

NAVAL EIGHT 208

NEWS 2005

The Annual Newsletter of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association



2004 Reunion Another Great Success

You will read inside, in our President's Foreword, about the change of table layout we used last year. Gone is the mess-style top table and sprigs and most members who were at the 2004 Reunion seemed very happy about it. The principle of the thinking was that a group of people could be in better contact with each other and, at the appropriate times, could move between tables and talk to others without undertaking a route march! Also, when someone needs to leave a table for any reason, they can do so without disturbing anyone else. For more, read the President's Foreword on Page 2.

The picture below shows one of the tables in the Ballroom and you can see it has a much more airy feel to it. The picture on the right is 208 Boss, Wg Cdr Nigel Clifford delivering his State of the Nation speech to the assembled gathering.





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N8/208 Rumblings

The President's Foreword:

For those of you who were able to attend the Association Reunion last year you will know that we have changed the format of the event. Rather than focussing on a State of the Union speech, instead we invite a member of the Association to recount stories of their time on 208, under the heading of Forever Vigilant, a motto you will all be familiar with. Ken Pugh of the Hurricane/Spitfire Chapter enthralled the Reunion with his experiences of the Italian Campaign — reprinted in full later in this Newsletter. Notwithstanding the difficult times he was able to recall moments of humour, as well as anguish. He put our legacy very much into perspective; it was a humbling and rewarding experience and we were most grateful to Ken for his reminiscing.

We intend to continue with this theme at our Reunions, Chapter by Chapter, and I have invited an Association member to give us a piece on his time on the Squadron during the Palestine crisis (his name will be announced upon acceptance of the invitation).

The Reunion Dinner continues to attract a good attendance, but we would always like more. The idea is to keep the evening simple and relaxed and to allow the maximum time for members to catch-up with each other in a convivial atmosphere. Last year there were over 50 members and their guests present. If you are not a member of the Royal Air Force Club we can always arrange for you to stay in the Club as guest of a member; the prices are very reasonable for central London. I am very pleased to report that the membership of the Association is very healthy, with close to 400 members. We have a number of new members, mostly, but not exclusively, in the Buccaneer Chapter — a very warm welcome to all.

Over the last few years the Committee has tried to obtain a full set of the miniatures of the AVM Sir Geoffrey Bromet medals. In an attempt to get copies of a couple of the more exotic medals we have contacted the Polish and Czech Embassies in London, who have promised to help. Eventually we will be in a position to complete the full collection and put them on display.

You will not have failed to notice the vast improvement in the quality (and quantity) of the annual Newsletter — very many thanks to David Styles for his sterling efforts, ably supported by Wg Cdrs Paul Comer, Neil Meadows and Nigel Clifford. At the moment the Newsletter is free but we may have to come up with some cunning plan to help pay for the much improved colour edition. Of course, any donations (or ideas) would be gratefully received! We will keep a close eye on the financial situation and let you know how things progress.

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 on 29th October.



Note from the Editor:

I have to introduce this Newsletter with a profound apology to all Association members for the very long delay in its production. It was our plan this year to have the Newsletter print-ready by the end of May, so that distribution could take place during the month of June, with a target of it arriving on your doorsteps no later than early July. There are several reasons for this not having happened, the first being that some of the important material for this issue did not arrive until quite late. Then we had a problem organising the printing of the Newsletter and this has only very recently been resolved, by a small printing company called M & B Print coming to our rescue. M & B is a family business, run by the father and son team of Malcolm and Brendan Green in Loughborough. They have very kindly printed this issue for us at no charge to the Association. I know very well what print costs and I am truly grateful to them for their generosity. It is for this reason that you will find an advertisement for M & B Print elsewhere and if any of you have a print requirement in your business activities, I can recommend M & B for their competitiveness, print quality and turn-round. My own activities have also been unusually hectic this year and timings have not always been good to get things done. So please accept my apology for this very frustrating delay. As Editor, it is my responsibility to deliver and I have not delivered on time this year. The whole production process will begin for next year's Newsletter much earlier in order to prevent this kind of delay again.



Naval Eight/208 People:

Mike Allman (Bucc 1989-93). He has been settled in civy street for the last 8 years and works for BA on the 777. He lives in Wiltshire.

Wg Cdr PJ Wallace (Bucc 1989-92): PJ is off to the Washington DC to a newly created post in a US/UK joint endeavour.

Mark (Rodders) Rodden (Bucc 1990-94): is a flight commander on 617 Sqn at Lossiemouth — his office is in the old 208 Sqn "Junta" room (complete with the "Russ Hall Laughter Volume Control" graffiti on the air vent).

Sqn Ldr Gary (Fatboy) Davies (Bucc 1988-94): finished his tour at AFNORTH in Brunssum, NL in January and is back up at Lossie.flying with 14 Squadron. Gary took the option of PA Spine (specialist aircrew for the older guys), because as he said one staff tour was enough for him! He reckons it's great being a gash sqn ldr, no in-tray and lots of flying (*Ed: Hmmm! - sounds pretty good to me too*). He admits that his days on 208 were the best of his career - the GR4 world is just not the same!

Ian Morrison (Bucc 1990-94): left the RAF in 1997, and even though a Nav took an ATPL course at Prestwick. He worked for Airtours, but recently joined Virgin. He lives near Chester.

Andy (Hedley) La Mar USAF (Bucc 1988-89): is currently working on the Air Combat Command staff at Langley AFB, Virginia. His previous tour of duty was in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Sqn Ldr Paul (Skids) Harrison (Bucc 1988-93): has recently completed a tour of duty in AFSOUTH, Naples; he obviously likes it hot — he has moved to Muscat in Oman.

Air Cdre (Retd) Ben Laite (Vice-President): has recently moved to a small town close to Exeter; he can be contacted via the Membership Secretary.

Newsletter Editor Dr David Styles (Vice-President): heard shortly after the last Reunion that the International Automotive Media Conference had awarded him two Gold Medals and a Silver Medal for his articles and illustrations in automotive media. This brings his total of Golds to seven from that organisation over a period of nine years and he has been invited to exhibit his work again this year.



New Members:

We are delighted to welcome a number of new members to Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association; they are:

Mike Allman	Bucc (1989-93)
Vic Blackwood	Bucc (1974-76)
Sqn Ldr Gary Davies	Bucc (1988-94)
Lt Col Andy La Mar USAF	Bucc (1988-89)
Dave Lee	Bucc (1983-85)
Alastair Macnab	Hunter (1959-61)
Ian Morrison	Bucc (1990-94)
John Myers	Bucc
Ken Richards	Meteor (1951-54)



Contact Has Been Re-established With:

Flt Lt Dick Catterall	Bucc (1993-94)
John Deane	Bucc (1977-80)
Sqn Ldr Paul (Skids) Harrison	Bucc (1988-93)
Sqn Ldr (Retd) Bob Joy	Bucc
Wg Cdr (Retd) John Kershaw	Bucc (1977-79)

Wg Cdr Jon (JJ) Parsons
Sqn Ldr Mark Rodden
Peter C J Sanders

Bucc (1991-94)
Bucc (1990-94)
Spitfire (1947)



Lost Contact:

The Association has lost contact with a number of Members, as of time of going to press. If you have any knowledge of their whereabouts please let the Membership Secretary know. They are:

J Adams	Lysander (40)
Malcolm Bartle	Hunter
M H Castle	Spitfire (45-46)
J J Clancy	Audax (36-37)
G Elliss	?
H C V Hawker	Hunter (42-43)
Terry Heyes	Hunt & Bucc (78-81)
Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Rip Kirby	Bucc (79-81)
K S Lamb	Lys/Spit (41-44)
H Larkman	Hunter
Mike Loosely	Bucc (83-88)
J Lunn	Hunter
Brian S Mahaffey	Bucc (87-89)
J Menzies	Bucc (90-94)
K Perry	Hunter
M Sidgeaves	Bucc (87-90)
Basil Smith	Hunter
P Sweeney	?
Col Bob Tipper	ALO (42-44)
G R Veale	Spitfire (48-49)
Flt Lt Phil Walters	Bucc (90-94)
B W Weskett	Meteor (53-56)
Rupert Wigley	Meteor (50-52)
A A Wiseman	Spitfire (45-46)



Extracts from Letters/Emails to the Chairman:

