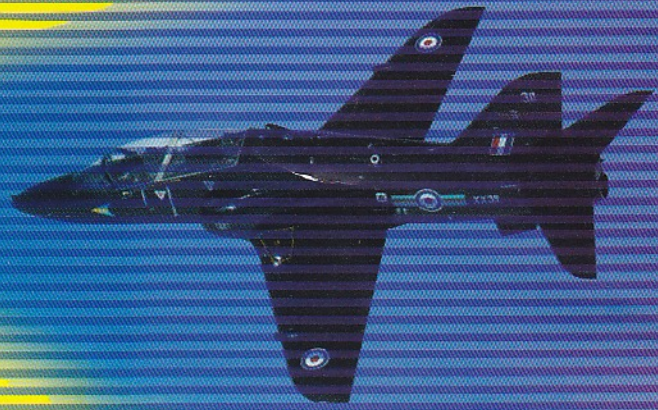


NAVAL EIGHT 208 NEWS 2010

The Annual Newsletter of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association



208 Back On The Display Trail

For several years now, 208 Squadron has had the privilege of operating the Solo Hawk Display Aircraft fielded from RAF Valley. There have been some pretty stunning designs over the years and the first significant use of the Union Flag "drape" livery came in 2008. A similar livery appeared last year, but with subtle changes to denote the 90th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

In September 2009, Flight Lieutenant Tom Saunders was selected to be the 2010 Display Pilot. Hopefully, Volcano allowing, Tom is now displaying the Hawk to its best in its striking new livery (designed by himself, continuing the theme of the Union Flag, but this time in an even more striking spread).

This year the display is once again raising money in aid of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, but this time supporting also the Wales Air Ambulance Service.

There is plenty more detail on the display and the current season on the Display Team's website at "<http://www.rafhawkdisplay.com>"





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N8/208 Rumblings

The President's Foreword:

After one year in operation the Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association Website has proven to be a great success and I hope many of you have had the opportunity to browse the pages and recall the time you spent on 208 Squadron. My thanks go to Tim Webb, our webmaster, for a superb 'mission accomplished'. He is always on the lookout for fresh material and to fill in the gaps so please let him have any interesting photographs and anecdotes that you may have.

You will recall that last year, with my other hat on as Controller of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, I announced that CAS and CINC Air Command had authorised the painting of the 208 Squadron 2009 display Hawk in RAFBF colours to celebrate our 90th anniversary. The colour scheme proved a great success and raised the profile of the RAFBF significantly. By way of showing our appreciation the RAFBF Board approved the commissioning of a piece of silverware to be presented to the RAF unit who had contributed most in support of the Fund. I am delighted to say that 208 Squadron were chosen to be the very first recipients of a magnificent Silver Hawk, which I presented to Jamie Hunter at the last Reunion Dinner; our thanks for the outstanding and continuing support by the display pilots.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the RAF Valley Open Day and 208 Squadron Association Open Day held in August last year but, as anticipated, it was an excellent event. So all in all, well done 208 Squadron.

At last year's Association Reunion Dinner Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Stear was our guest speaker and gave us a fascinating account of the later Hunter period with, a first for a Reunion Dinner, a powerpoint picture show. This was especially useful for the navigators as it had pictures to go with the words! This year we move forward in time and take on the early Buccaneer era. I can think of no better person to reflect on this chapter of 208's illustrious history than the first fast-jet navigator Squadron Commander in the Royal Air Force, Air Cdre Graham Pitchfork (my former boss for my time on 208 Squadron), who will be our guest speaker this year.

Finally, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Naval 8/208 Squadron Newsletter 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 23rd October 2010.



Ed Lines:

We have a lot of material to fill this issue, the largest piece being Mike Stear's Hunter presentation in this issue, so not a lot from me in this edition. I hope you enjoy it, especially if you were not at the 2009 Reunion. There is also the annual Squadron News piece, in which we learn that Wing Commander Jamie Hunter will be leaving the Squadron in the summer of 2011. We continue to hope that you enjoy the Newsletter each year, but do please remember that we are also always looking for material for the next issue. So if you have a little anecdote you think might interest other Association members, do please let us have it.



Chairman's Chunter:

The big event of 2009 was the RAF Valley Families Day and 208 Squadron Association day held at the end of August. The whole day was extremely well organised, with even the weather holding off to let the flying displays take place, with a superb singleton aerobatic display by Flt Lt Matt Barker and a perfect diamond nine flypast. I would like to say a BIG thank you to Jamie Hunter and all his team for an excellent day.

You will be delighted to hear that the financial situation of the Association is stable with special thanks to those of you who were able to make such generous donations. Of course, we continue to rely upon those donations to help fund the Newsletter and we would very much welcome any further donations this year – so please keep the money rolling in!

I hope many of you have been able to view the Association website (www.naval8-208-association.com) and I trust you have enjoyed reading the various sections. You will see that there is room for more information/anecdotes, so if you have any please do not hesitate to contact Tim Webb and he will be delighted to include your photos and written pieces. There were a few technical problems for some of those members who submitted the Reunion Dinner reply slip via the Website but we hope that those difficulties have been overcome now (sometimes a problem for those who use aol.com). In the last resort an email can always be sent to me or the Honorary Secretary (Malcolm Brown) if you wish to attend the dinner and we can sort out the rest (contact details appear elsewhere in the Newsletter). The website was very kindly sponsored by Sid Jefford for 2009-2010; if you would like to be a sponsor for 2010-2011 please let me know.

There have been a couple of Association Committee changes since the last Newsletter and I would like to welcome Flt Lt Tom Sawle who has taken over from Flt Lt Stefan Wurwal as both Squadron and Hawk Chapter Member. Also Paul Steele has tendered his resignation from the Committee as Groundcrew Member for personal reasons; I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Paul very much for all his hard work and dedication over many years and I wish him the very best of luck in his new endeavours. At the moment we do not have a replacement for Paul, but I would be interested to hear from anyone who would be willing to take-up this post.



