

NAVAL EIGHT 208 NEWS 2012



The Annual Newsletter of the Naval 8/208 Squadron Association

Squadron Standard Presentation



During 208 Sqn's 95 years of service it has been honoured with 2 previous Standards, the first of which was presented on the 18th November 1955 by the founding CO of the Sqn, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Bromet KCB CB DSO RAF (Retd) at Abu Suier in Egypt. The original standard was eventually replaced on 1st June 1984 during a parade at RAF Lossiemouth in the presence of Air Marshal Sir Humphrey Edward-Jones KCB CBE DFC AFC BA RAF (Retd). It was this second standard that was replaced during a parade at RAF Valley on Thursday 24th November 2011 after nearly 28 years of uninterrupted service.

The day of the presentation dawned mild but extremely blustery as the staff of 208 Sqn conducted their last dress rehearsal before awaiting the arrival of the reviewing officer, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton KCB ADC BSc FRAeS CCMI RAF. The parade not only marked an important event for 208 Sqn but also saw the disbandment of

19 Sqn and the rededication of the IV Sqn standard as they take on the mantle of operating the Hawk TMK2. The CAS arrived in a Royal Sqn HS125 at 1300 and made his way into the Moran Building to greet the staff and guests of all three Sqn's for a buffet lunch.

By 1400 the invited guests were in position for the start of the parade. The Central Band of the RAF led the procession with an exemplary performance given the inclement conditions and over the next 40 mins both the 208 Sqn and the IV Sqn standards were uncased and marched past the reviewing officer. As the Standards were marched off the parade square the standard bearers had to contend with some very high winds which they did very well to cope with as it looked likely that we may need our fourth Standard in short order!

With the ceremonies complete the staff and guests alike beat a hasty retreat to 208 Sqn for some well earned refreshments and opportunity to look over the Sqn's history or chat about the old days.



Naval 8 – 208 Rumblings



NAVAL EIGHT 208 Squadron Association Committee:

President:

Air Marshal Sir Robert Wright
KBE AFC FRAeS RAF

Life Vice-Presidents:

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Stear
KCB CBE MA FRAeS DL
R J White MIMgt
S E Jefford BSc

Vice-Presidents

Air Cdre B C Laite
Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FBIM FInst SMM FIMI
Wg Cdr E Moriarty RAF OC 208 Sqn

Chairman:

D J Trembacowski-Ryder BSc Esq

Secretary:

M W Brown MRAeS Esq

Treasurer:

P Smith MBA Esq

Membership Secretary:

Air Cdre B C Laite

Committee:

S E Jefford BSc
Air Cdre GR Pitchfork MBE BA FRAeS
J D Penrose BSc DLc CEng FRAeS FRSA
D Gill Esq

Webmaster:

T M Webb AFC MRAeS

Newsletter Editor:

Wg Cdr M M Ward MDA BSc RAF

Printed by: M&B Print,
9 Great Central Road
Loughborough, LE11 1RW
email: mandb@print.fsbusiness.co.uk

The President's Foreword

The Squadron and Association had 2 reasons to celebrate in 2011: the 95th anniversary of the formation of Naval Eight and the presentation of a new standard. To commemorate the 95th anniversary 208 Squadron held an open day at RAF Valley on 10th June 2011, with a theme of "The Changing Face of 208 Sqn". We were blessed with good weather, a fine flying display and a most enjoyable and entertaining dining-in night in the Officers' Mess. I would like to offer a big thank you to OC 208 and his team for an excellent event. The presentation of a new Squadron Standard by CAS at the end of November was another opportunity to celebrate. The Association was represented by Air Commodore Ben Laite, along with support from a number of other members who braved the very strong winds at RAF Valley. The Standard Bearer did a particularly good job of staying on his feet, albeit at an angle of 45 degrees!

At last year's Association Reunion Dinner Air Commodore Ben Laite continued into the second, middle period, of the Buccaneer era on 208 Squadron where he described the transition from the overland strike/attack role to maritime strike/attack role and the move to RAF Lossiemouth, and the first operational deployment of the Buccaneer on Operation Pulsator in support of British Forces in the Lebanon. His fascinating account is reproduced later in the Newsletter (and on the Association Website - www.naval8-208-association.com), but without an American accent! The final chapter in the Buccaneer story will be told by Gp Capt Bill Cope and will focus on the First Gulf War and the final days of the Buccaneer. The Reunion Dinner will be held at the RAF Club on Saturday 27th October 2012.

In my foreword last year I mentioned the drastic cuts affecting the UK Armed Forces and the Royal Air Force in particular, and I said I would be keeping a watchful "flying" eye on how these changes may impact on 208 Squadron and its future. At the time of writing the future for 208 Squadron is still far from certain, except to say that the Squadron's current task at RAF Valley will come to an end in December 2012. Currently no future role has been identified for 208 Squadron after this date and we may have to prepare for a change in status; you can rest assured that I will do all I can to obtain a clear picture of the way ahead so that we can plan accordingly. As you will see in the letter from OC 208 Squadron later in the Newsletter the Squadron is carrying out prudent planning in case we are faced with the sad duty of disbanding the Squadron. We will keep you informed of events as they unfold.

Chairman's Chunter

I would like thank OC 208 Sqn, Wg Cdr Eugene Moriarty and OCA Sqn Ldr Paul "Skids" Harrison for organising the thoroughly enjoyable air display and open day at RAF Valley last June to celebrate the 95th anniversary of 208 Squadron. It was a great event followed by a highly entertaining dining-in night in the Officers' Mess with some very amusing speeches, great banter and general revelry in the true traditions of the Royal Air Force and 208 Squadron.