Ken Richards wrote to Paul Steele (Groundcrew Member) and asked if he could join the Association. He joined 208 in July 1951 and was stationed at Kabrit, Cyprus and Abu Sueir. He was a painter/doper when the Squadron operated Meteor 9s (and one Meteor 7). He now lives in Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Peter Sanders has written to re-establish contact with the Association, and recounted a little of his time on 208 in 1947, when the Squadron was based at Ein-Shemer in Palestine and flying the Spitfire Mark FR XVII (subject to confirmation the next Guest Speaker at the Reunion will be Roy Bowie who also served on the Squadron in Palestine). The station was shared with 32 Squadron (flying the fighter version of the Mark XVIII) and 2 squadrons of Lancaster bombers. The role of the Lancaster squadrons was to patrol the Mediterranean to intercept immigrant ships and to plot their course and speed. When these ships came close to the 12-mile limit the Spitfires were sent out to pick them up and radio information back to Haifa, when the Royal Navy would send out a destroyer to turn the ships away from Palestine. As Peter recalls some of the local population were not amused by the antics of the boys in blue, either dark or light shades, and the "freedom fighters" of the day (the Hagana, the Stern Gang et al), who would now be considered terrorists, occasionally retaliated by firing on

members of 208. Apparently on one occasion a home-made mortar was used to try and destroy the aircraft outside the hangars in Ein-Shemer, luckily without success. It was not all bad though, as Peter was selected as travelling groundcrew (along with Ron Walsh) to follow the Squadron on a "Battle of Britain Tour" to Dar-es-Salaam, Entebbe, Mombasa, Zanzibar and Nairobi. The groundcrew travelled by Dakota, but without in-flight catering!

Tommy Thomson joined 208 Squadron several days after Saddam Hussein's first flurry on the Kuwait border and spent

the whole of the Britannia flight to Nairobi trying to convince his wife that 8 Squadron would be sent to Kuwait and not 208. They were met at Embakasi Airport with the news that they had 3 days to get sorted out, because Tommy would be off to the Gulf (ed: nice to see things never change). Tommy recalls some time spent with Ian Craig when they were both on 118 Squadron in Germany; he remembers many happy hours in his company — mostly in drinking establishments!



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

Joseph Boardman	Meteor (55-60)
K C Evans (died 01 — 02)	Spitfire (44-45)
Dr Murray Jones MBE	1941-45
S Nolan	1961-63
H Taylor (died 2001)	Hunter
R B Weeks (died 17 Nov 03)	1941-45
George (Chalky) White (died 98)	Hunter (70-71)
Gp Capt (Retd) N C Odbert	Atlas (29-32)

The Naval Eight 208 Reunion 2005

The Annual Reunion Dinner will take place on Saturday 29th October 2005 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 this year is £32.50p per head. Tickets will not be issued - but contact the Secretary (details below) for any last minute changes.

The menu for the Dinner is:

Pear and Stilton Salad (with crispy bacon and lemon dressing)

*

Topside of Lamb with trio of onions (served with cocotte potatoes, Savoy cabbage and puree of suede)

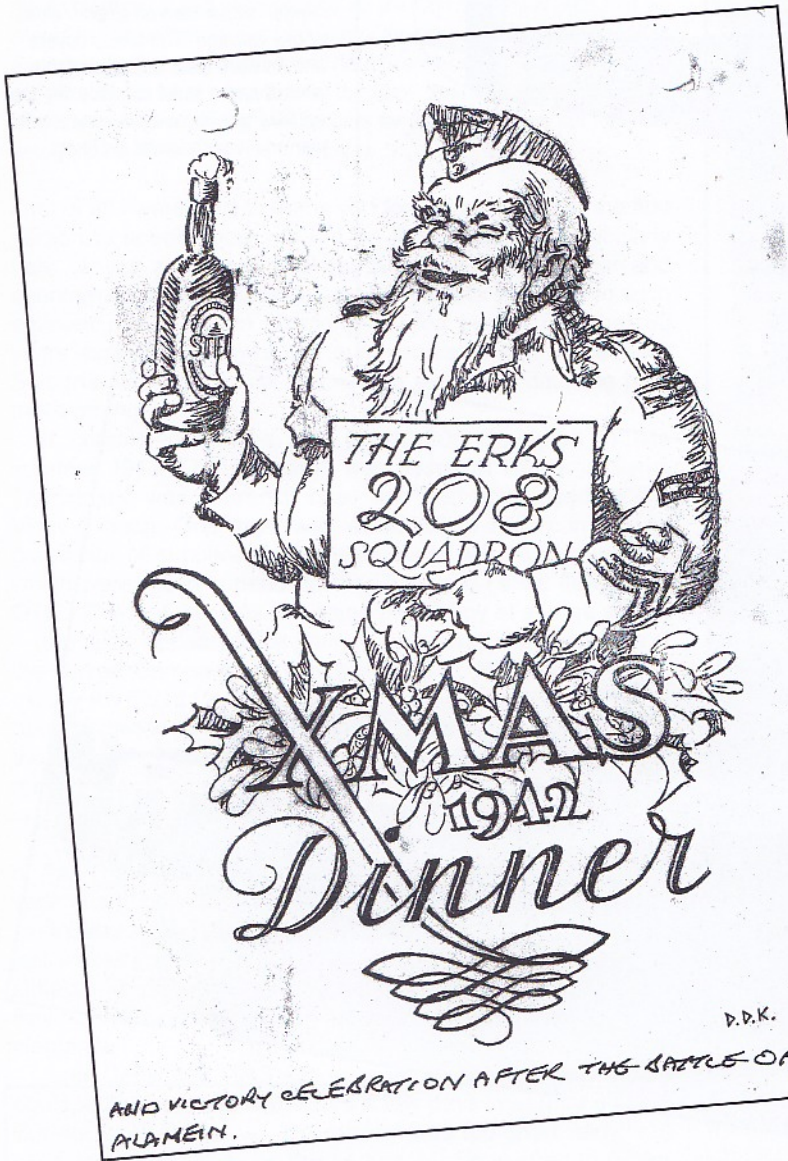
*

Bread and butter pudding (with crême Anglaises)