New Member:

D J Simmons	Associate
C Bell	Hunter
P McLeland	Hunter

Contact Has Been Re-established With:

A Ferguson	Buccaneer
K M Norman	Buccaneer
A R Thompson	Hunter

Lost Contact:

P Wright-Gardner	Buccaneer
A R Thomson	Hunter
P P Bingham	Buccaneer
J K Frampton	Buccaneer
N V Morss	Spitfire
G B Gray	Buccaneer

Committee/Chapter News:

Meteor. The Meteor Chapter had a very successful gathering at their new pub venue, the 'Coach and Horses', at 1 Great Malborough Street, Soho on Wednesday, 5th May 2010. Photographs of faces and places in Egypt and Cyprus were in evidence and all agreed 'We were young', but even more evident there were no glum faces - a happy unit witnessed by the loyal attendance at the Meteor reunion. The next gathering is on Wednesday, 4th May, 2011. If you wish to join them give Desmond a call on

208 Squadron Movements:

Departures:

Sqn Ldr Phillip Millward (Sep 09) OC A Flt 'Lance' Millward left 208 in July to take up a post instructing with the Kuwaiti Air Force on completion of his Flt Cdr tour.

Sqn Ldr Edward Thomas (Dec 10) CFS Exam Wg Sqn Ldr Thomas left the Squadron in December after being selected to start Test Pilot training at RAF Boscombe Down in Jan.

Lieutenant Darren Bedding (July 09) B Flt QFI Lt Darren Bedding left 208 in July on completion of his service in the Royal Navy and has taken a job with the airlines. We all wish him well in his new career.

Flt Lt Matthew Barker (Dec 09) Display Pilot Matt Barker completed his 3 years with the Squadron with a season as the Hawk Display Pilot and has now returned to RAF Marham after a short period on the OCU at RAF Lossiemouth.

Flt Lt Nicolas Cogley (Mar 10) C Flt QFI Nick Cogley departed in March to return to the GR4 at RAF Marham after a short period on the OCU at RAF Lossiemouth.

Flt Lt Phillip Davies (Sep 09) C Flt QFI Phil Davies finished his time at 208 Squadron as an instructor on C Flt and departed the Sqn in Sep on completion of his service in the RAF. Phil is now working for BAe.

Flt Lt Simon Dutton (Apr 09) C Flt QFI A fond farewell has been said to Si, who has been a member of 208 for 3 years and completed his tour as a member of C Flt. Si moves on to NFTC in Canada flying the Hawk 115.

Flt Lt Stephen Eccles (Oct 09) A Flt QFI (Creamie) Steccles departed in Oct on completion of his instructor tour and has since started Tac Weapons training on 19(F) Sqn. We wish him the best of luck with his next course.

Flt Lt Kevin Van Gisbergen (June 09) A Flt QFI Capt Kevin Van Gisbergen from the Canadian Forces has now completed his tour at RAF Valley and returns to his native country to instruct at NFTC. 'Cheez' has been a member of 208 now for 3 years and has become an integral part of it. He leaves the UK with two new assets which he did not have on arriving, two children

Flt Lt Rory McLaren (Sep 09) Training Officer Rory McLaren has been posted back to the Tornado GR4 fleet. Rory has been a key member of 208 Sqn for the past 3 years as the Training and Standards Officer.

Flt Lt Oliver Parr (Sep 09) C Flt QFI Flt Lt Ollie Parr has been posted back to the Tornado GR4 fleet. Ollie has been a key member of 208 for the past 3 years.

Flt Lt Simon Ramsden (Apr 09) C Flt QFI (Creamie) Farewell to Simon who moves on to 19(F) Squadron. Rambo has been a Creamie on 208 since 2007. He was an integral part of 208 Squadron since arriving at RAF Valley as a student in 2006.

Flt Lt Stefan Wurwal (Aug 09) C Flt QFI (Creamie) A fond farewell is said to Flt Lt Stefan Wurwal who leaves 208 Sqn to commence Tac Weapons on 19(F) Sqn. Stef has been a Creamie on 208 since 2007 and has had a very active role in the organization of 208 Sqn's Association.

Fg Off Sam Hudson (Sep 09) Ops Officer Fg Off Hudson has been posted OOA to the Falkland Islands. Sam has been the Sqn OpsO for the past year. The best of luck to Sam in the future.

Arrivals:

Sqn Ldr Paul Harrison (Sep 09) OC A Flt Sqn Ldr 'Skids' Harrison joined 208 Sqn in Sep to take up the post as OC A Flt. Flt Lt James Copple (Apr 09) Training Officer James Copple joined 208 in April after completing an exchange tour instructing with the Pakistani Air Force. James has instructed on 208 Sqn during a previous tour and takes up the post of Training Officer.

Flt Lt Roger Cruickshank (May 09) A Flt QFI (Creamie) Roger Cruickshank has returned to 208 Sqn as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.

Flt Lt Juliet Fleming (Mar 10) QFI U/T Jules Fleming has returned to 208 Sqn after a tour on the Tornado GR4 at RAF Marham. Jules completed a creamie tour at 208 Sqn before being posted to the Tornado.

Flt Lt James Milmine (Aug 09) A Flt QFI Milly joined 208 Squadron in August 09 after completing his first tour as a Tornado GR4 pilot on 14 Sqn at RAF Lossiemouth.

Flt Lt John Mulhall (Nov 09) A Flt QFI Johnny Mulhall joined 208 in Nov 09 after completing his first tour as a Tornado GR4 pilot on 617 Sqn at RAF Lossiemouth.

