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2014 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

There have been many recent events locally, nationally and in the media commemorating the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914. It has been truly amazing to see the conditions in which those servicemen operated and next year, of course, we get our own opportunity to remember those who formed XV Squadron in 1915. The Squadron will be holding some events at RAF Lossiemouth but the Association will get the chance to celebrate this unique occasion at the Annual Reunion Dinner. We have just had the venue confirmed and, whilst I will leave it to the Secretary to give you the details later, we will at least be somewhere with a sniff of aviation fuel in the air (See page 19).

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Bill Read, our Secretary, for his tremendous work in organising the 2013 Dinner at RAF Henlow. I am sure you would join me in congratulating him on what turned out to be another excellent event.

Now I need to seek your help. The Committee believe that it is vital that we maintain active links with the Squadron and thankfully OC XV agrees. These links are primarily done by having a Squadron Officer as our Secretary.

However, the drain on front line resources and the ever present tasks mean that it is becoming more and more difficult for serving officers to carry out this duty. As the President said in his speech at the Reunion Dinner, we very much need a volunteer from the ranks of the Association to help out with some of the duties the Secretary currently undertakes. If we can lighten the load then we stand a good chance of maintaining an active serving Officer as part of the Committee and hence maintaining the contact.

Similarly, Sgt Webster the former Ops Sgt has been running the website for several years. We have a very good and current web site but Sgt Webster has now retired from the service and the Squadron is unable to fill his place. There must be someone out there who is tech-savvy enough to maintain the website in its present form and hopefully develop it as well.

If you would be prepared to give either of these jobs some of your spare time then please contact me or the Secretary.

Finally, on behalf of the President and the Association Committee, I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible again next Summer.

XV(R) Squadron Sqn Cdr's Report 2014



I can't believe that it is already that time of year and Bill has been frantically encouraging me to get my Christmas Update written for the Newsletter! Life on the Squadron never seems to standstill and it has been a particularly challenging few months.

The good news is that we are now back on track and managing to graduate our students on time to the frontline, which is keeping the AOC happy and therefore making my life somewhat more enjoyable! It is difficult to believe that it has been many years since a course had finished on time, in fact nobody could actually remember when the last time was. The most pleasing aspect of this success has been that the Squadron has finally managed to balance the available resource against an achievable task – long may it continue!

The deployment of the Tornado Force to Cyprus in support of operations against Islamic State in August caught most of us by surprise, just as we were all looking forward to having all of the Force in the UK as Afghanistan draws to a close. This deployment, combined with a 3-month overlap with Afghanistan and in the shadow of the disbandment of two Tornado squadrons earlier in the year left Tornado aircraft and personnel at a premium.

The Front Line was so stretched at one point, that only 4 crews and 30 engineers

were left at RAF Marham out of nearly 500 personnel. This meant that XV Squadron had to provide a huge amount of support to the Front Line, which is still on going although slowly starting to reduce. This support led to us deploying aircraft out to various deployed locations and returning other aircraft to the UK. In addition to the numerous aircraft moves, we have provided a vast amount of training events to ensure that deploying crews were sufficiently current and competent and returning crews were reset back to UK operations. Perhaps the most telling sign of the strain on the Tornado Force was that XV Squadron were tasked with providing the Tornado flypast for the RAF Marham Friends and Families Day. In addition to the 4-ship airfield attack at Marham, the crews managed to also flypast RAF Wittering (and possibly my back garden too)!

With so many memorable events, it is difficult to pick out individual things but three that spring to mind are as follows. We were honoured to host trustees and staff from the MacRobert Trust for a visit, the first by them in over 10 years allowing us to maintain the strong links with XV Squadron that started back in WW2. A particular highlight for the Squadron, was leading a flypast for Her Majesty The Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh as they visited RAF Lossiemouth in November. Finally, Flt Lt Chris Stradling managed to achieve the milestone of 5000 hrs Tornado this year and was also recognised by the award of the LG Groves Memorial Air Safety Prize for work he has done to reduce the risk of Mid Air Collision.