As mentioned last year, Malcolm Ward has taken over as the Newsletter editor and will be on the lookout for material to fill the pages, so if any of you have memorabilia or anecdotes that you would like to share, please get in contact with Malcolm. In the same vein, we always welcome contributions to the Association website (www.naval8-208-association.com). Please contact Tim Webb with any contributions you may have, especially any new photos and written pieces from your long forgotten shoebox in the attic!

You will be interested to know that the general financial situation of the Association is sound with a modest balance sheet sufficient for our immediate needs. Nevertheless, you should know that the donations generously given by members ensure the continued production of the Newsletter; without your donations we would need to explore alternative options. So please keep the donations coming!

The President in his foreword talks about the uncertain time ahead for 208 Squadron and we can only hope that the lack of tasking beyond the end of 2012 will not see the demise of our beloved Squadron. Whatever the outcome of the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review for 208 Squadron the Naval 8/208 Squadron Association will continue and will remain forever "Vigilant".

Ed Lines

David Styles edited this newsletter for 35 years. Respect! In that time the Sqn has progressed from dropping "dumb" bombs, through the early trials with laser-guided bombs, to PULSATOR and GRANBY. Since 1994 the Sqn's mission has been to train the combat pilots of the future, many of whom will have been in action over Afghanistan and Libya recently. Here's to the next 35 years of 208!

Letter from the Squadron

I signed off last year's letter to the association in the sincere hope that I would be able to update you again in 2012. It is my pleasure that I am able to do so after another busy year on 208 Sqn. The first half of 2011 was largely consumed by the fallout from the Strategic Defence and Security Review with 16 students removed from flying training at RAF Valley. In April 2011, all Hawk T1 flying training activity at RAF Valley was merged, under my command on 208 Sqn. Thus, since early April 2011, 208 Sqn has been responsible for training ab initio students from the end of Tucano training to the entry standard for the Tornado GR4 or Typhoon OCU. The merge of T1 flying in April saw the number of pilots on 208 Sqn jump from 57 to 95 which almost certainly made 208 Sqn the largest fast jet unit in the RAF, if only for a few months. In its new guise 208 Sqn has completed just over 6500 hrs spread over 6400 sorties and in the process 64 students have completed various courses from the full ab initio package to pilots refreshing before proceeding to 100 Sqn or the Red Arrows.

Since the last update the Sqn has completed the training of 10 Algerian QFIs with the last course graduating in October; while in the same month 3 Kenyan ab-initio students arrived to start their Advanced Flying Training before their return to Kenya to convert onto the F5. Apart from the increase in numbers with the merge, we have not seen any postings into 208 Sqn in the last 12 months and as such the Sqn numbers have continued on a steady decline in line with the gradual reduction of the task. Over the last year we have seen members of 208 Sqn depart for exchanges to fly the Alpha Jet in France, the Hawk in South Africa and the F-18 in Australia. Flt Lt Fred Wigglesworth was promoted to Sqn Ldr and has been sent to Las Vegas to be a flt cdr on the Reaper. The Sqn has continued to support current operations with 2 members of staff undertaking out-of-area detachments to Al Udeid in Qatar and Gioia Del Colle in Italy in support of Op HERRICK and Op ELLAMY respectively.

During the 2011 display season Flt Lt Jules Fleming represented 208 Sqn at air shows throughout the UK and Europe and in the process raised money to support the Royal Air Forces Association. On completion of the season Jules was awarded the Wright Jubilee Trophy for her excellent flying display season after beating off stiff opposition from the Tucano and Tutor displays. Jules has since departed the Sqn on posting to RAF Cranwell. Flt Lt Phil Bird has been selected to display the 208 Sqn Hawk T1 for the 2012 season and he is currently busy working up his display ready for a hectic few months flying.

Despite being a tumultuous year for both 208 Sqn and the RAF there have still been plenty of opportunities for members of the Sqn to get away from home base with detachments to Tours and Cazaux in France and Skrydstrup in Denmark along with overseas training flights to Gibraltar and Berlin. During any quiet periods in the flying training task the Sqn has made the most of adventure training opportunities with QFIs and students taking part in alpine skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, sailing, windsurfing, and hiking both in the UK and abroad.

The highlight of the last 12 months for 208 Sqn has undoubtedly been the presentation of a new Sqn Standard by ACM Sir Stephen Dalton on the 24th November 2011. Despite the typically windy Welsh weather Flt Lt Will Ricketts managed to heroically hang onto the new Standard in a gusty 40 knots of wind; supported by the Standard escorts the Standard was marched past in full flight. Air Cdre Ben Laite headed up a healthy representation from the Association.

Of course 2011 also saw 208 Sqn celebrating its 95th year and it was a great pleasure to welcome so many of the Association to Anglesey to share the uncommonly good weather as well as the commemorative Welsh whiskey, which was enjoyed in the mess that evening. As we enter our 96th year it is worth me making comment on the future of 208 Sqn. The current task for Hawk T1 flying training at RAF Valley will come to an end in December 2012. At the present time, no future role has been identified for 208 Sqn and although there are some options being discussed, the further we march towards the end of the year the more likely the unpalatable outcome of a 208 Sqn disbandment seems. If 208 Sqn is to disband in 2012, I intend to make it a memorable and significant event that appropriately recognises the long and proud history of 208 Sqn, of which you have all in some way been a part of. To that end, I have commenced initial planning for a disbandment event on 16 November 12. I have my fingers crossed that this will not be required, but I must accept that at present, it seems that disbandment is more likely than not. Please mark this date in your diary, as if we are to disband, I would very much like to include the Association members in the day's events.