Flt Lt Tom Sawle (May 09) B Flt QFI Tom Sawle joined 208 Squadron in May 09 after completing his first tour as a Tornado GR4 pilot on 14 Sqn at RAF Lossiemouth.

Flt Lt Geoff Sheppard (Dec 09) CFS Exam Wg Geoff arrived on the Sqn in December to take over the post of CFS Agent and very quickly notched up his 6000th fast jet hour. Geoff's experience will no doubt be a great asset to the Squadron.

Flt Lt Peter Smith (Apr 09) Flt Lt B Flt QFI Flt Lt Pete Smith arrived on 208 Sqn in Apr 09 after completing his first tour at RAF Leuchars on the Tornado F3.

Flt Lt Alex Taylor (Apr 09) A Flt QFI Alex 'Shredder' Taylor arrived on 208 in Apr 09 after completing his first tour at RAF Leuchars on the Tornado F3.

Flt Lt Philip Taylor (Aug 09) A Flt QFI 'Giz' Taylor returns to 208 Squadron from a Tour as a QFI at NFTC in Canada.

Flt Lt James Turner (Feb 10) QFI U/T (Creamie) James Turner has returned to 208 to train as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.

Flt Lt Phillip Wilkinson (Apr 09) A Flt QFI (Creamie) Phil Wilkinson has returned to 208 as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.

Sub Lt Christopher Mould (Aug 09) B Flt QFI (Creamie) 'Mouldy' Mould has returned to 208 as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.

Fg Off Natalie Griffiths (Feb 10) Ops Officer Natalie Griffiths joined 208 Squadron in February to take over the post of Sqn Ops Officer.

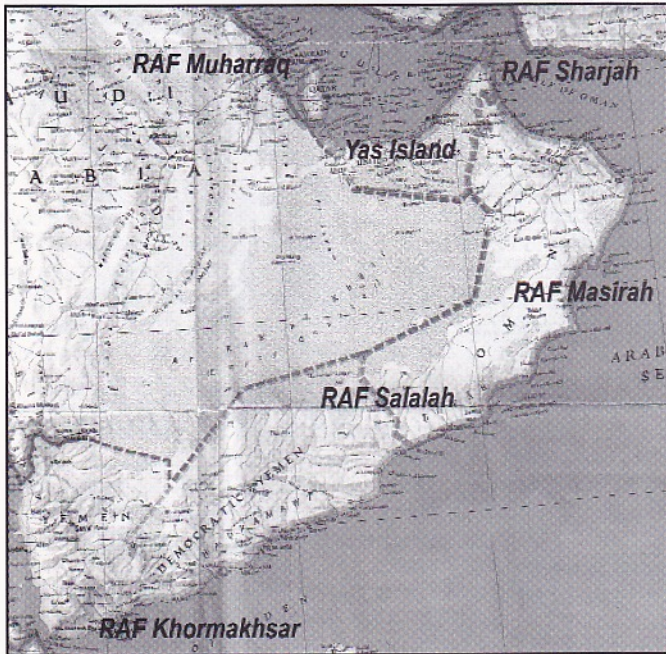
Fg Off William Macdonald (Aug 09) A Flt QFI (Creamie) Will Macdonald has returned to 208 Squadron as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.

Fg Off Scott Noyes (Feb 10) QFI U/T (Creamie) Scott Noyes has returned to 208 to train as a creamie instructor after completing his ab initio training on the Hawk.



2009 Guest of Honour - ACM Sir Mike Stear

As a start, below is a map showing where the Squadron lived and operated over the period 1965-1971, showing the "Persian", now "Arabian" Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.



You can see the island of Bahrain, and off its North East coast the island of Muharraq, home of RAF Muharraq. The other bases where 208 was deployed or detached are also marked: Aden and RAF Khormaksar, down on the SW corner of the Arabian Peninsular, close to the entrance of the Red Sea. Moving up the coast to the NE, was RAF Salalah, close to the main palace where the Sultan of Oman resided. Moving further up the coast of Oman is the island of Masirah and RAF



Masirah, then an important staging post of the RAF, now the main flying training base of the Sultan of Oman's Air Force. Turning North on the southern shores of the Gulf is RAF Sharjah, much visited, not just by 208 but a wide cross section of RAF aircraft and personnel, and the first ever airfield in the Gulf area, built in 1932 as a staging post for Imperial Airways en route to India.