*

Coffee and petits fours

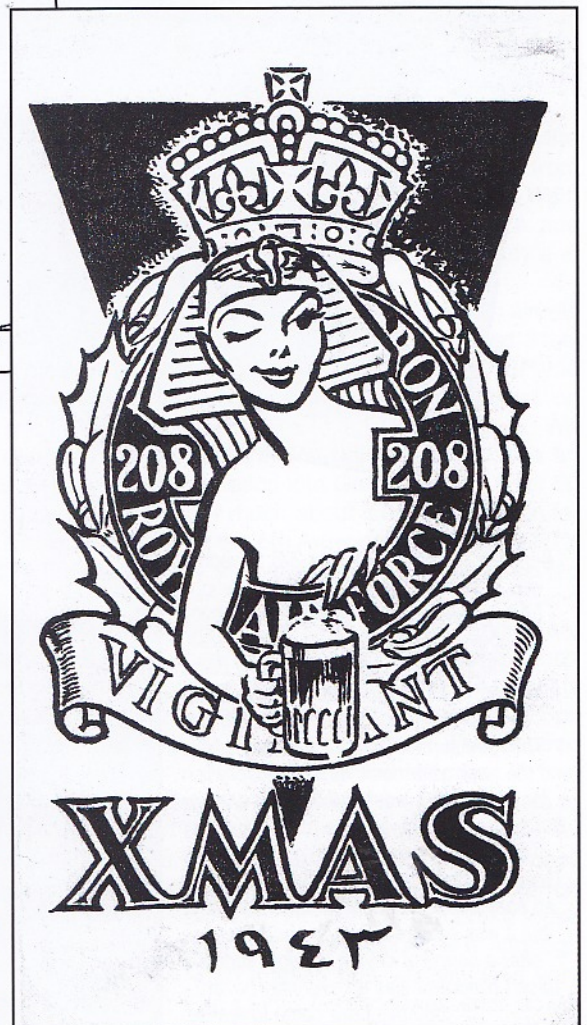
Bits 'n' Pieces

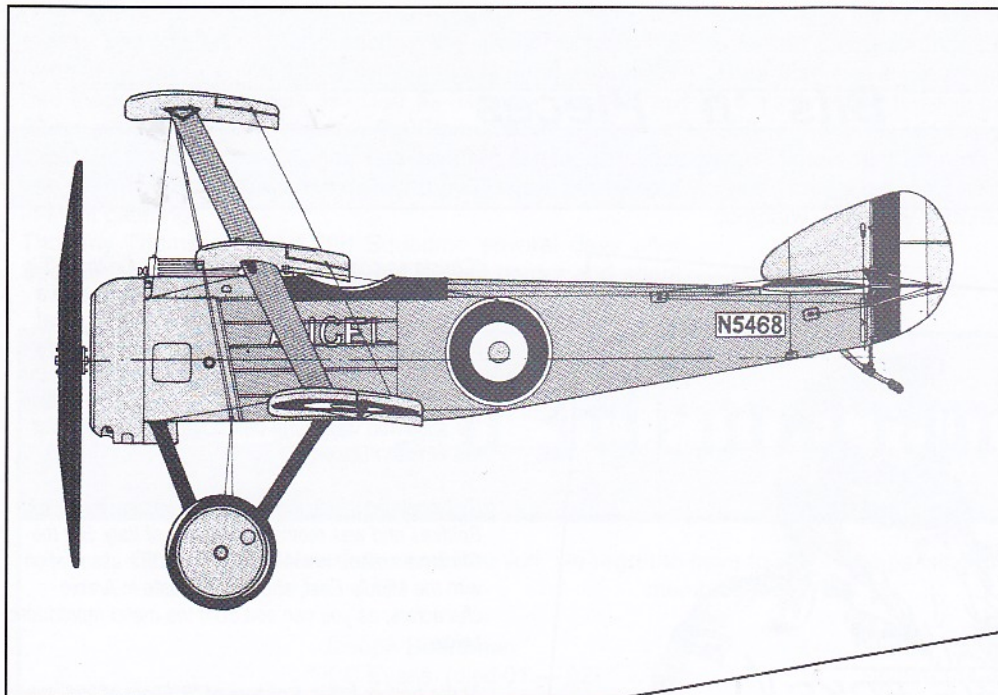


"Christmas comes but once a year.....". On the left is the "Erks 1942 Christmas Menu", which was also a celebration of the British victory at el Alamein. That battle was a major turning point for the British Army and 208 Squadron was the squadron tasked with the job of reconnaissance prior to the battle. By this time, the squadron was being described as: "The eyes of the Western Desert".

By Christmas 1943, the Squadron was equipped with Spitfires and was moving up the leg of Italy. But the Christmas menu revealed Number 208's association with the Middle East, showing the date in Arabic characters, as you can see from the menu reproduced below.....

At the bottom left is a picture of "B"Flight of 208, taken at Villa Franca, in Italy. The Squadron's move up Italy was swift and effective, as you will learn from Ken Pugh's account of his time with 208, beginning on Page 7.

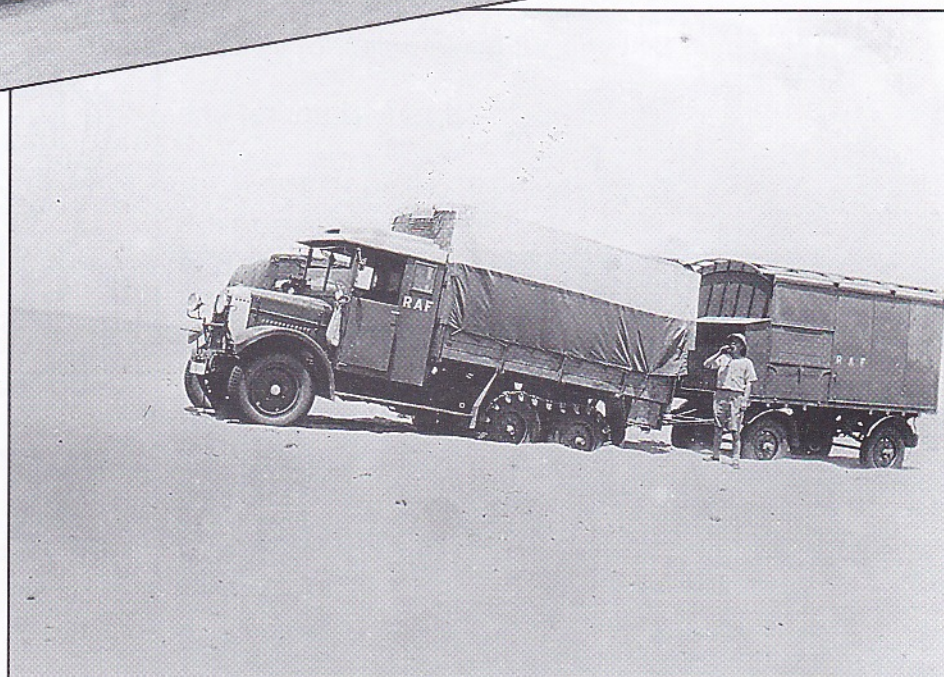




This Triplane was delivered by the Sopwith Aviation Company to Dunkirk, from where it went directly to Naval Eight at le Vert Galant. Flown by Flt Lt CHB Jenner-Parson as his second mount (he had joined the Squadron in October 1916, flying a 1 1/2 Strutter Fighter with "C" Flight), he quickly had the name "Angel" signwritten on to both sides of the fuselage. The wheel covers and fin were clear doped and this aircraft had a small tailplane like the earlier Pup. The aircraft survived the war and was returned to Dover.



Between the Wars, Number 208 Squadron was often detached out to other locations from Heliopolis on exercises. The convoy above is preparing to leave for Gizah, though last-minute items are still being loaded, such as the crate of plates being carried by the porter on the left. The road surface above looks very stable and the newcomer could have been forgiven for thinking this would be an easy convoy. But then, when you see the truck and trailer combination on the right, returning from Gizah, you may realise that it was not such an easy ride! Deserts are not all soft sand, but it was easy to be caught out, because after a period of driving in bright sunlight, desert blindness was an everyday hazard - one this crew came to realise.



2004 Guest of Honour - Ken Pugh

Ken Pugh was our first Guest of Honour selected from the membership of the Association. It had been decided by the Committee last year that we should invite members to give us a view of their time with the Squadron. Ken Pugh was the first such member and his presentation was rivetting, amusing and humbling to all of us - and all at the same time! So fascinating was his story that we are repeating it in full here for those who were not fortunate enough to be at the 2004 Reunion. Enjoy.....

First of all I would like to thank you for asking me to be the first person to speak about my era on the Squadron, particularly Italy. I was a farmer's son and after the war a farmer and countryman of the Cotswolds and not used to speaking to such eminent company. On checking my log book I find that 60 years ago today I was doing a vertical photo recce near Bologna, with heavy Ack Ack — it is almost as daunting here this evening!

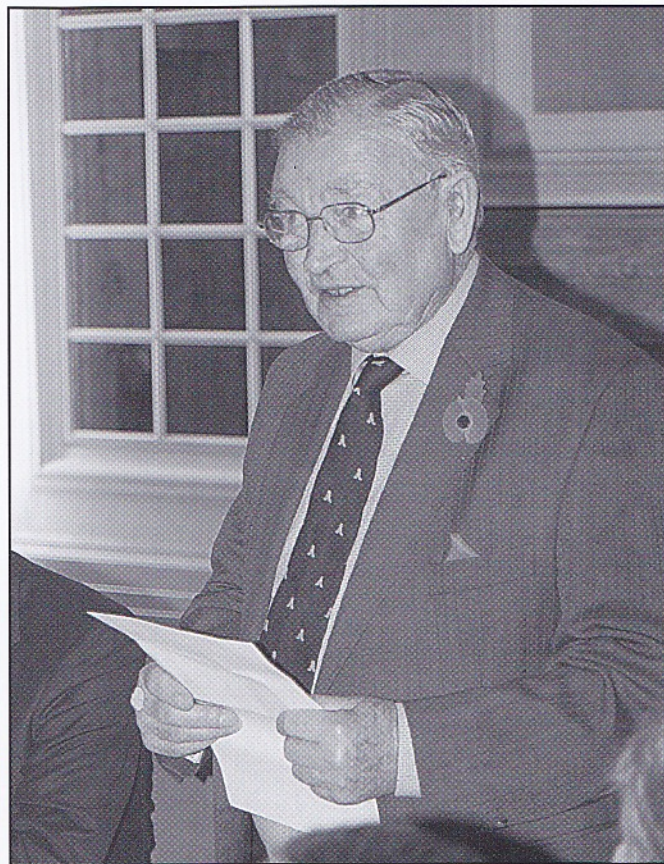
I completed training and joined 208 Squadron in late summer 1943. The Squadron was based at Rayak in Syria. The airfield was a French base and had been used by the Vichy French. One flight was detached to Kirkuk in Iraq to guard vital oil supplies. We were equipped with Hurricane IIB s, which were much superior to the Hurricane I s we flew at the OTU. The first day was like being a new boy at a large school — the pilots appeared like prefects and many were veterans of the Desert Campaign. I was assigned to "A" Flight and was met by my Flight Commander Peter Perry whose exploits have been recorded in Graham Pitchfork's book "The Men Behind the Medals". Peter and I became good friends and we used to meet several times a year until his death 2 years ago; I represented the Squadron at his funeral.