I look forward to addressing you again at the RAF Club in October and hope that by then I can deliver more positive news about the future.



Eugene Moriarty
OC 208 Sqn



Guest of Honour 2011



The guest of honour at the 2011 reunion dinner was Air Cdre Ben Laite. His presentation covered the middle period of the Buccaneer era during the last year at Honington and the first year at Lossiemouth, including the deployment to Cyprus for Operation PULSATOR, which provided Air Support to British Forces on the ground in Beirut. Here is a shortened version of his script. The full version, including all of the accompanying slides, is on the Association Website.

Graham Pitchfork handed 208 over to me in December 1981. At that time, the Squadron was employed in the Overland Strike/Attack role, which meant our job in war was to hit targets on land, such as airfields, ground defence installations, communications centres, and so on, with conventional weapons known affectionately as iron bombs. The main weapon in that category was the 1,000lb bomb. We were also trained to be ready to carry and drop nuclear weapons. All overland. I am stressing these otherwise tedious details so that you might appreciate the significance of what comes later in the story.

Life on 208 then was straightforward enough though there were many challenges each day in providing enough flying for the training of the crews in each of the roles. And aircraft serviceability was always a concern! There were several VIP visits including one from HRH The Duke of Gloucester. And

of course there were the inevitable minevals. But there were also times of enjoyable exercising, like a fortnight on the Moselle on exchange with a German F104 Squadron at Buchel. Back home, we found time to give our departing SENGO a Buccaneer ride and then enjoyed celebrating his survival! Then there was always Goose Bay where we could fly a lot of low level sorties and not annoy too many of the locals. Our AOC, AVM Mike Knight, came out to visit us and fly with us on a sortie. The training was to be focused on a trip to Cold Lake in Canada for a Maple Flag exercise. We enjoyed pitting our wits against the USAF F15s and the Ground Defences.

But we were engaging in all of these sort-of routine activities against a backdrop of some serious uncertainty. The time was rapidly approaching when the Tornado would be operational! That would mean the Buccaneer being withdrawn from the Overland role and confined exclusively to the Maritime anti shipping role. This was nothing new for the ex-Navy Buccaneer of course, but something quite new for the 208 of the early 80's. The most popular plan with the staffs was that 208 overland would be disbanded but the aircraft and some of the crews would move to Lossiemouth to recreate 216 Squadron. Fortunately, 208 had effective reinforcements in the shape of senior officers at high level. Our own now Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Stear, thank you sir, was extremely persuasive. The happy news was eventually issued that after all, the second maritime squadron at Lossiemouth working alongside the other lot would be 208. I recall with great pleasure bringing that news to the Squadron Association at this reunion in October 1982. The move to Lossiemouth was not straightforward but we left Honington and arrived at Lossie to begin training in the anti-shipping role. The tactic we were to employ was to use laser guided iron bombs to sink enemy ships. The promise was that, eventually, the Squadron would be armed with the Sea Eagle anti-ship missile but that was definitely some long way into the future. Only about half of the Honington 208 had moved to Lossie and the Squadron complement was made up with several maritime crews from 12 Sqn. The idea was to give 208 a core of crews already trained in the anti-shipping role.



Some 3 hectic months after arriving at Lossiemouth and while still negotiating the many hurdles involved in settling a virtually new squadron into a new role and new accommodation, the order came to deploy as quickly as possible to Cyprus for Operation Pulsator. The task was for the Lossiemouth Wing to deploy 6 Buccaneers to Akrotiri to provide air support for 102 British officers and men (known as British Forces Lebanon or BritForLeb) in a block of flats in Beirut. BritForLeb were members of a British, American, French and Italian peace keeping force. Unfortunately by September 1983, the peacekeepers were themselves coming under threat. The US ground forces (Marines deployed

ashore) had the US Sixth fleet, known by the designation "Carrier Task Force 60" close to hand. CTF 60 was equipped with well over 100 fixed wing combat aircraft. Similarly, the French forces ashore had the French Carrier Foch nearby, complete with their Air Wing. BritForLeb in their block of flats had no such air support and their morale was sagging. Accordingly, MOD planned to send attack aircraft to Cyprus to redress the balance. What was needed from the air support was undoubtedly the capability to deliver an extremely accurate attack. Although the Buccaneer had only a crude and basic nav/attack system, it possessed an outstanding Laser Guided Bomb capability both in designation and delivery. Thus, the Tornado and Jaguar options were discarded and the order came for the Lossiemouth Wing to deploy 6 Buccaneers. The Warning Order was issued on 8 Sep 83. All the deploying crews needed Overland Laser Designation experience but such experience with the Laser Designation equipment, known as Pavespike, was in short supply. Six senior crews were picked from across the two squadrons and, as OC 208 Sqn, I was appointed as the non-flying Detachment Commander.



The next day, several Hercules arrived at Lossie. They were loaded and quickly departed carrying stores and a contingent of ground crew drawn from across the "Buccaneer Wing." The Buccaneers also departed on time in 3 pairs and flew an air to air refuelling non-stop sortie to Akrotiri. All aircraft were on the ground within 36 hours of receiving the Warning Order. At Akrotiri, the detachment quickly got established. In his briefing to all deployment aircrew at Air Headquarters Episcopi, the Air Cdr Cyprus was very clear. However, who might be shooting at whom, from where, and why, was very confusing for the aircrew. Worse still, details of the air scenario and, in particular, the air threat, were very sparse. The four likely actions were: 1. Show of Strength; 2. Reaction to Attack (Bombardment); 3. Immediate Defence; and 4.