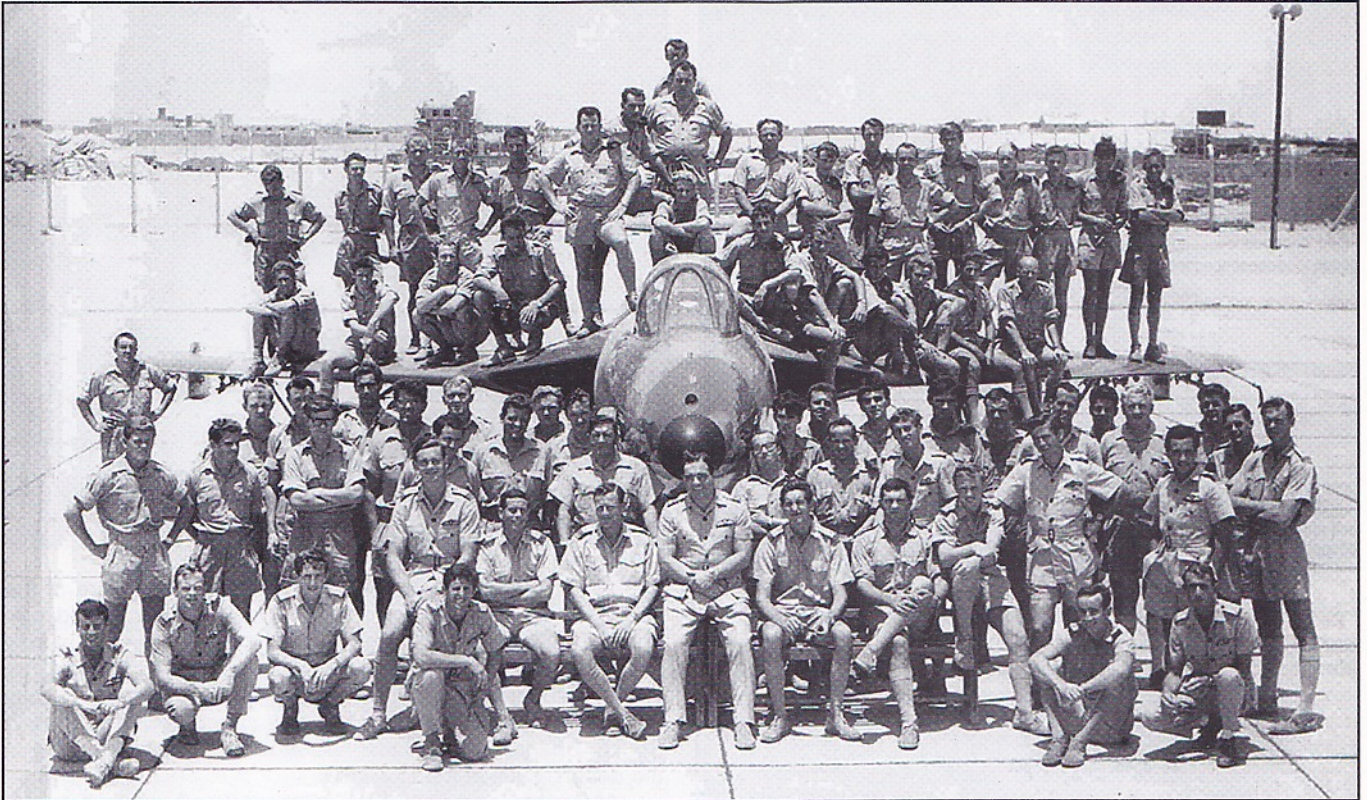
The picture at the bottom of the opposite page is a view of the Airfield at RAF Muharraq – long since now Bahrain International Airport, and it shows the Squadron's Hunters on the pan before the Squadron hangar and offices were built.

The island of Muharraq was at that stage connected to Bahrain by a single narrow causeway – almost 2 lanes wide – now there are 3 large motorway sized causeways with bridges. The whole station, including the RAF Hospital but only the senior wheels, hospital staff and singlies lived on base. We married folk lived in hirings etc in Manama, Bahrain's only town, then. During the Six Days Arab/Israeli War, there were riots – incited by Egyptian teachers, and everyone living "downtown" were confined to their flats unless military MT could be provided to get them to the station – and – guess what! The Squadron was on detachment for the whole of that period. The wives as so often in service life had to cope on their own!

here. 208 was tasked with introducing the new SNEB high velocity anti-armour rocket into operational service, carried in pods of 19 on under-wing pylons. We were also introducing low-level skip bombing, 50 feet altitude at 420 knots, training for napalm, retarded bombs and cluster bomb deliveries. The FGA 9 Hunters all had the integral four-cannon 30mm Aden gun-pack, capable of knocking down mud forts and just about anything else in their way.

The Hunter aircraft could carry all the weapons I have described and deliver them with remarkably devastating accuracy. Ground controllers reached such a level of skill and trust in the precision of the Hunter, that they were talking aircraft down to attack positions as close as twenty-five yards from their own!

Below is a SNEB gunsight picture of a 10 degree dive with weapon release at around 900 feet, (the whole pods take some

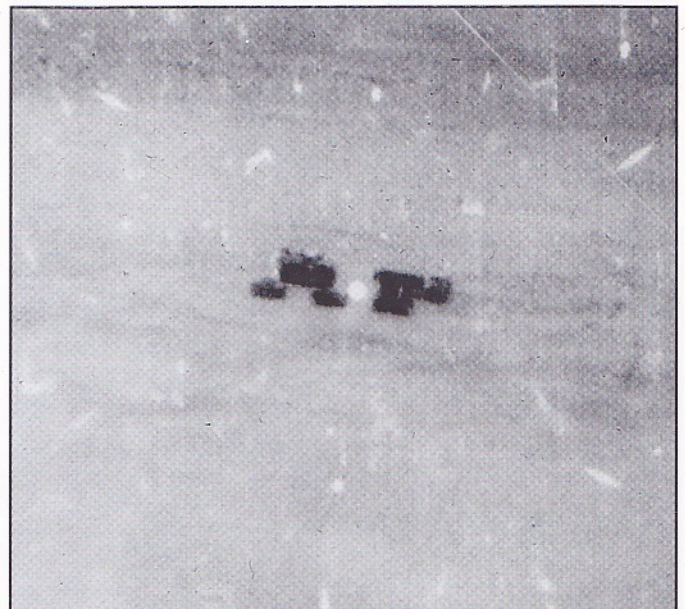


The picture above shows the Squadron's air and ground crew assembled in front of a Hunter. At the beginning of 1967, 208 was a fully operational front line squadron and remained so until its disbandment in September 1971. Assigned to CENTO, but with other significant local commitments, the support and reinforcement of Aden and the two Hunter squadrons at Khormakhsar was, overall, the top priority.