Our time there was spent training — tactical reconnaissance or Tac R s with the Army Photo Reconnaissance Unit, both vertical and oblique, air-to-ground firing etc.

In November 1943 the Squadron was moved to El Bassa, just inside the Palestine border with Syria. A much smaller airfield with nissen huts for accommodation — a change from Rayak, which had hangars — here aircraft were open to all the elements.

Late December 1943 was a red letter day — we were to be equipped with the Spitfire V and a few days later they arrived. But not to El Bassa, as the runway was too short and there were some high trees on the approach. So we had to fly our Hurricanes to Megiddo some distance away to convert to the Spit — they were every bit as good as we thought they would be — beautiful to look at, positive to every slight movement of the controls and no vices whatsoever. The only drawback was a long nose, which restricted our vision when taxiing. As in the Hurricane we had to sit in the cockpit reading and digesting the pilots notes as there were no dual control aircraft — mistakes could be fatal. The undercarriage lever on a Spit was on the right hand side of the cockpit, while on the Hurricane it was on the left hand side. Initially until you got used to it you could see the wings wobbling while changing hands on the control column on take off. Soon after the Spitfires arrived we also had a new commanding officer — Lt Col Johnny Blaaw DFC of the South African Air Force. He had been with 40 S.A.A.F. in the desert and was a first class leader of the Squadron.

Come March 1944 and the call came to send 208 to Italy. So everything began to hot up and the ground staff departed. On 13 March the Squadron started the long flight to Italy from Megiddo. First to LG 244 in Egypt, then on to El Adem, to Marble Arch in Libya and then to Castel Benito near Tripoli.



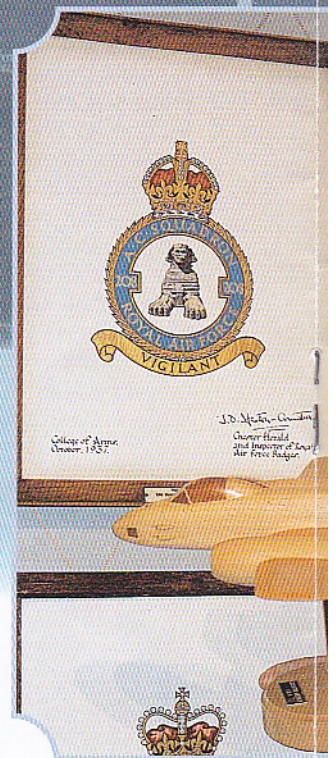
Between Marble Arch and Tripoli two aircraft collided, but the pilots baled out and I visited them in hospital in Tripoli. On from Tripoli over the Mediterranean to Catania in Sicily, a long flight over water; you listened very carefully to your engine and noted the instruments constantly. From Catania into Italy and our base at Trigno.

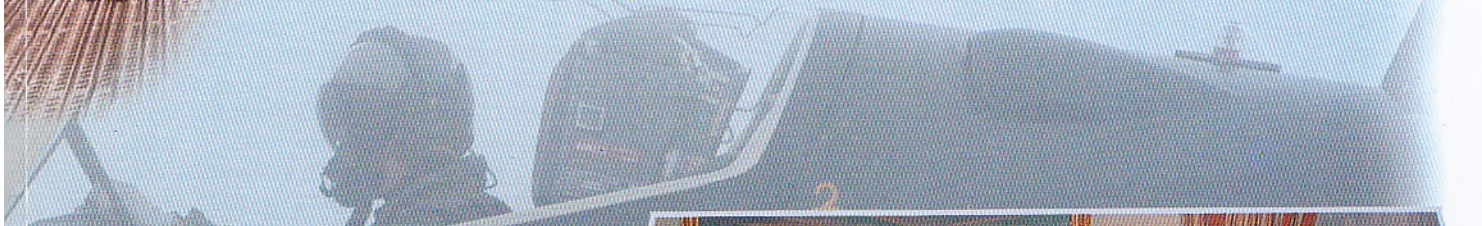
Trigno was an interesting airfield — well it was not an airfield as such — the Royal Engineers had laid PSP (Pierced Steel Planking) on sand near the shore and if you ran out of PSP you were in trouble as I found out once when a tyre burst on landing and I ran off and pitch polled to land upside down. We started ops the next day and the first one I recorded was an offensive sweep, and my initiation into German Flak. Over 60 years on I cannot remember much about it but we went on for several weeks working with the 8th Army on TacR s and ARTY R s (ARTY R s are artillery shoots with the army on specified targets). We had a Major and two Captains attached to us who used to brief us on what the army wanted us to do. Shoots are bracketing a target by observing the smoke on a shell burst and either upping or dropping so many yards until the target is hit. We were then being re-equipped with Clipped Wing Spit IX s with Merlin 66 engines — very powerful. The Clipped Wings made them very manoeuvrable at low altitudes.

In late April we moved to a grass airfield at San Angelo to prepare for the Battle of Cassino. We continued sweeps over the battle area; TAC R s, ARTY R s and Photo R s. A few days before the battle a high-ranking Army Officer briefed us on what was going to happen. On 12th May all hell broke loose and we were very busy doing ARTY R s and TAC R s, although the smoke and dust were so intense that visibility was very poor. It was here that Eric (Judy) Garland was shot down.



Above: Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright presents the Bromet Memorial Trophy to Flt Lt John Killerby. The picture above right is another "round table" picture showing Bill Cope chatting with Helen Laite. Below that, a group you might call: "Members Old and Members New". Next is a beautiful model of a Meteor FR9 presented to the Squadron at the 2004 Reunion and to its left, another mixed group. The Cameo at the top centre is from just over sixty years ago, showing the line-up of 208 Squadron in northern Italy. The lower left is one of your editor's shots of Hawks aloft.





Judy was an ex Army Commando and had the MC & Bar. I met him again after the War and he has escaped from the train going through the Brenner Pass and had led a band of Partisans to the end of the war. Judy now lives in the Isle of Man.

After Cassino things moved very quickly and every few weeks we had to move airfields to keep up with the Army. The number of airfields we moved to after San Angelo will give you some idea — Venafo, Aquino, Asa (near Rome), Falerium, Orvieto, Castiglione, Cecina, Arrezzo, Malignano (near Sienna) and finally, for me, Florence.

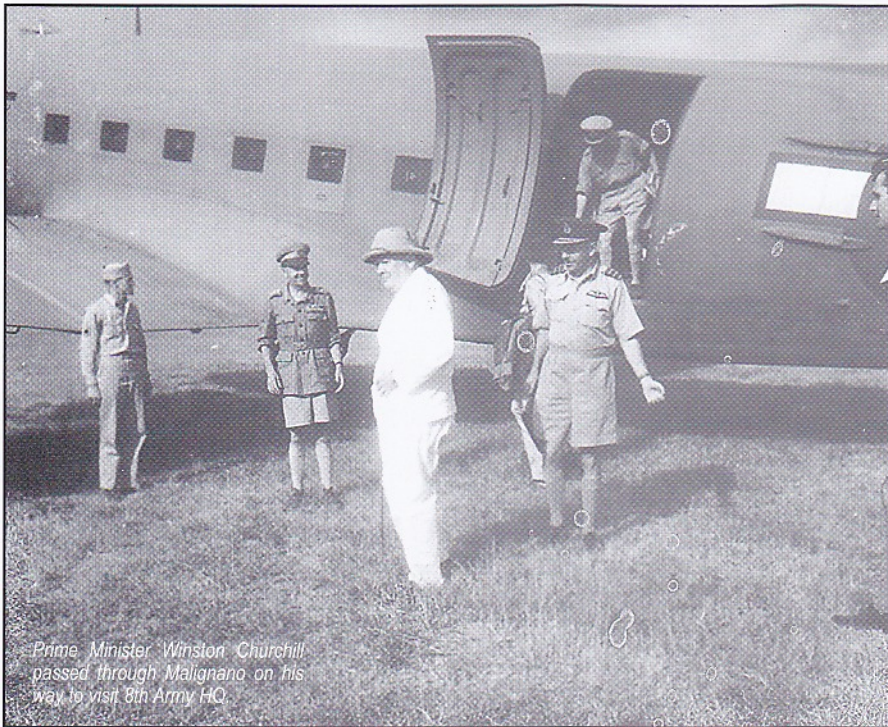
Rome fell on the same day as D-Day in Normandy, but we had our own war going on, so we really didn't take much notice of it. Some of us went into the city to look at the sights three days after it fell and as we were the first RAF personnel they had seen, we were treated like Royalty.