Reaction to Attack on Multinational Force. Actions 1, 2 and 4 required Ministerial Approval. Amongst the staff at AHQ Episcopi, there was no expertise or experience in the tasking and direction of Buccaneer operations. Effective tasking of the Buccaneers and skilful co-ordination with the CTF60 air traffic were crucial. Our Buccaneer Detachment List of things to do was quite long but quite urgent: Establish an ASOC; decide on communications requirements and draw up a comms plan; identify a suitably experienced Buccaneer Air Liaison Officer to be with CTF60 aboard either Dwight D Eisenhower or Iwo Jima; begin planning ROE 1 sorties for showing the flag; brief the Forward Air Controller who was about to join BritForLeb in the block of flats in Beirut; and develop a Concept of Operations for all sorties under the ROEs.

I established a Buccaneer Ops Centre within the AHQ at Episcopi and manned it myself becoming what the Royal Navy call a "Long Day man!" That left the senior Buccaneer flight commander with the crews and aircraft at Akrotiri to be responsible for the leadership of the flying side of the operation. At the Ops Centre desk at Episcopi, the communicators quickly installed two HF networks, one to CTF60 and another to ComBritForLeb. The new comms plan encompassed the entire sortie profiles of the Buccaneers. I despatched a 208 flt cdr, Dutch Holland, to the USS Iwo Jima as an Air Liaison Officer but he soon transferred to the Dwight D Eisenhower where he could be more effective as part of the Carrier Task Force staff. To replace him amongst the flying crews, I called for an overland Pavespike designation expert to join us from RAF Germany. Enter Norman Browne! By now, the detachment could mount "show the flag" sorties across Beirut as per Likely Action 1. The aim was to demonstrate to BritForLeb in the block of flats that air support was on hand if required. The crews were to overfly the city ensuring at least 2 passes across the block of flats. The Liaison Officer's work with CTF60 guaranteed deconfliction with both the USN fixed wing traffic and their helicopters. The Buccaneer crews were all cleared to fly at 100 feet above the sea, the safest height to fly for deconfliction. No other aircraft, fixed or rotary wing, operated that close to the water. The intelligence suggested that if there were to be any reaction, it would be sporadic and late.

The major problem with the Show the Flag sorties was ComBritForLeb himself. He applauded the raising of the morale of his own troops, but he thought that the sorties should also support the Lebanese Army to the South of Beirut in the Soukh Al Garb area. The Commander British Forces Cyprus (CBFC) and the Air Cdr both firmly overruled him. On 11 Sep, two pairs of Buccaneers took off from Akrotiri, flew out through the CTF60 airspace, and 17 minutes later crossed the coast at the Beirut International Airport. They flew past the British block of flats in Hadath and turned North over the city. Back into the city again and past the block of flats on the way back. The crews passed safely through CTF60 airspace then flew back to Akrotiri. A total sortie of 40 minutes. During the sortie, as the Buccaneers approached the flats, ComBritForLeb came on the radio and ordered them to change their routes to fly to Soukh Al Garb.



This was undoubtedly beyond his authority and clearly contrary to the pre-arranged orders. The Air Cdr intervened and immediately ordered the crews to stick to their briefed plan. After landing, there was a long dialogue between Commander British Forces Cyprus and ComBritForLeb. CBFL was adamant that the Buccaneers should have threatened Soukh Al Garb. As well as that strictly "army to army" confrontation, the other major concern was that the voice comms between Episcopi and Beirut were not reliable. However, despite these sticking points, the potential rewards of showing the flag were considered great enough to warrant a second try. On 13 Sep, another pair flew the same profile. All went well and again, the US Navy was very co-operative. This time, ComBritForLeb did not attempt to retask the Buccaneers in the air.

We carried on working on a concept of operations for Likely Actions 2, 3 and 4. The aircraft fit was LGBs, Pavespikes, an ECM Pod and AIM 9 Air to Air missiles. Each Buccaneer also carried 4 x 1,000lb Retard bombs in the bomb bay. It was likely that the first notification of an attack would be a call to the Ops Centre at Episcopi. The Centre then had to relay all the information to the Buccaneer detachment at Akrotiri whilst scrambling them to get them airborne fast. BUT - What were the Buccaneers going to "hit" and how were they going to "hit" it?

Turning first to the How? Accuracy demanded Laser Guided Bombs. But the targets would most likely be small mobile artillery positions out of line of sight of the FAC in the block of flats. Thus, Ground based laser designation was out of the question - airborne designation would be needed. The Buccaneer crews would operate in pairs - one crew would designate the target with the laser while the second crew manoeuvred to drop a bomb on the point designated by the laser. But the standard maritime toss tactic for dropping laser guided bombs was a low level tactic. It was obvious that acquiring and designating small targets within an urban area from low level would prove extremely difficult if not impossible. For easier acquisition of the target, more height was needed. A steeper but higher dive delivery would afford the designator extra time to search for the target. Such an approach would need good weather and a benign air defence environment. Well, the weather at that time of year was good enough. Furthermore, the air defences consisted only of SAM 7 and small arms. In view of all these factors, the preferred tactic was for a 40-degree dive delivery from 11,000 feet releasing at 7,000 feet. But the Buccaneer was not cleared to release LGBs in a 40-degree dive.