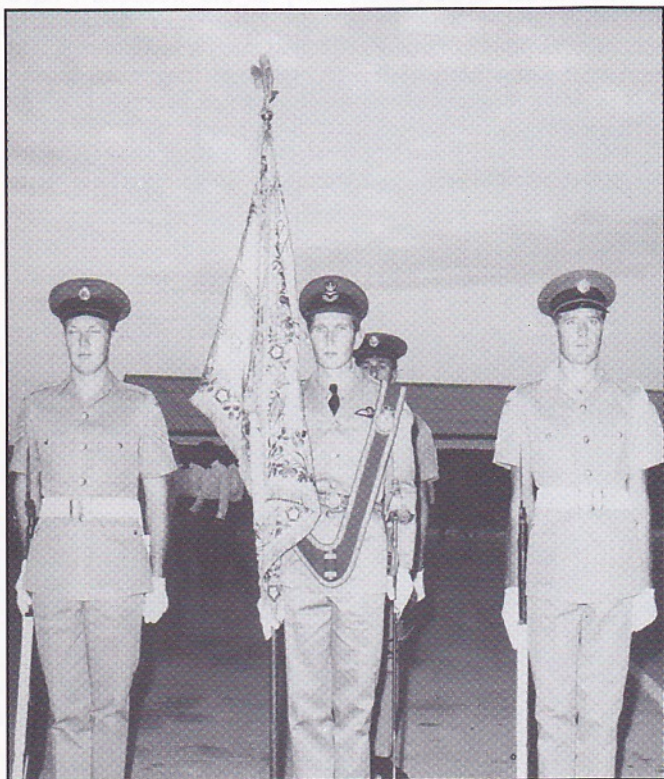
As you can see, we were: "all of one company", air and groundcrew working together, largely self-sufficient, on an expeditionary footing and able to deploy at short notice away from our home base. We had our own Army Ground Liaison Team to enable and direct Close Air Support operations, a key commitment in that theatre.

In the area of armament, the RAF was already in transition, looking towards the new fast jet front line. This is reflected

(time to deliver) remaining steady in the dive with wings level. Note the centre-spot of the gunsight graticule right in the middle of the target.



In October 1966 a very special event took place, Naval 8/208 Sqn's 50th Birthday, attended by Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Bromet, the Squadron's first Commanding Officer, accompanied by his wife Dame Jean (nee Conan-Doyle) Bromet and many other distinguished names, including the Squadron's second Commanding Officer, the legendary Major Christopher Draper, who some will remember for his exploits in flying an Auster light plane under London bridges.



There were the inevitable high power visits to punctuate the Squadron's routine. Here the Ruler of Bahrain, His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Suleiman al Khalifa visiting the



station. Our revered and much loved Station Commander at the time, Gp Capt "Twinkle" Storey, assisted by Flying Officer Whitney Griffiths (one of our JPs from New Zealand) showing His Highness the Hunter's weaponry.

DETACHMENTS/DEPLOYMENTS: ADEN

While 208 was now "permanently" based at Muharraq frequent detachments and deployments to Aden continued right up until independence. At one stage 208 was detaching operational pilots to reinforce the Khormaksar sqns on ops up around the Yeman Border, while they sent some of their newly arrived JPs from the OCU at Chivenor up to 208 for plenty of good flying, continuity, plus training in all roles, tactics and weaponry required of a fast jet Fighter Ground Attack pilot looking towards the RAF's new front line aircraft.



SHARJAH

208 deployed regularly to Sharjah. Above is a picture of the control tower, just as it was then, and since the airfield was built in 1932. But although it has not been moved it is now almost in the city, the tiny village long since gobbled up, surrounded by skyscrapers. At the far end of the runway today stands the magnificent marble cased structure of the Sharjah Soukh. Sharjah International Airport is some distance away in the desert, outside the city limits.

At least twice a year the Sqn spent 2 or 3 weeks there for APCs using an academic weapons range at Rashid and the much larger range at Jebel Ali – both now busy built up areas of the sprawling Dubai.

On one such detachment the whole Sqn was put into quarantine for smallpox. A number of Pakistanis had disembarked from a dhow up the coast at Ras al Khaima, through Sharjah to Dubai, where it was discovered they had smallpox. As the Sqn MO with them put it, they were all now world outcasts but after compulsory re-vaccination it was sorted out in about 10 days.

There the Sqn also mounted long range sorties into Southern Iran, through the wadis and mountains of Oman and in to the Empty Quarter, the Rub al Khali.

Army Co-op and Forward Air Control exercises also took place there. (as below: "Found them" – Army vehicles)





This second picture shows targets spotted – then “guns” attack – cine only!!

On now to Masirah: 208 Squadron and many other RAF aircraft regularly used the base on Masirah Island, off the Omani coast as a staging post. Below is a picture of the Masirah Pan and Offices.



For the Squadron, it was en route to and from Aden. The facilities were pretty basic, with little infrastructure. However, Masirah featured in our night flying programme. The Air Headquarters at Aden and Bahrain decided that we should be able to deploy to Aden under cover of darkness. Approach aids were minimal; the runway had a few lights, and only a red “T” to guide you in! Not really enough light to see any obstructions, but luckily camels and donkeys did not appear to be around at night. The airfield was unfenced!

Later we used Masirah for live Forward Air Control practice. Here is a live Sneb firing – can you see the rockets! - Followed by a smart 6+ G pull-out – mountains ahead.



Next picture is of Live Forward Air Control firing training which used to take place on Yas Island where there was absolutely nothing. The Army and ground party were supported by the resident Royal Navy Landing Craft from Bahrain. Our Army ground liaison found the Twyneham huts at Masirah much more to their liking!

RANGERS:

The prospect of “rangers” to more exotic places was exciting but short lived. On the first trip a very senior officer from Air Headquarters, who had flown Hunters, decided to go to check the scheme out. On arrival, he managed to go off the end of the longest runway in that part of East Africa – and that was the end of that!