Florence was the first airfield on our way up through Italy with a proper hard runway — all the others had been grass. We really appreciated that and also the fact that we had a proper mess, as up to then we had been living under canvas. We were now into autumn and operations continued as before when the weather permitted; ARTY R s, Photo R s and TAC R s into the Po Valley and Naval Base at Spezia and others. In November, our second in command Sqn Ldr Peter Bezencenet, was shot down. We heard he had escaped, but was shot in the leg by an American soldier as he was coming back through the front line. I visited him in hospital in Rome later on and he seemed quite cheerful. I completed my tour of ops on 11th January 1945 doing an ARTY R south of Bologna.

On the lighter side I must tell you about the Squadron Mascot — Ferdinand the Bull! We bought him as a calf in the south of Italy for 2 shirts, and he came with us all the time. He was still there when I left the Squadron in January, and by this time he had become quite large! He had his own tent and truck and was well looked after. His favourite drink was Marsala. Occasionally he became quite legless and we had to manhandle him — he remained a famous mascot, especially in the RAF hotel in Florence; he became an honorary member of the nightclub there!

I would like to pay tribute to the ground staff — the fitters, the riggers, the armourers and all the others who had to carry out their duties in, sometimes, terrible conditions in the open air. Some had to put up with sandstorms in the desert. In Italy it was either very hot or very cold, wet and windy. In my time with them we never had an engine failure on take-off or, as far as I know, at any other time, which showed how well they carried out their duties. I owe my life to them!

Finally, I am sure the Squadron has maintained the spirit, the comradeship, and the professionalism that it had many years ago, and will be FOREVER VIGILANT



Prime Minister Winston Churchill passed through Malignano on his way to visit 8th Army HQ.



Reg Porritt (right) and his "oppo" Ken (Pugh)



Spitfires on a hard surface at Florence



208 Armourers in front of a Spitfire IXe at Florence



Members of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association

The Association Committee has produced a list of the membership of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association. It is reproduced here, but may not be complete, or could be expanded. If you know someone who served with the Squadron and is not included in this list, do please let us know:-

S M	AGER	Buccaneer	75-78	I F	DAVIDSON	Buccaneer	75-78	B R	HOSKINS	Buccaneer	76-78
K S	AITKEN	Unknown	NA	G	DAVIES	Buccaneer	88-94	G	HOUNSELL	Hunter	NA
G	ALFORD	Unknown	NA	R G	DAVIS	Hunter	64-66	R J	HOWARD	Hunter	65-67
K	ALLEN	Hurricane/Spitfire	43-45	J H	DEANE	Buccaneer	77-80	N M	HUCKINS	Buccaneer	92-94
M J A	ALLMAN	Buccaneer	89-93	R	DENNETT	Meteor	52-54	A E	HUDSON	Hunter	61-63
J	ALLWOOD	Spitfire	1948	J H	DENT	Buccaneer	75-77	B	HUGHES	Unknown	NA
P W	ARMSTRONG	Hunter	66-68	C A F	DENTON	Lys/Hurr/Spt	41-44	L	HULLY	Spitfire	47-49
M	ASHER	Unknown	NA	N	DEVINE	Buccaneer	89-94	R	HUTT	Unknown	NA
J	BABBINGTON	Buccaneer	87-89	K	DEWHIRST	Meteor	52-53	R E	HYMANS	Hunter	66-68
J	BABRAFF	Buccaneer	NA	D	DEWHURST	Hunter	58-59	AC	IMLAH	Meteor	NA
HW	BARBER	Spitfire	45-46	N	DIAMOND	Hunter	NA	M	IVELAW-CHAPMAN	Hunter	NA
DW	BARLOW	Hurricane/Lysander	1942	A B	DICKEN	Hunter	63-64	GL	IVORY	Unknown	NA
J	BARROW	Hunter	NA	M B	DODD	Vampire/Hunter	1958	P H D	JAMES	Spitfire/Meteor	50-53
J	BARWELL	Hunter	NA	D	DORWARD	Hunter	NA	J R	J-CLARK	Meteor	NA
K	BATES	Buccaneer	73-79	D R	DRAKE	Hunter	67-69	M A	JEFFERY	Buccaneer	87-90
A J	BEATON	Buccaneer	83-84	C M	DRAPER	Unknown	NA	S E	JEFFORD	Lysander/Hurricane/	
E	BEEHDHAM	Hurricane/Spitfire	NA	TH	DUDLEY	Lysander	1940			Spitfire	41-45
G N	BEER	Buccaneer	73-74	J	EDMUNDS	Hunter	NA	B R	JEMMETT	Meteor	56-57
N R	BENSON	Buccaneer	89-93	G	ELLISS	Unknown	NA	D C	JOHNS	Meteor	54-57
P	BIDDISCOMBE	Hunter	NA	E H	ERSKINE-LEGGET	Meteor	56-58	R	JOHNSON	Meteor	NA
P P	BINHAM	Buccaneer	87-89	N H	EVANS	Hunter	NA	M	JOHNSON	Buccaneer	87-90
C B	BLACK	Unknown	NA	K A	EVANS	Buccaneer	75-78	E M G	JOHNSTONE	Unknown	NA
N J	BLACKBURN	Buccaneer	85-91	A	FERGUSON	Buccaneer	77-80	P R C	JONES	Hunter	65-67
T V	BLACKWOOD	Buccaneer	74-76	G E	FIELD	Unknown	NA	G C W	JONES	Meteor	51-54
K G	BLATCHFORD	Hunter	62-64	H O	FIELD	Meteor	54-55	K P	JONES	Meteor	NA
P G	BOTTERILL	Hunter	NA	G	FINLAYSON	Hunter	NA	W R	JONES	Spitfire	1950
R	BOWIE	Spitfire	47-49	J A F	FORD	Buccaneer	84-87	R M	JOY	Buccaneer	79-81
P	BOWKER	Meteor	NA	J	FORDHAM	Hunter	58-59	M	KEMP	Meteor	52-55
L F	BOYCE	Hurricane/Spitfire	47-49	P	FOSTER	Buccaneer	83-88	B	KENNEDY	Buccaneer	74-80
M G	BRADLEY	Meteor	54-57	J K	FRAMPTON	Buccaneer	93-94	J	KERSHAW	Buccaneer	77-79
G K	BRADSHAW	Spitfire	46-47	G P	FRANKCOM	Buccaneer	78-81	R	KING	Buccaneer	78-80
J B	BRAZIER	Spitfire	NA	J C A	FRASER	Buccaneer	91-94	A R	KING	Hunter	58-59
J	BREINGAN	Spitfire	44-45	N M J	FRASER	Hunter	58-59	W T	KING	Spitfire	1946
E A	BRENTNALL	Hurricane/Spitfire	NA	J A	FRYER	Meteor	54-57	N R	KIRBY	Buccaneer	79-81
D W	BRIGGS	Meteor	NA	M	FULLER	Hunter	NA	A H	LA MAR	Buccaneer	88-89
N	BRIND	Unknown	NA	P	GALLAGHER	Unknown	NA	B C	LAITE	Buccaneer	81-84
P A	BRISTOW	Meteor	1956	M	GANNER	Lysander/Hurricane	39-42	K S	LAMB	Lysander/Spitfire	41-44
W G	BROOKS	Spitfire	47-48	E	GARLAND	Hurricane	NA	K J	LAMBDEN	Spitfire	44-46
F	BROWN	Spitfire	NA	D	GASKIN	Buccaneer	79-87	P	LARGE	Meteor	53-55
M W	BROWN	Buccaneer	79-83	A	GEORGE	Meteor	NA	H	LARKMAN	Hunter	NA
V	BROWN	Spitfire	40-43	F	GIBBS	Lysander/Hurricane	40-41	R	LAVERICK	Meteor	NA
R	BROWN	Hunter	NA	T	GIBSON	Hunter	NA	C J	LEACH	Buccaneer	1977
WN	BROWNE	Buccaneer	87-94	M	GIBSON	Hunter	NA	J R	LEASK	Meteor	56-58
R A	BURDEN	Hurricane	1943	D	GILL	Hunter	58-59	D	LEE	Buccaneer	83-85
A	BURDETT	Hunter	NA	D	GLEEN	Hunter	NA	A	LIVICK	Hurricane/Spitfire	41-45
A J	BURTENSHAW	Buccaneer	85-88	M S	GOODFELLOW	Hunter FGA9	61-63	K R	LLOYD	Spitfire/Meteor	50-52
J W	BURTON	Meteor	50-54	G	GOODMAN	Meteor	53-54	J	LOCHE	Unknown	NA
M J	BUSH	Buccaneer	75-78	D R	GRANT	Atlas/Hurricane	36-39	W J	LONERGAN	Hunter	NA
C K	BUSHE	Meteor	54-57	C	GRANVILLE-WHITE	Hunter	NA	M	LOOSELY	Buccaneer	83-88
J B	BUSHELL	Lysander/Hurricane	NA	G B	GRAY	Buccaneer	83-86	D C	LOTT	Hunter	NA
C	BUXTON	Buccaneer	87-90	G	GREEN	Meteor	53-55	R E W	LOVERSEED	Hunter	66-67
R	CALVERT	Hunter	NA	J L	GREGG	Hunter	58-59	J	LUNN	Hunter	NA
R	CAMPBELL	Unknown	NA	B S	GRIEVE	Hunter	58-59	A	MACNAB	Hunter FGA9	59-61
M H	CASTLE	Spitfire	45-46	K G	GRIFFIN	Hunter	69-70	B S	MAHAFFEY	Buccaneer	87-89
R S	CATTERALL	Buccaneer	93-94	I N	GRIFFITHS	Hunter	67-69	G D	MANDER	Hurricane/Spitfire	41-44
N S	CHAMPNESS	Hunter	69-70	D L	GROOM	Hurricane/Spitfire	NA	D S B	MARR	Hunter	65-67
A J	CHAPLIN	Hunter	66-67	E R	GWILLIAM	Hurricane	NA	R	MARTIN	Spitfire	NA
J J	CLANCY	Audax	36-37	I	HALL	Hunter	NA	C M	MASON	Unknown	NA
J	CLARK	Unknown	NA	J R	HALLAS	Hurricane	1941	G	MASON	Buccaneer	93-94
J A	CLARK	Unknown	NA	S L	HAMMETT	Spitfire	48-49	J M	MASON	Meteor	51-54
J R J	CLARK	Meteor	NA	F	HANLEY	Unknown	NA	J D	MCCONNACHIE	Meteor	53-55
P	CLEMENT	Hunter	NA	R J	HARDIMAN	Lysander/Hurricane	NA	T J	MCELHAW	Spitfire	NA
N	CLIFFORD	Hawk	03-on	R A	HARPER	Hunter	60-62	M	MCGROGAN	Lysander/Hurricane	39-42
T	COHU	Hunter	NA	L	HARRIS	Lysander/Hurricane	41-42	R	MCLELLAN	Buccaneer	78-81
P K	COMER	Hawk	98-00	T	HARRIS	Hunter	63-65	N	MEADOWS	Hawk	01-03
G S	COOPER	Spitfire	1947	P K	HARRISON	Buccaneer	88-94	D	MEE	Meteor	1952
A W	COPE	Buccaneer	89-92	P J	HARVEY	Hunter	NA	J	MENZIES	Buccaneer	90-94
A	CORNAH	Unknown	NA	H C V	HAWKER	Hurricane	42-43	P	MILLARD	Hunter	NA
M	CORNER	Meteor	53-54	S	HEAVISIDES	Lysander/Hurricane	NA	M	MILLER	Buccaneer	88-93
J W	COULSON	Unknown	NA	W F	HENDERSON	Hurricane	1942	F W	MITCHELL	Hunter	63-65
T	COUSTON	Buccaneer	86-91	J M	HENSON	Hunter	64-66	G R	MOODIE	Buccaneer	78-81
S	CRAIG	Hunter	58-59	R	HERRINGTON	Unknown	NA	I N	MORRISON	Buccaneer	90-94
J	CRANK	Hunter	55-60	J H G	HEXT	Hunter	58-59	N V	MORSS	Spitfire	14-45
M R W	CROOK	Hunter	NA	T A	HEYES	Hunter, Buccaneer	78-82	A	MUMFORD	Hunter	62-64
M R W	CROOK	Hunter	67-69	P J R	HILL	Buccaneer	NA	A J	MUNRO	Hunter	64-66
B L	CROSS	Meteor	53-56	R	HILLS	Lysander	1940	G R	MUST	Spitfire	48-49
J A	CUMMING	Hunter	64-65	K G	HODSON	Unknown	NA	J	MYALL	Meteor	NA
A F	CUTT	Hurricanes	40-43	H E	HOLLIS	Unknown	NA	T F	NEIL	Meteor	53-56
R C	DAVEY	Bristol Fighter	NA	C B	HOLROYD	Meteor	54-56	P	NEWMAN	Venom/Hunter	59-61
R J M	DAVID	Hunter	58-59	R C	HOOPER	Hurricane	1942	F J	NICOLL	Hurricane	1942