I called for a weapons specialist from the Central Trials and Tactics Organisation (CTTO) to come to Cyprus and conduct a small trial with six Paveway LGB kits. The trial was eminently successful proving that the 40-degree dive profile was feasible. This profile then became the preferred option so long as the weather held and the Syrians did not encroach too far into Lebanon with a more capable Air Defence system. However, the first question remained – what were the Buccaneers going to hit? Many, many guns could threaten the block of flats from any direction and these artillery pieces would fire off a few rounds in quick succession then move. Today that's called "Shoot and Scoot!" A minimum response time of 45 minutes for the Buccaneers to reach the target meant that the artillery could "Shoot and Scoot" with impunity!

And we didn't even know which artillery pieces had fired the offending rounds! However, several of the firing sites were permanently manned, they didn't Shoot and Scoot. One option, therefore, would be to preplan attacks against these permanent sites regardless of whether they had fired the offending rounds or not. But these big guns, on permanent sites, were all Syrian. I requested permission to target these sites but got a muted response. Reading between the lines, I felt we would never get the right approval in time for this option to be of any use.

With the concept of operations, the comms plan and the targeting now all roughly sorted, the Detachment swung into the standby routine. That was two Buccaneers and crews on 30 minutes, two more on one hour, and the third pair on call. Because Pavespikes is a daylight only system, the standbys were from sunrise to sunset. I established practice call outs. We called the non-flying practice call outs Ex Kelly and generally, the reaction times from receipt of task to reaching the marshalling point were pretty good. Because of the need to practice short notice co-ordination with CTF60, we also designed flying practice call outs. These we called Ex Tephrate and they consisted of an Ex Kelly plus the extra element of getting airborne and flying through CTF 60 airspace to a point just short of the Beirut coast. Another aspect of our training was, "Know your enemy!" The Intelligence Section provided photographs of individuals from the 20 or so different Arab factions operating in Beirut at that time including the Druze Militia, the Lebanese Army, the Sunni Muslims and the Shi'ite Muslims and so on. There was only one drawback – all the photos were absolutely identical!

Two station operations officers from Lossiemouth flew out to join the detachment and they took over the manning of the Buccaneer Ops Centre, much to my personal relief! This overall state of orderly preparedness continued for some time. Crews took their turns at Standby duties while pre planning any likely sorties. On 22 September, the French

launched an air attack from their Carrier, the Foch. At least two waves of attack aircraft flew against an artillery site outside Beirut. The French reported this air attack as a success. However, a few days later, I went with the Commander British Forces Cyprus to lunch aboard the Foch and there were some US Navy and Marine guests as well. After the introductions, one of the Americans called to the French Admiral our host, "Gee, Jean Claude, do you have any idea how long this little party is going to last, we have to get back to business aboard the Eisenhower." The French Admiral was brilliant! "Ah mon ami," he replied. "We are here for lunch so the timing will all depend on the menu!" It was a good lunch of course! After the lunch, I excused myself from the table and found some of the French navy pilots to try some very careful interrogation and investigation. I assessed that their attack had achieved very little. I also took the opportunity to question the US guests from CTF 60 on the pending arrival of USS Iowa with her 16 inch guns and her mortar locating radar. I told them of our difficulty in deciding how to find and hit the guns threatening our British troops in their block of flats. "How are you going to employ the Iowa and her huge capability?" I enquired. "Is she going to sit and wait for the bad guys to fire guns, then locate those guns and fire back?" "Guns!" he said. "Guns! She ain't going after no guns, she's going to re-arrange the geography!"

On 30 Sep 83, an official cease-fire was declared in Lebanon. The Detachment continued the standby but it was relaxed to one pair on 2 hours and one pair on 4 hours. This was now the time to return some air and ground crews to Lossiemouth and bring out fresh replacements. During this cease-fire period, there were several major events. On 23 October, the US Marines suffered over 200 casualties when suicide bombers detonated a lorry full of high explosives at the Marine HQ in Beirut. Furthermore, in December, Druze Militia shot down two United States Navy aircraft with modern SAMs over the Chouf Mountains. The US then launched a large air package containing defensive aircraft and 26 attack aircraft against ground targets in The Lebanon. The attack aircraft launched Rockeye from 40-degree dive attacks at 520 knots. This choice of weapons and attack profiles was certainly of some interest to us. By this time, the Buccaneer standby requirements had further relaxed to 2 aircraft and crews at 4 hours readiness. The tactics had been changed to low-level attacks because of the newly demonstrated threat of modern SAMs in the area and the deteriorating weather. On 11 January 84, the readiness state was increased temporarily when the BritForLeb block of flats was hit by tank fire. However, the tension was greatly eased when the local Druze Militia Commander immediately drove out in a Land Rover and apologised in person to ComBritForLeb for the "stray" shell! After the cease-fire had been sustained for several days, the Likely Actions were amended such that only the show of strength and immediate defence options were available.

In Mid February 1984, the entire British Force Lebanon was brought to Akrotiri and by the beginning of March, the flats in Hadath were completely evacuated. On 24 March, the six Buccaneers and crews departed Cyprus. In all, the Deployment had lasted 6½ months and the Buccaneers had flown 733 hours 55 minutes on Pulsator related sorties. As we departed, the GOC Cyprus, Maj Gen Sir Desmond Langley, said: "The Buccaneers provided a vital part of the force required for peacekeeping operations in The Lebanon and the detachment from Lossiemouth has been most professional."