On a subsequent trip, we delivered four ex-Aden Hunters to Amman to replenish the Royal Jordanian Air Force after the Six Days War. Apart from landing at Riyadh in a sand storm, and being fortunate enough to meet a Royal Saudi Air Force general in jeans, who found them some fuel – the trip went off without a hitch but no thanks to the British Embassy staff at Jeddah.

LIFE IN BAHRAIN:

What was life like in Bahrain 40 plus years ago? The weather was expletively hot and very humid; nothing changed there, and the strong Northerly winds “the Shamal” still bring the sand from the deserts of Iraq and Kuwait and turn the sky and everything orangey-red. When it rains it is usually in torrents and everything floods.

Social life inevitably centred round the Station and the Mess. Apart from all the outdoor activities, all forms of sport, swimming, sailing and waterskiing, plus the Rulers Beach for married accompanied folk, there was not much else to do and nowhere to go. A Malcolm Club down town, a dodgy Dhow restaurant, if you were prepared to chance the results, and the Speedbird Hotel where the BOAC crews night-stopped. It was only in late '68 early '69 that the first American/European style hotel was built and opened on the North Shore of Manama that there was anywhere of any quality to go to for an evening out and meal.

Shopping in the Soukh and the Gold Street was always fascinating, colourful and fun – bartering for everything – quite different from home. Ladies were wise to have a companion and a large, heavy handbag to swing, against the prospect of being approached from behind too closely! But they were allowed to drive, and on their own – unlike Saudi – and there was “Harry Somers” Store where we were allowed to buy booze legally. Weekend Sqn dhow trips for fishing and swimming were always very popular. But we all made our own fun, and I can’t remember anyone who disliked their time out there.

The messes were very lively, popular and well-supported. Mess nights, the Ball, dances and other functions and occasional Casino nights run by 208 Squadron (we had the kit) were all regular features. We would dance on the patio if it wasn’t too hot to all the latest hits from the 60’s: Beatles, Stones, Beachboys etc. The Mess even had its own home grown band “the Sunset” – and we would dance to them on Saturdays ‘til the small hours.

There were, naturally, the inevitable post dinner, Mess Games. Here is 208 in action – and “ready, heave!”





THE HUNTER ERA OF 208 SQUADRON

Eight 208 Hunters airborne "somewhere over the Arabian Gulf", probably Bahrain.

Below Centre: A squadron group photograph, now in "magical technicolor". This was a shot taken to mark the departure of Squadron Leader Tony Chaplin.

Bottom: next aircraft in the line of 208 history - the Buccaneer. This shot being quite symbolic - in that it is a Naval aircraft type (208, as Naval 8 was a Navy Squadron, flying over the Pyramids of Egypt, very close to where the Squadron spent most of its time between the two World Wars.





DISPLAY HAWKS

Number 208 Squadron has been the "Squadron of Choice" for the Royal Air Force's Solo Hawk Aerobatic Display for several years now and it's interesting to show, in each of recent years, the livery in which the display aircraft has been decorated has become more colourful year-on-year.

The top picture shows the 2007 Display Hawk - brightly coloured and quite adventurous in its time.

2008 marked the 90th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force and so the colour scheme chosen for that year was highly adventurous - with a Royal Air Force roundel wrapped around the fin, the tricolour lightning flash down the sides of the aircraft and then, the RAF roundel painted in full on the underside of the Hawk. Quite spectacular!

But wait for it. Last year's 90th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund saw a stunning scheme, with the "tear-away" black finish exposing the Union Flag, and as you see on the left, another roundel underneath - this time the RAFBF one. And then, there's this year's Hawk, on the front and rear covers of this issue.....

Here are 208 doing their croupier act – the roulette table – in Sharjah, the locals were doing far too well and prospects for the Sqn funds looked dire. But someone was looking after the Sqn! The last turn of the wheel, with the table stacked with bets – up came a zero – House takes all and sighs of relief all round.



Since we now had colour, the next picture is (in the Centre Spread on Page 8) taken as a very popular boss, Sqn Ldr Tony Chaplin was about to leave.

THE END OF AN ERA

Detachments and APC continued to occupy 208's time, but there was a certain inevitability about the outcome, as the British Government told the world it no longer intended to maintain a presence East of Suez.

The British Forces in the Gulf were to be disbanded. On 10th September 1971, Number 208 Squadron was disbanded. And below is a photograph of the Disbandment Parade at RAF Muharraq.

Squadron Leader Ian Dick was the last Commanding Officer of 208 Squadron in the Middle East. With no immediate plans to reform the Squadron it was his duty to bring the Squadron Standard home and lay it up at the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell. This he did on 26 October 1971, 55 years to the day from the formation of Naval 8.

So ended an era. No 208 Sqn had established a record that will almost certainly never be beaten. It served continuously in the Middle East for almost 52 years; longer than any other numbered Squadron in the Royal Air Force. So farewell to the beautiful Hunter – but was it? It lived on, as I expect you will hear next year, as 208 Buccaneers take the floor.

NO. 208 SQUADRON
ROYAL AIR FORCE



CEREMONIAL PARADE

AT RAF MUHARRAQ

ON SATURDAY 21st AUGUST 1971

by kind permission of

GROUP CAPTAIN E. G. P. JEFFERY, RAF

(Officer Commanding RAF Muharraq)



Letter From the Squadron

Greetings once again from OC 208 Squadron after another busy and eventful year. Sadly for me, this will be my last letter from the Squadron, as sandy places beckon in July for a quick 6 months of something totally different. One of the Squadron's flight commanders will hold the fort for a few months until my replacement, Wing Commander Eugene Moriarty, finishes Staff College and completes his QFI refresher training. And so the wheel turns...