K M	NORMAN	Buccaneer	NA	F W	SEATON	Meteor	NA	I D C	TITE	Hunter	65-67
I A W	NORMAN	Buccaneer	86-98	B	SELLERS	Buccaneer	74-76	L D	TODD	Hurricane	41-42
P J	O'DONOHUE	Lysander	1939	I	SEMPLE	Hunter	NA	J N	TOMES	Atlas	35-38
K P	OLIVER	Buccaneer	78-79	E	SHARP	Hunter	64-65	G E	TOWNSEND	Hurricane/Spitfire	1949
K C	O'NEILL	Buccaneer	80-81	J	SHARP	Unknown	NA	R R S	TRINDER	Buccaneer	76-79
Q M B	OSWELL	Hunter	NA	M	SHAW	Spitfire	67-68	K L	TROW	Meteor	51-54
D C	PACK	Hunter	NA	J E	SHAW	Spitfire/Meteor	49-51	D J	T-RYDER	Buccaneer	81-84
R	PAGE	Buccaneer	83-86	L	SHAW	Unknown	NA				& 88-90
R	PANCOTT	Hunter	NA	T	SHEPPARD	Hunter	NA	R	TURNER	Hurricane	40-41
B E	PARFITT	Unknown	NA	H R	SHORT	Hurricane	40-43	P E	TURVILLE	Spitfire/Meteor	49-52
J I	PARKER	Unknown	NA	M	SIDGEAVES	Buccaneer	87-90	PD	TYLER	Hunter	70-71
J J	PARSONS	Buccaneer	91-94	H J	SKACE	Unknown	NA	A R	TYLER	Hunter	63-64
J	PASCOE-WATSON	Spitfire	48-50	H J	SKANE	Unknown	NA	G R	VEALE	Spitfire	48-49
D	PATRICK	Spitfire	50-51	G H	SLANEY	Hunter	NA	P J	VICARY	Hunter	70-71
O G	PATTERSON	Spitfire	48-50	A	SLIMAN	Hunter	58-59	R J	VINCENT	Unknown	40-43
J	PEARCE	Hunter	NA	A C	SMALL	Meteor	NA	A	WADSWORTH	Meteor	55-56
T	PEARCE	Unknown	NA	A H	SMITH	Hurricane/Spitfire	42-45	B G	WAKLING	Hunter	64-65
J D	PENROSE	Meteor	52-55	B	SMITH	Hunter	NA	P J	WALLACE	Buccaneer	89-92
D F	PERRENS	Spitfire	44-45	P	SMITH	Buccaneer	80-83	J H	WALLER	Hurricane/Spitfire	NA
K	PERRY	Hunter	NA	T A	SMITH	Spitfire	47-49	R A	WALSH	Spitfire FR XVIII	1947
S C	PHILLIPS	Unknown	NA	K	SMITH	Buccaneer	90-93	F H	WALTERS	Unknown	NA
R A	PHILLIPS	Buccaneer	87-89	A G	SMITH	Spitfire	1945	P	WALTERS	Buccaneer	91-94
L W	PHIPPS	Meteor	57-58	M H B	SNELLING	Hunter	69-70	W	WARD	Buccaneer	NA
P G	PINNEY	Buccaneer	77-79	D R	SOUTHWOOD	Buccaneer	80-84	G	WATLING	Hunter	1960
G R	PITCHFORK	Buccaneer	79-81	D	SPONG	Buccaneer	83-85	R G	WATSON	Unknown	NA
W F	PLUMPTON	Hurricane/Spitfire	43-44	D R	STANLEY	Hunter	69-71	J	WATSON	Hunter	NA
R S	PORRITT	Spitfire	44-45	SIR	MICHAEL STEAR	Hunter	NA	T M	WEBB	Hunter	63-65
B	POUNDS	Unknown	NA	P	STEELE	Buccaneer	NA	H	WEBB	Unknown	NA
J	PRATT	Spitfire	49-52	B J	STEPHENS	Hunter	NA	P	WELLS	Hunter	63-64
J K T	PUGH	Hurricane/Spitfire	43-45	J	STOREY	Hurricane/Spitfire	42-45	B W	WESKETT	Meteor	53-56
R	RAMIREZ	Hunter	59-61	G J	STOREY	Spitfire/Meteor	49-52	J	WEST	Hunter	1958
M	RAYMOND	Unknown	NA	J	STRACHAN	Spitfire	48-51	K M	WHILEY	Hunter	67-68
G L	REEKIE	Hunter	69-70	D	STRATTON	Meteor	51-53	G	WHITE	Unknown	NA
K D	RHODES	Hunter	NA	D G	STYLES	Hunter	58-59	R J	WHITE	Meteor	1953
L K	RICHARDS	Meteor	51-54	T J	SUMMERS	Buccaneer	78-81	J W	WHITE	Hunter	NA
T	RIDDIHOUGH	Unknown	NA	J A	SWAIN	Hunter	63-64	C	WHITE	Hunter	63-65
N B	RIVETT	Meteor	57-58	P	SWEENEY	Unknown	NA	R B	WHITE	Spitfire	45-46
G	ROBERTSON	Buccaneer	83-90	J	SWEETMAN	Hunter	NA	T	WHITELAM	Unknown	NA
F C M	ROBINSON	Meteor	NA	A	TAMPLIN	Hunter	NA	D L	WHITELEY	Hunter	NA
B C	ROBINSON	Meteor	53-55	H H	TAPNER	Spitfire	44-46	B	WIDDISON	Unknown	NA
S	ROBSON	Buccaneer	NA	A S	TARWID	Hunter	NA	D J	WIGGLESWORTH	Hawk	94- ?
M O	RODDEN	Buccaneer	90-94	M A	TELFORD	Hunter	NA	R	WIGLEY	Meteor	50-52
F J	RODER	Spitfire	NA	W	THOMAS	Spitfire	NA	D J G	WILBY	Buccaneer	76-79
P F	ROGERS	Buccaneer	74-76	A L	THOMAS	Meteor	55-57	J C T	WILKIE	Atlas	38-39
I C	ROSS	Hunter	69-70	S J	THOMPSON	Unknown	NA	A A	WISEMAN	Spitfire	45-46
M	ROYCE	Buccaneer	86-90	E A	THOMPSON	Spitfire	44-46	H	WOOD	Hurricane	41-43
J	SADLER	Meteor	NA	P	THOMPSON	Unknown	NA	R C	WOOD	Meteor	NA
R B	SALMON	Hunter	NA	P	THOMPSON	Unknown	NA	A O	WRIGHT	Hunter	63-65
C M	SANDERS	Buccaneer	80-85	G A	THOMPSON	Hunter	68-69	R A	WRIGHT	Buccaneer	78-80
P J C	SANDERS	Spitfire	1947	R T	THOMPSON	Buccaneer	85-86	P	WRIGHT-GARDNER	Buccaneer	85-94
P J	SAWYER	Hunter	NA	A R	THOMSON	Hunter	61-63				
M G	SCARFFE	Buccaneer	82-94	T	THORNTON	Hunter	NA				
L	SCHWAIGER	Meteor	NA	I	TIMPERLEY	Hunter	NA				
T D	SCOTT	Unknown	NA	R F	TIPPER	Gso2 (ALO)	42-44				



