *The Naval Eight 208 Reunion 2009*

The Annual Reunion Dinner will take place on Saturday 24th October 2009 at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1V 0PY. Dress is lounge suits and Members may bring a guest or guests. It is important that the name of your guest(s) is on the booking slip and that you indicate your period of service with the Squadron for the seating plan. Seating will be based on the Chapters. Timing is 6.30 pm for 7.30 pm and the cost per head this year is £36.00

Tickets will not be issued - but contact the Secretary (details below) for any last minute changes.

The menu for the Dinner is:

*Chicken liver parfait with tomato chutney and continental salad leaves with granary toast*

*Medallions of pork with port and stilton sauce  
served on a bed of red cabbage with sauté potatoes and a selection of vegetables*

*Blackcurrant charlotte with cream*

*Coffee and petit fours*

To reserve your place, please complete the tear-off slip on Page 12

## *Keeping in Touch*

The Association is always trying to update its records of former members of 208 Squadron, as many people leave the Squadron without making contact with the Association as they move on. For this reason, 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 take a moment to enter details below. We'll do the rest:-

I BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL SERVED WITH No 208 SQUADRON IN: \_\_\_\_\_

AT RAF: \_\_\_\_\_ THE SQUADRON WAS FLYING: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES' NAMES AND ADDRESSES

<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	DJ Trembaczowski-Ryder,
<b>HURRICANE/SPITFIRE</b>	SE Jefford BSc,
<b>METEOR</b>	JD Penrose,
<b>HUNTER</b>	TM Webb AFC
<b>BUCCANEER</b>	Wg Cdr M M Ward MDA BSc MCMi RAF.
<b>HON SEC</b>	MW Brown,
<b>HAWK</b>	Flt Lt S Wurwal, c/o No 208 Squadron,
<b>GROUNDCREW</b>	P Steele Esq,
<b>HISTORIAN/EDITOR</b>	Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FBIM FInstSMM FIMI,
<b>MEMBERSHIP SEC</b>	Air Cdre BC Laite,
	(Information on potential new members and existing members seeking contacts should be addressed to the Membership Secretary)

## 2008 NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION DINNER RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS

The following Members and their Guests were present at the 2008 Reunion Dinner:

MRS J	ABELL	FLT LT R	MCLAREN	LADY	STEAR
M G	BRADLEY	F W	MITCHELL	G J	STOREY
MRS D L	BRADLEY	MRS M	MITCHELL	R	STOREY
M W	BROWN	FLT LT S	MORRIS	T	STOREY
MRS H	BROWN	F J	NICOLL	E	STOREY
M	BURTON	J I	PARKER	DR DG	STYLES
FLT LT D	DAVIES	J	PASCOE-WATSON	J	SWAIN
MR A B	DICKEN	J D	PENROSE	MRS S	SWAIN
MRS A E	DICKEN	MRS F	PENROSE	MR JK	TROW
JF	FORD	GR	PITCHFORK	WG CDR DJ	T-RYDER
G	GOODMAN	J K T	PUGH	T M	WEBB
D	HALL	E	SHARP	MS C	WELSFORD
MRS P	HALL	MRS C	SHARP	K M	WHILEY
MS L	HANSEN	S	SMALL	FLT LT P	WILKINSON
RJM	HOWARD	A G	SMITH	AM Sir Robert A	WRIGHT
WG CDR J	HUNTER	P	SMITH	LADY	WRIGHT
M	KEMP	MS A	SMITH	FLT LT S	WURWAL
B C	LAITE	ACM Sir Michael	JD STEAR		

The following Members sent their greetings to the 2008 Reunion, as they were unable to attend:

K ALLEN	J R J CLARK	K GRIFFIN	L PHIPPS	A L THOMAS
PW ARMSTRONG	J CLARK	W GRIFITHS	P PINNEY	E A THOMSON
H W BARBER	A W COPE	D L GROOM	W F PLUMPTON	R TURNER
E BEEDHAM	J D CRANK	K G HODSON	N RIVETT	P TURVILLE
L F BOYCE	C M DRAPER	R HILLS	IL SCHWAIGER	P VICARY
G K BRADSHAW	E ERSKINE-	S E JEFFORD	A H SMITH	M WARD
W G BROOKS	LEGGETT	P LARGE	T A SMITH	
R CALVERT	D GLEEN	B MAHAFFEY	P STEELE	
NJ CHAMPNESS	G GREEN	D MEE	H TAPNER	

## Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association- Reunion Booking Slip - 2009

Please return booking slip to: MW Brown,

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

Full Address..... 2010 same? or.....