The previous 12 months at Valley have also seen significant change. The skies above now regularly echo to the sound of a slightly louder and lumpier Hawk in the form of the new TMk2. While the Squadron may not get to fly it, this development period will last until the end of 2011 when full student training commences. To enable this, there's a huge amount of construction work already well under way. With the new Military Flying Training System driving the whole initiative, a 'super-hangar' and associated buildings are near completion. The only down-side being that my once fabulous view of Snowdonia is no more...the cost of progress! There is currently no change to 208 Squadron's anticipated role. We will continue to train pilots straight from the Tucano at RAF Linton. Once the T2 is introduced, the Squadron and its role will reduce somewhat, as the Hawk T1 will be used to 'fill the training gap' that is anticipated between Linton's exit standard, and the T2 entry standard. Although this will be a smaller and dual-only course, it will include elements of Air Combat and tactical low-level training which will certainly be more rewarding for the staff.

Despite the changes, 208 Squadron has continued to deliver its primary task of training new fast jet pilots, with 2009 seeing the graduation of 8 courses and a total of 39 young aviators progressing to the next stage of training on the Tactical Weapons Unit (TWU). The effort involved in meeting this task should not be underestimated with the Squadron flying 5707hrs over 5909 sorties during the year. The Squadron was able to complete nearly 95% of all planned sorties, which is a testament to the reliability of the Hawk TMk1, and believe it or not, the excellent weather record on Anglesey! Despite this success, there were a significant number of students who were unable to meet the required standard with a disappointing suspension rate last year around a very high 25%. However, with a contracting Air Force, the front-line has continued to receive enough high-quality pilots to meet all Defence needs. Furthermore, not all of the students who did manage to complete the course continued on to TWU training. 208 Squadron has welcomed 6 new 'creamie' instructors in the last 12 months, and for the first time, two students have been posted to Creech Air Force Base, USA, to fly the Reaper Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV) with the RAF's 39 Squadron. These two 'lucky ones' will be operating UAVs in Afghanistan, including weaponering, but all from Nevada – the mind boggles! As this is the first time this streaming option has been tried, the performance of the two officers is being carefully monitored to see if it will become routine for the Squadron. There's a possibility that another 2 will follow in the autumn...

In addition to the 6 new creamies, the Sqn welcomed another 10 instructors over the last year including Sqn Ldr 'Skids' Harrison as OCA Flt who recently returned from Oman, Flt Lt Geoff Sheppard as the Exam Wing Representative and Flt Lt Jim Copple as the Training Officer who just returned from an 'interesting' tour flying Hawks in Pakistan. The Squadron also qualified Valley's new Station Commander, Group Captain Hedley, who as a 5-tour Harrier weapons expert enjoyed the 'challenges' of instructing ab-initio students for the first time. He now realises that true flying reward comes from teaching a knowledge-thirsty student the intricacies of a stalling package (even if he hasn't acknowledged it yet!)... The Squadron also

said goodbye to 13 QFIs including Flt Lt Stefan Wurwal who after doing an excellent job of representing the Squadron to Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association for 3 years has handed over the reins to Flt Lt Tom Sawle.

Along with the usual flying training task the Squadron has continued to develop close links with the French Advanced Flying Training school at French Air Force Base Tours in the Loire Valley. This association has contributed to a tri-lateral agreement between the Belgian, French and British governments that allows all associated training bases to rapidly re-deploy to each other's countries should the weather turn poor at home. This agreement has already been tested on several occasions with the French operating out of RAF Valley and 208 Squadron operating from France.

Flt Lt Matt Barker completed his tour on 208 Squadron at the end of 2009 after a very successful year as the Hawk Display Pilot. Matt started the season well by winning the Wright Jubilee Trophy which is awarded by AOC 22 Group to the best display during the fly off for Public Display Authority (PDA). Matt went on to perform 70 displays at 50 different venues to an estimated audience of around 5 million as well as raising over £13,000 in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund and local Station charities. The highlight of Matt's season was a visit to Belgrade, Serbia, with the RAF returning to the country for the first time since the Kosovo Conflict of 1999. The whole event was very political, but nonetheless, very successful, with spectators numbering around 150 thousand, a figure which represented the country's largest gathering in a decade.

Of course it hasn't been all work during the last 12 months and despite ever-tightening financial constraints the Squadron has completed overseas training flights to locations such as Aalborg, there have been Force Development trips to GCHQ



Above: an overhead view of GCHQ, a Force Development Trip location.

Below: a former 208 Gulf "Bucc" (Guinness Girl), seen during a London Trip.





Above: the Inter-Services-Ski Championships brought Flt Lt Roger Cruickshank and Flt Lt David Stark, very near to success.

and the Hawk production facility at BAe Brough and a Staff Ride to London to investigate the development of our Integrated Air Defence System in the run up to the Battle of Britain. With Flt Lt Roger Cruickshank now a creamie on the Sqn there will usually be some good news about skiing to report and this time is no different with Roger and Flt Lt David Stark both representing the RAF at the Inter-Services Ski Championships with great success. Ok, they didn't win, but it was very close...

208 Squadron Tie

On the right is the new 208 Squadron Tie. It is available for sale now at
Price - £18.50

Please send cheques payable to 'Service Funds RAF Valley'

To

Flt Lt Tom Sawle,
Number 208 Squadron, Royal Air Force Valley,



The Naval Eight 208 Reunion 2010

The Annual Reunion Dinner will take place on Saturday 23rd October 2010 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 £42.00 per head. Tickets will not be issued - but contact the Secretary (details below) for any last minute changes.

The menu for the Dinner is:

Smoked salmon with brown bread and butter

Roast Rib-Eye of Beef with Yorkshire Pudding, with traditional roast potatoes and a selection of vegetables

Chocolate Gateau

Coffee, Petits Fours and Port

To reserve your place, please complete the tear-off slip on Page 14

The 2011 Annual Reunion Dinner will take place at the RAF Club on Saturday 29th October.