The Medals Project and the Blazon of Arms



*Blazon: A Spire affords proper
And the Gize Spire signifies the Squadron's most gallant
and as being representative of Egypt where the unit saw
much service from 1920.
Date of issue: October 1937*

*Formed as No 8 Squadron RAF at Tripoli on 23 October 1916, was renumbered No 208 Squadron on 1 April 1918 and became a Reserve Squadron on 1 April 1934
Commissioned by the No 8/208 Squadron Association to commemorate those of all ranks who have served on No 8 Squadron or No 208 Squadron.*

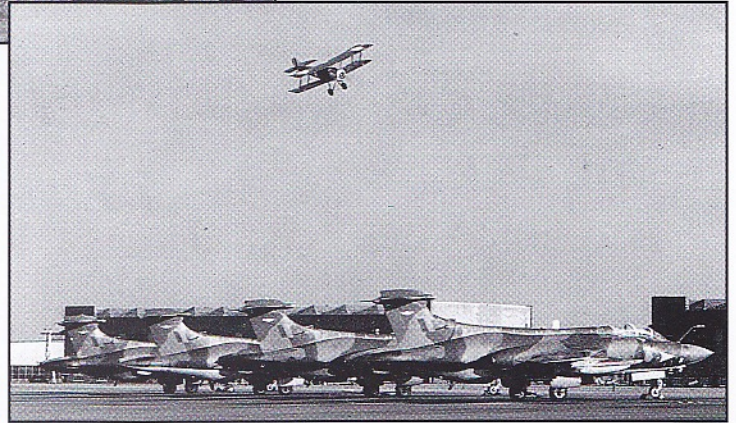
Our miniature medals project remains stagnant at the moment, because we are searching for some specific miniatures, a few of which are proving particularly difficult to locate. The difficult ones include a George V DSC, a First Series DFC with a horizontally striped ribbon, a Polish Order of Polonia Restituta Second Class, the Czech Order of the White Lion Second Class and the Czech War Cross for the Second World War. If any member can help in our search, it will be greatly appreciated.

To assist in funding the Miniature Medals Project and the continuing colour presentation of our Newsletter, the Blazon of Arms of 208 Squadron, reproduced from the original by Mrs Mary Denton, is still available for the sum of £9 post-free in UK, or £4 extra for postage overseas, despatched in a cardboard tube.

Almost Thirty Years Ago



These two pictures were taken by the Editor twenty nine years ago - at the 60th Anniversary Reunion of Naval Eight/208 held at RAF Honington. The upper picture is a first - and perhaps unique - image of a squadron's first commanding officer and its serving commanding officer some sixty years apart - each with an aircraft of their own squadron. Wing Commander Peter Rogers, with a Buccaneer of his 208 Squadron and Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Bromet with Sopwith Pup N5182 of Naval Eight in October 1916 - sixty years apart to the day! The picture below shows British and European Aerobatics Champion of the time, Neil Williams, flying N5182 over a line of Buccaneers on the afternoon of 26th October 1976. Two people who flew that aircraft back in 1916 and 1917, Rochord Grange and "Ally" Shaw were there to see it fly again!



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 NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

HURRICANE/SPITFIRE SE Jefford BSc,
METEOR JD Penrose,
HUNTER TM Webb AFC
BUCCANEER AW Cope MBE AFC.
HON SEC MW Brown,
HAWK Wg Cdr N Meadows MA BSc RAF,
GROUNDCREW P Steele Esq,
HISTORIAN/EDITOR Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FMIB FInstSMM FIMI,
MEMBERSHIP SEC Wg Cdr D J Trembaczowski-Ryder BSc RAF,

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

2004 NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION DINNER RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS

The following Members and their Guests were present at the 2004 Reunion Dinner:

<p>HAWK: AM SIR ROBERT A WRIGHT LADY WRIGHT J K T PUGH WG CDR DJ T-RYDER WG CDR N CLIFFORD OC 208 PROF K G HODSON MRS T HODSON ACM SIR MIKE STEAR LADY STEAR</p> <p>HURRICANE: F J NICOLL WG CDR N MEADOWS</p>	<p>M W BROWN MRS H BROWN P SMITH MS A WALLACE FLT LT J KILLERBY FG OFF J MCMILLAN PLT OFF R BRADLEY</p> <p>SPITFIRE: J I PARKER G J STOREY MRS E STOREY J PASCOE-WATSON E D MEE</p>	<p>MRS J MEE K L TROW P H JAMES MR H JAMES LT S IRWIN</p> <p>METEOR: J D PENROSE R J WHITE I M WHITE C K BUSHE G GOODMAN LORD STERLING J PURDIE</p>	<p>R G PAYNE M KEMP G GREEN MRS S GREEN</p> <p>HUNTER: TM WEBB M A TELFORD MRS G L TELFORD DR DG STYLES MRS A STYLES K G WHILEY FG OFF M PERT FG OFF J NORRIS</p>	<p>FG OFF G LOCKWOOD FG OFF P GEDDES</p> <p>BUCCANEER: B C LAITE MRS H LAITE A W COPE MRS M A COPE GP CAPT P GALLAGHER MRS V GALLAGHER SQN LDR R L KING MRS E KING</p>
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The following Members sent their greetings to the 2004 Reunion, as they were unable to attend:

M	ASHER	A F	CUTT	E R	GWILLIAM	P J	O'DONOHUE	J E	SHAW	J N	TOMES
HW	BARBER	R	DENNETT	R J	HARDIMAN	KC	O'NEILL	A H	SMITH	G E	TOWNSEND
E	BEEDHAM	J H	DENT	J H G	HEXT	L W	PHIPPS	TA	SMITH	R	TURNER
R	BOWIE	AB	DICKEN	R	HILLS	GR	PITCHFORK	A G	SMITH	P E	TURVILLE
LF	BOYCE	D	DRAKE	C B	HOLROYD	W F	PLUMPTON	D R	SOUTHWOOD	P J	VICARY
M G	BRADLEY	C M	DRAPER	A E	HUDSON	R S	PORRITT	D R	STANLEY	R	WALSH
G K	BRADSHAW	TH	DUDLEY	S E	JEFFORD	J	PRATT	P	STEELE	R B	WHITE
R	CALVERT	J A F	FORD	G C W	JONES	L K	RICHARDS	H H	TAPNER	JW	WHITE
NS	CHAMPNESS	J C A	FRASER	P R C	JONES	N B	RIVETT	A L	THOMAS		
A J	CHAPLIN	D	GILL	K	LAMB DEN	B C	ROBINSON	E A	THOMPSON		
J R J	CLARK	D R	GRANT	D S B	MARR	L	SCHWAIGER	T	THORNTON		
G S	COOPER	D	GROOM	J D	McCONNACHIE	E	SHARP	I D C	TITE		

The 2005 Reunion Dinner

**Have you booked your place at the 2005 Reunion Dinner?
 If you have, then read no further. If you have not, then dig
 out the booking slip you were sent in July and return it
 now to the Secretary with your cheque to:-**

M W Brown,

Email:

See you on 29th October.

News From No 208 Squadron



I am amazed to find that it is time, once again, for the annual update of what has been going on here at Valley on 208 Squadron. Time has absolutely flown by and it is some 13 months since my last submission to the newsletter. As I was warned when I took over, a Command Tour is all too brief and by the time you work out what is going on and what you might want to change the end is probably already in sight. Sadly for me this is only too true; I have now been in command for just under two years but my replacement has been nominated and my posting-out date is set for December this year. However, as you will see from what follows we have been very busy and the year has been successful on all fronts.

By way of an overview I will start with some statistics to give a flavour for the sheer scale of our operations. In the thirteen months from May 2004 to May 2005 the squadron flew just under 10,000 sorties and just over 10,000 hours. We trained over 180 pilots on a wide range of courses, from basic Hawk flying, through Indian Air Force (IAF) training to conversion for the Red Arrows. Additionally we have finished the 2004 Hawk Aerobatics Display season and started the 2005 Season, travelled widely across Europe (East, West, North and South), hosted a multitude of visits from Royalty downwards and enjoyed a wide variety of formal and informal social functions. Within the wider Service there have been further reductions in Squadrons and manpower with the bringing forward of the Out of Service Date for the Jaguar, a reduction in Tornado F3 Squadrons and a draw-down of RAF manpower to around 42,000. All these issues have impacted our "market" for new pilots so we have faced some challenging times with reductions in the numbers of students coming into training and some long waiting periods for those already in the pipeline.

The period began with the start of the 2004 Display Season and, in June, a high profile visit from the Chief of the Air Staff, IAF who was keen to understand the training system his junior pilots were about to enter. In July the first IAF students duly appeared and began a couple of months of ground-school. They were delighted to arrive on the Friday before the Station Summer Ball on the Saturday, but somewhat disappointed to discover subsequently that not all the weekends at RAF Valley

have quite such big parties. That same month the Squadron performed a flypast in memory of Fg Off Henryk of the Polish Air Force who was killed 50 years earlier in a crash at RAF Mona. As the summer developed we began to see the effects of the reduction in the numbers of pilots required on the Front-Line and waiting periods for graduating trainees began to build up. In September the first IAF course started flying and the second course arrived to begin ground-school. With good language skills and an outstanding work-ethic the IAF students did very well in their studies but did find the UK environment and weather very different from what they were used to. October saw the end of the Display Season, Squadron involvement on the ground and in the air in the local Freedom Parades, visits from CinC STC and the military head of the Defence Exports Sales Organisation, a very successful Charity Track Day (raising over £4 500 pounds) and the presentation, long overdue, of the Canal Zone Medal to Flt Lt (Ret d) Dougie Mee — ex 208 Squadron — in the Officers Mess. A party from the Squadron also travelled down to London for the Annual Dinner of the Squadron Association. This was a great evening with both staff and students able to meet association members from across the years, the presentation of the Geoffrey Bromet Memorial Trophy to the 2004 Display Pilot - John Killerby — and an extended party in the West-End for those with sufficient stamina.

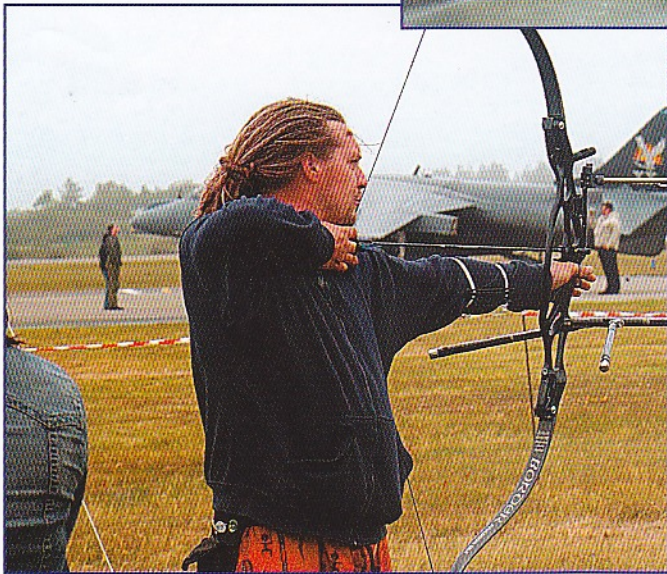
Over the winter we were badly affected by some very poor weather with gales, fog and low cloud making flying training very difficult. By January we decided that a deployment chasing the sun was the only answer so 6 aircraft were despatched to Solenzara in Corsica for a weeks worth of formation flying. This was much enjoyed by the lucky few who travelled but they did find that most of Sardinia was closed for the winter so off-duty entertainment was in short supply. At the end of the month the Station and the Squadron were thoroughly checked out by the Central Flying School Examiners on their annual visit; this testing time went very well and the team was generally impressed with what we achieved and the quality of our work. Due to the weather we did, however, fall behind the task overall and were forced to cancel one training course; with too many student pilots "in the

system" this was not a major issue but regrettably waiting periods continued to rise and the young aircrew faced significant delays before progressing onto Front-Line Squadrons. In February there was an excellent liaison visit to the Metropolitan Police with a large team of aircrew proving that they were better pilots than skid-pan drivers.

The Spring saw some excellent visits to BAE Systems at Brough to view both the new Hawk 132 aircraft for the IAF and also the new Hawk 128 for the RAF. Development and manufacture of both aircraft is proceeding apace and they will offer both air forces a very significant leap forward in training capability. By April IAF Course 4 had arrived in the UK and



Pictures from the Families Day - here, the kids enjoy a walk around in a Puma. If that's not strenuous enough, try archery (hope he didn't hit the Harrier) - or you could just have taken a stroll down the flight line to admire the visitors.



despite appalling weather, with a dinner at a local hotel on the first night, an Open Day on the Station and an evening party.

As we go forward now into the summer itself I am looking out of the window at low cloud, drizzle and driving winds, flying is temporarily on hold and we have the AOC's formal inspection tomorrow. It has been a challenging and interesting year with much change and uncertainty in the wider RAF. Here at Valley we have managed to maintain our focus, introduce and develop IAF training, resolve our previous manning difficulties and continue to deliver high quality training to a very wide range pilots. As I said last year, morale is high and the flying remains great fun; we are confident that we can continue to uphold the finest traditions of the Squadron.

Finally, since this will be my last letter from the Squadron I would like to thank all the members of the Association for their support and encouragement over the past 2 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed all the contacts we have had, in particular at the Annual Dinner. I am sure that the strong links we have all enjoyed will continue in the years ahead and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's get-together.



the 2005 Display Pilot — Joey Diacon — was formally granted his authority to display by our new AOC, Air Vice Marshal Ponsonby. The highlight for many in this period was undoubtedly the visit by HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles to RAF Valley in May. The Prince visited the Station, presented Honours and Awards to Station personnel and met and chatted to many Squadron members during his tour. He was particularly impressed with the quality of the personnel who in his words, "achieve so much when faced with many difficulties". At the end of the month we also hosted a visit by more than 50 members of the Squadron Association who made the long journey to Valley to take part as our guests at the RAF Valley Families Day. This was very successful,

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