Back at Lossiemouth, it was down to business as a newly designated Maritime Anti Shipping Squadron and on with the training for launching Paveway bombs against ships not ground based guns. So, a detachment to Gibraltar went ahead and we tried to pick up the threads again. But we upset the OC Ops at Gibraltar somewhat with incidents like returning to the airfield declaring acute fuel shortages. And, occasionally infringing Spanish air space. Happily, the Air Commander Gibraltar was an old friend from Vulcan days and he was quite on our side. We rounded off the detachment and celebrated our return to normal squadron training with a photo of the whole squadron. Back at Lossiemouth the next important items on the agenda were the formal declaration to NATO that we were operational as a Maritime Squadron and that demanded more training in the hostile environment of the North Sea, North East of



Aberdeen. Tragically, during this final work up period, Sqn Ldr Bill Graham and Flt Lt Tony White were killed when their Buccaneer hit the sea during just such a training sortie. Both men were sorely missed, particularly as the date for our formal declaration to NATO approached. Despite the awful effect their loss had on the members of the Squadron, we pressed ahead with the final training for the declaration and also with the preparations for the Presentation of a new Standard. The ceremony went ahead and Sir Humphrey Edwards-Jones, a former Spitfire pilot and 208 Flight Commander presented the Standard. We were declared operational, albeit short of one crew, on 1 July 1984. In the next week, I handed over to Wing Commander Jon Ford, the Boss for the transition of 208 into the Sea Eagle era.

This time next year, another ex-OC 208, Wing Commander, now Group Captain Bill Cope will be telling you the story of 208 Squadron in the First Gulf War. In closing, I must stress how glad I am to be a part of the Naval8/208 Squadron Association. There is a wonderful spirit about this Squadron which is second to none. To you all, and particularly to the current 208 Squadron, I offer my very best wishes for the future. Thank you!

Ben Laite

OC 208 Sqn 1981 – 1984





Above: 208 Sqn after the amalgamation of 19 Sqn in April 2011.



Left: The 2011 solo display Hawk, flown by Flt Lt Jules Fleming.



Below: The Boss in full flow at the 95th Anniversary Reunion Dinner at the RAF Club on 29th October 2011.



Below: The Valley flightline during the Sqn Open Day on 10th June 2011.





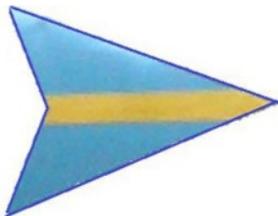
Above: 208 Sqn Crest, as displayed in the Hall of Badges in the RAF Club.

208 Sqn Standard presentation ceremonies Lossiemouth 1984 (left) and Valley 2011 (right)



Left: Buster! A lone Bucc, doing its bit for the maritime environment.

Below: Break right! A pair of 208 Sqn Buccs in the Scottish Highlands. (Camera ship Hunter flown by Malcolm Brown)



Squadron & Association News

SQUADRON COMINGS AND GOINGS

Departures:

Wg Cdr Jamie Hunter	Jul 10	Flt Lt Stephen Moon	Jan 11
Sqn Ldr Al Dow	Oct 10	Flt Lt Luke Munton	Aug 10
Flt Lt Tim Davies	Jan 11	Flt Lt Adam Sanders	Aug 10
Flt Lt Stephen Eccles	Nov 10	Flt Lt Tom Saunders	Aug 10
Flt Lt Mitch Lloyd-Jones	Oct 10	Flt Lt Peter Smith	Jul 10
Flt Lt James Mander	Dec 10	Flt Lt David Stark	Jul 10
Flt Lt James Milmine	Jul 10	Flt Lt Alex Taylor	Jan 11
		Fg Off Natalie Griffiths	Dec 10

Arrivals:

Wg Cdr Eugene Moriarty	Jul 10	Flt Lt Bruce Poole	Mar 10
Sqn Ldr Duncan Laisney	Jul 10	Flt Lt James Spoor	July 10
Flt Lt Ben Goodwin	Aug 10	Flt Lt Mark Thompson	Nov 10
		Fg Off Sam Bottomley	Dec 10

NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE - CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES'

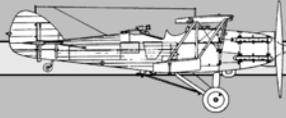
CHAIRMAN	D J Trembaczowski-Ryder
HURRICANE/SPITFIRE	S E Jefford
METEOR	J D Penrose
HUNTER	T M Webb
BUCCANEER	Wg Cdr M M Ward
HON SEC	M W Brown
HAWK	Flt Lt T Sawle, c/o 208 Sqn, RAF Valley
GROUNDCREW	D Gill
EDITOR	Wg Cdr M M Ward
HISTORIAN	Dr D G Styles
MEMBERSHIP SEC	Air Cdre Ben Laite

(Information on potential new members and enquiries from existing members seeking contacts should be addressed to the Membership Secretary)

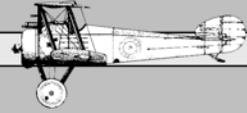
COMMITTEE/CHAPTER NEWS:

Meteor. On 1 May 2012 Desmond Penrose, our intrepid Meteor Chapter representative, flew a de Havilland DH82 Tiger Moth to celebrate his 82nd birthday on that date. 82 in 82! Well done Desmond and keep on flying, not that *anything* would stop you. The Meteor Chapter met at the 'Coach and Horses', 1 Great Marlborough Street, Soho on Wednesday, 2 May 2012. If you wish to join them on the first Wednesday in May in 2013 give Desmond Penrose a call.