Hon Sec: MW Brown,



In Memoriam



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

R Widdison	Hunter
F Gibbs	Lysander/ Hurricane
J R Hallas	Hurricane
L D Todd	Hurricane
J J Sharp	Unknown
B J Stephens	Hunter
M Raymond	Hunter
G J (Twinkle) Storey	Spitfire/ Meteor
B E Parfitt	Lysander/ Hurricane
R B White	Spitfire

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

CHAIRMAN
HURRICANE/SPITFIRE
METEOR
HUNTER
BUCCANEER
HON SEC
HAWK
GROUNDCREW
HISTORIAN/EDITOR
MEMBERSHIP SEC

DJ Trembaczowski-Ryder,
SE Jefford BSc
JD Penrose BSc, D.L.C., C.Eng, FRAs, FRSA
TM Webb AFC
Wg Cdr M M Ward MBA BSc MCMLRAE
MW Brown MRAsS,
Flt Lt T. Sawle, c/o 208 Sqn, RAF Valley.

VACANT

Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FBIM FInstSMM FIMI,
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 2009 Reunion Dinner:

MW BROWN	BC LAITE	MRS E PENROSE	TM WEBB	FG OFF L BOWMAN
MRS H BROWN	MRS H LAITE	P SMITH	MS C WELSFORD	FLT LT RA CRUICKSHANK
MISS K BURTON	B MAHAFFEY	Sir Michael STEAR	KM WHILEY	SQN LDR PK HARRISON
CK BUSHE	MRS J MAHAFFEY	Lady STEAR	AM Sir Robert WRIGHT	WG CDR J HUNTER
AW COPE	R MARSHALL	DR DG STYLES		MRS P HUNTER
MRS M COPE	MRS J MARSHALL	MRS A STYLES		FG OFF WR MACDONALD
D DRAKE	ED MEE	M TELFORD		FLT LT J MILMINE
G GOODMAN	MRS J MEE	G TELFORD		FLT LT T SAWLE
MISS L JACKSON	FJ NICOLL	MRS G TELFORD	MEMBERS AND THEIR	MRS S SAWLE
I JOHNSTON	J PARKER	D FRYDER	GUESTS FROM No 208 SQN	FLT LT PJ WILKINSON
MRS J JOHNSTON	JD PASCOE-WATSON	WG CDR M WARD		
M KEMP	JD PENROSE	MRS L WARD	FLT LT MJ BARKER	

The following Members sent their greetings to the 2009 Reunion, as they were unable to attend:

PW ARMSTRONG	N CHAMPNESS	DL GROOM	JR LEASK	P SANDERS	K TROW
HW BARBER	JD CRANK	D HALL	DSB MARR	S SMALL	P TURVILLE
E BEEDHAM	E ERSKINE	KG HODSON	M MCGROGAN	AH SMITH	P VICARY
LF BOYCE	LEGGET	R HOWARD	L PHIPPS	G SMITH	DJ WILBY
GK BRADSHAW	HO FIELD	R HILLS	G PITCHFORK	TA SMITH	
MG BRADLEY	J FORD	L HUBELY	J PRATT	D SPONG	
WG BROOKS	J FRADGLEY	R HYMANS	N RIVETT	P STEELE	
R CALVERT	W GRIFFITHS	SE JEFFORD	BC ROBINSON	GJ STOREY	
		P LARGE	I ROSS	EA THOMSON	

Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association- Reunion Booking Slip - 2010

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

Full Address..... 2011 same? or.....

I will/will not be attending the 2010 Reunion Dinner on Saturday 23rd October and require.....places at £42 per head.

I enclose my cheque/postal order* for Reunion Dinner (£42 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.

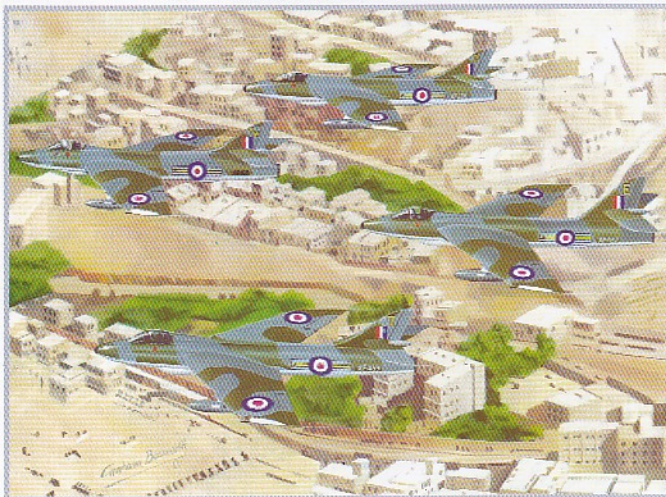
Please make cheques payable to: 208 Squadron Association

Pictures From The 2009 Reunion



Top left: Flt Lt Matt Barker receives the Bromet Memorial Trophy from Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright. Top right: Squadron Boss Wg Cdr Jamie Hunter is presented with a beautiful silver Hawk trophy by Air Marshal Wright.. Above left and right - Jamie Hunter and Association Chairman Dave T-Ryder making their addresses to the Gathering.

Below: Another view of Flt Lt Tom Saunders' beautifully designed and executed 2010 Solo Hawk Display livery. As you can see, the aircraft looks simply stunning in flight.



HUNTERS OVER AMMAN
A Limited Edition print of 208 copies

This print of Graham Bosworth's painting of a unique piece of 208 history was painted 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,

This Newsletter was printed by us. It is your advertisement for our print quality, If we can help you, contact Malcolm or Brendan at:-

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