I will/will not be attending the 2009 Reunion Dinner on Saturday 23rd October and require.....places at £36 per head.

I enclose my cheque/postal order\* for Reunion Dinner (£36.00 each) £.....

Total for Reunion Dinners £.....

Name(s) of Guest(s).....

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

Total cheque/postal order/money order value £.....

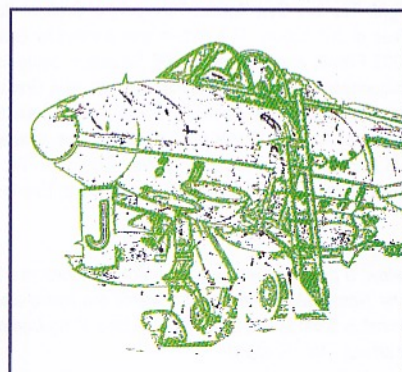
\*Please delete as necessary.

Please make cheques payable to: 208 Squadron Association

## Pictures From No 208 Squadron



Above: The Shuttleworth Trust's Bristol Fighter being flown by Desmond Penrose, our Meteor Chapter Representative, over forty years ago at Old Warden.  
Below: Flight Lieutenant "Horse" Davies receives the Bromet Memorial Trophy from Association President Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright at the 2008 Reunion Dinner.



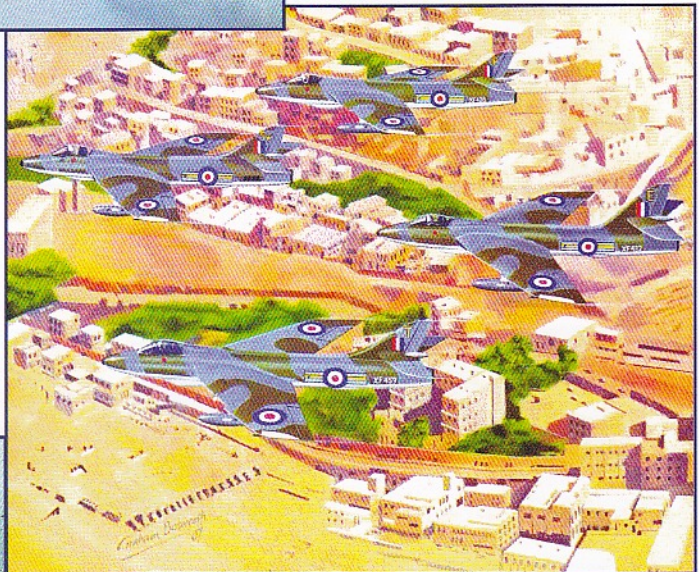
Top: Chairman Dave T-Ryder addresses the 2008 Reunion. Middle pair: two 208 aircraft - Hunter above and Buccaneer below.  
Below: Wg Cdr Jamie Hunter gives the Squadron's "State of the Nation" speech.





Flt Lt Stefan Wurwal took this beautiful shot of a 208 Hawk on a routine training flight out over the Irish Sea.

Right: "Hunters Over Amman", the print of Graham Bosworth's painting of a unique piece of 208 history. This picture was painted by Graham in late 2007 to mark the 2008 Fiftieth Anniversary of 208 Squadron being in Amman back in 1958. The uniqueness of this painting is that Sqn Ldr John Granville-White's 208 Hunters were and remain the only Royal Air Force Hunter Squadron to fly over the Jordanian capital of Amman. Prints of this painting are available at the price of £40 each (UK Postage paid) from Dr David Styles at 24 de Verdun Avenue, Belton, Loughborough LE12 9TY, cheques payable to Evenword.



Below: a picture taken by your editor thirty two years ago. Two Buccaneers flying over Nant-y-Moch Reservoir towards the hydro-electric dam in 1977. The lead aircraft is flown by the OC 208 of the time, Wing Commander Philip Pinney. Eat your heart out, Dam Busters!



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