In Memoriam



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

R Cook
J H Waller
J Fryer
R Johnson
E R Whincop
D Dorward

Hunter
Spitfire
Meteor
Meteor
Lysander/Spitfire
Hunter

Squadron Open Day



On 10 June 2011, the Squadron opened its doors to the Association and other invited guests to celebrate the Sqn's 95th anniversary. We were treated to a splendid day, including the solo aerobatic display and a diamond nine flypast. The Sqn kindly allowed Association members to sit in on the briefing for the nine-ship, which brought home to some and brought back to others just how much preparation is involved in getting nine aircraft into the same piece of sky. The day's flying was rounded off by a spirited display by an ex-208 Sqn type – the Hunter, albeit in rather garish colours. Three of the Sqn's latest students were invited to quaff their "solo pot" of noxious, though colourful liquor, washed down with a large tankard of ale. It is good to see that some traditions have survived the attentions of the "fun

detectors." After a hog roast, there was plenty of time to visit the Sqn History room, before adjourning to the Officers' Mess for a traditional dining-in night. I hope that the younger generation can fly better than they can sing! A big thank you to OC 208 and his officers and staff, for making us feel very welcome.



This Newsletter was printed by M & B Print as your advertisement of our print quality. If we can help you solve a print problem, large or small, then call Malcolm or Brendan, at:-

**M & B
PRINT**

9 Great Central Road
Loughborough
Leicestershire LE11 1RW

T : 01509 233342

F : 01509 211172

E: mandb@print.fsbusiness.co.uk

Squadron Snippets

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



Flt Lts Tim Looseley and James Skinner graduated from 208 Tac Wps on a wet and windy day at Valley on Friday 21 October 2011. Their proud dads Mike Looseley and Dave Skinner served on 208 Sqn as Navs.

A good time was had by all. Tim is going to the Tornado GR4 and James to the Typhoon.

From L to R :
Mike and Tim Looseley,
James and Dave Skinner.



THE UNDECLARED WAR - 208 Sqn vs. 205 Gp

The early 1950s were a changing time for the Royal Air Force. Reduced from wartime size, but still large enough to have the Middle and Far East plus Germany as areas of responsibility. The wartime ethos was gradually being replaced by an equally strong peacetime ambition "don't rock the boat, don't upset my promotion chances". We, the young fighter-reconnaissance pilots of the finest squadron ever could see that. Didn't we have a C.O. who was OLD. Over 30! Remote. Career minded. Not so our two excellent flight commanders who led by example. We felt they really ran the squadron, would drink, play rough games in the Mess thereby incurring the wrath of the fuddy-duddys of 205 Group who shared the Mess with us (note: *they* shared our Mess). It was *they* that organised those extraneous duties that took us away from our flying. We had to be:- guard commander (a 24 hour flog), orderly officer (often used by the C.O. as a (non-legal) punishment, take summaries of evidence, act as escorting officer to a chum, sit on boards of courts martial. All with a view to teaching us what made the Air Force tick, according to 205 Group. But we didn't want to learn yet, we were YOUNG. *They* didn't frequent 'The Chanteclaire' or John Odger's bar in Nicosia. Couldn't see John letting them cash an ante-dated cheque so we could continue on to 'Black Helens' for yet another round. Not for *them* the extra-curricular activities provided by the school teacher in the squash court or the thrills of breaking into the WAAF Officers' quarters at dead of night. No, we were an irritation and Oh! was the feeling mutual. It reached a stage where actual physical violence was planned and occurred with the partially successful de-bagging of two group captains one night. The Station Commander (on our side) had to cool things and five of us were paraded (fortunately collectively) in front of him for a (gentle) dressing down.

But the war was not over. Paper was *their* joy. Lots of it. So we decided to add to *their* happiness. Flies are endemic to Egypt and their elimination took various forms. Flit guns (hard pressurised), DDT aerosols (then very modern), fly whisks and any hand held object. So there was our answer, a fortnightly return tabulating fly mortalities, and cause of death, in Officers', NCOs' and Airmen's Lines. First a 205 Group statistical return had to be located, roneo'd and altered to suit our needs. It had to look right and by the time we had finished it did. It could have matched any Order of Battle with enemy and friendly forces listed. Even the rank of the signatory indicated the insignificance of the proforma, a pilot officer. One who would learn the value of reports, orders, submission papers and the all important priority of 'need to know'. After all, information was power. And what name did our gallant statistician have? Dick Barton, of course the 'special agent' of that era. So, the first fortnightly reports were submitted by Plt Off R. Barton with the officers slightly ahead in the cull of flies. Next two reports showed the airmen well ahead with the NCOs trailing. A comment was made that word was to be had with the senior Flight Sergeant (Discip.) to point to the NCOs the need of example. This bore fruit in the next three submissions that showed the NCOs top of the league. The next fortnight had the airmen first with the officers last. The next return showed again, the officers last with Barton (to add verisimilitude now promoted to Flying Officer) suggesting, tentatively, that the officers had all but eradicated flies in their lines and further submissions might be of little value. And there we stopped and waited. Two months passed and then 'it' arrived; a peremptory demand for 'Fly, Pest, Control Return', remarking that we were two reports in arrears. 'Submit immediately.'

We'd won! Confirmation that all *they* did was shuffle paper, even fly paper. What a laugh. Years later I wondered whether we'd been outsmarted. Did one of them have a sense of humour? Humoured us and then sent a chaser and so had the last laugh? No, I decided, *they* were too old.

We'll never know. *They* had been young once.

Desmond Penrose



Membership News

The Association welcomes the following new members, all of whom have joined the Hawk Chapter:

J Abbott (Ex WO Eng 208 Hawks), A Watson, B Goodwin, B Poole, C Smith, C Butterfield, R Cruickshank, S Griffith, G Kingman, G Williams, D Griffiths, J Spoor, J Turner, N Jewsbury, J Mulhall, N Battersby, O Fleming, P Smith, P Bird, R Bradley, S Noyes, P Wilkinson, W Macdonald, E Williams, O Thompson, K Brown, P Taylor, O Suckling, M Thompson and N Critchell.

(Huge thanks to Tom Sawle for getting almost all of the current 208 "signed up" for Association Membership.)

Members Lost Contact:

S L Hammett Spitfire

Current Membership:

Full (In contact) 359
 Honorary (in contact) 4

Members Found Again:

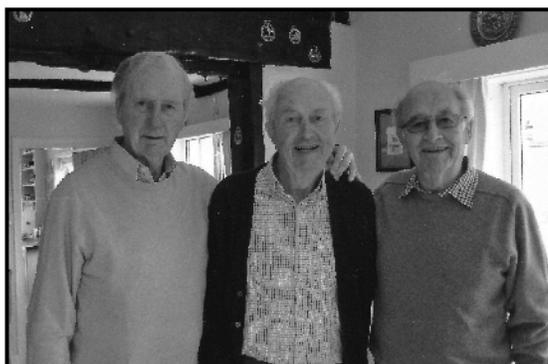
M Christie Hawk
 J Hunter Hawk

Associate (in contact) 1
 Lost contact 64
 Total 428

Ben Laite
 Membership Secretary

The Meteor Men

Geoff Green has been "keeping in touch" by providing the following photograph. It shows Geoff Green, Monty Burton and Chris Bushe at Hartley Wintney in April 2012. These three stalwarts are all 208 Meteor men and served together at Abu Sueir in 1953 - 1955. Monty joined BOAC after leaving the RAF and retired as a Concorde Captain. He had a stroke about 3 years ago and although he sadly has been unable to regain his speech, that did not stop him enjoying a beer with Geoff and Chris. After he left the Sqn, Geoff went to CFS and was posted to Liverpool UAS at Woodvale, where he managed to fly Spitfire PS915, which is now in the Battle of Britain Flight. Happy memories !



Keeping in Touch

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

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone: eMail:.....

(Please forward to the Membership Secretary: Air Cdre Ben Laite)

Naval 8/208 Association Annual Dinner

45 Members and guests attended the Naval 8/208 Sqn Association Dinner at the RAF Club, Piccadilly, on 29th October 2011.

Flt Lt P Bird, Mr and Mrs M W Brown, Mr W Cope, Mr D Drake, Mr and Mrs J Ford, Flt Lt B Goodwin, Flt Lt and Mrs P Harrison, Mr N and Mrs Huckins, Air Cdre and Mrs B C Laite, Flt Lt V Lyle, Flt Lt W Macdonald, Flt Lt L Martin, Wg Cdr and Mrs E Moriarty, Mr F J Nicoll, Mr J Pascoe-Watson, Mr and Mrs J D Penrose, Flt Lt B Poole, Mr and Mrs N Rivett, Flt Lt and Mrs T Sawle, Mr and Mrs E Sharp, Mr and Mrs P Smith, Dr D Styles, Flt Lt O Suckling, Flt Lt J Taylor, Flt Lt P Taylor, Fg Off O Thompson, Mr D T-Ryder, Wg Cdr and Mrs M M Ward, Mr T M Webb, Mr K M Whiley, Miss L Wolseley-Hext, AM Sir Rob and Lady Wright.

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

P W Armstrong, M Asher, H W Barber, L F Boyce, M Bradley, C K Bushe, R Calvert, N Champness, J A Clark, A F Cutt, C M Draper, W Griffiths, G Green, R Hills, S Jefford, B Mahaffey, D Mee, J Parker, J Pascoe-Watson, D F Perrens, L Phipps, Air Cdre G Pitchfork, W F Plumpton, J Pratt, D Simmons, A G Smith, A H Smith, T T A Smith, ACM Sir Mike Stear, K Trow and R Turner.

The 2012 Reunion Dinner will be held at the RAF Club on Saturday 27th October 2012. Tickets cost £45 per head for the three course dinner, including port and coffee. Please reserve your place via the Association Website or by using the booking form below.

Naval 8/208 Squadron Association – Reunion Dinner Booking Slip – 2012

Please return slip to: M W Brown

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

Full Address.....

Telephone: eMail:.....

I will/will* not be attending the 2012 reunion dinner on Saturday 27th October 2012.

Please reserve places.

Names of guests:

Special dietary requirements (if any):

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

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

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

*** Please delete as appropriate**

Please make cheques payable to: 208 Squadron Association

Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright, the Association's President, presents The Sir Geoffrey Bromet Trophy to Flt Lt Will MacDonald at the 95th Anniversary Reunion Dinner at the RAF Club, Piccadilly on 29th October 2011.





208 today

Two more photos from the Sqn Open Day at Valley on 10th June 2011. The gaudy Hunter (*above*) and the high conspicuity black Hawk (*right*).



& yesterday

And two golden oldies. The reproduction Sopwith Triplane (*above*) and the genuine ex-208 Sqn Bristol Fighter (*right*).

Both aircraft are now in the custody of the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden.
Photos: Copyright Geoff Collins – used by permission.