Next year is going to be a big one as we celebrate the 100th Birthday of XV Squadron, and I am immensely proud and feeling very privileged to be in Command during this momentous occasion for the Squadron. I look forward to the Squadron members past and present making this a suitably magnificent set of events and of course we must take time to remember our fallen colleagues.

On behalf of the Officers, Airmen, Airwomen and Civilians who are currently serving on XV Squadron, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Boss

A Second Tour on XV Sqn

By Gp Capt Graham Bowerman

Last year I wrote what I thought would be a foreword for the XV Sqn Newsletter but others wiser than me decided that it would be an article. In my final line of that submission I unfortunately left the door ajar by mentioning that I had a second tour on XV Sqn thus I was asked to write once more.

My first tour on the Buccaneer had been predominantly as a Fg Off, when I returned to XV 16½ years later I was a Wg Cdr with nearly 4 years seniority. The passage of time and my personal experiences had naturally changed my perception of our Service and indeed what was required of me. The fun and games that I had as a Fg Off was due to being primarily responsible for myself, my flying and, as I recall, a couple of minor secondary duties; this lifestyle was to contrast markedly with my future role as a Sqn Cdr.

Notwithstanding the natural evolutionary and developmental changes within the RAF, by 1994 there had been a huge strategic shift of operational focus brought about by the fall of communism and the Gulf War. This was certainly a different Service to the one in which I had cut my teeth during the height of the Cold War.

In 1993 I returned from 3 years in Saudi Arabia with a posting to XV(R) Sqn, the Tornado Weapons Conversion Unit, firmly in my pocket.

At the venerable age of 44½ I was to be the Sqn Cdr, a job for which I thought my time had passed but clearly someone up there liked me! So what had preceded and perhaps led to my selection?

Back in 1981, and by now a qualified weapons instructor, I was one of the founder members of the TWCU. Being involved in bringing a modern, dynamic aircraft into service and training the crews to fill the cockpits was a great privilege. Over the next 8 years I flew the Tornado in UK and Germany in training, operational and test and evaluation roles.

Subsequent promotion to Wg Cdr and a 3 year tour in Saudi Arabia saw me involved in the Gulf War and its aftermath with both the Saudi Air Force and the RAF detachments and thereby continued my linkage with the Tornado GR.

In late 1993 I began my refresher flying on the Hawk at RAF Chivenor ... this was harder than I thought it would be! Four years off flying duties and now somewhat older I found even taxiing and using the radio at the same time a little tricky. Would I ever get to grips with aviation once more? Going solo certainly grabbed my attention, after all I had flown with a navigator for most of my flying career so who would I chat to in the air? However, after a few sorties it all started to come back and I moved back to that familiar 'glove' the Tornado.

After a few trips with the Tri-national Training Establishment at Cottesmore I moved to Lossiemouth when, following a short instructional re-qualification, I took command on 13 May 1994.

Wow, I was now the Boss of the largest sqn aircraft-wise in the RAF with 26 Tornados and 2 flight simulators. I was also responsible for 180 groundcrew and 60 aircrew at any one time so it was, as Blackadder would say, 'big job for little boy'!

With 10 Tornado GR1 sqns to man the throughput of main course student pilots and navs was incessant. Similarly, the refresher and weapons instructor courses plus the requirement to standardize all the sqns of the Tornado Force every 18 months placed a huge load on personnel and aircraft.

My first few months in post were a very steep learning curve not only as a pilot and instructor still getting back in the saddle but also as a Boss. Fortunately I had a first class team of instructor aircrew and engineers and the Sqn ran smoothly despite me. On top of that for some reason best known to himself the Stn Cdr selected me to be his deputy and those who know Nigel Day will recall his predilection for salmon fishing, a sport of which he partook nearly every Tuesday leaving me the con!

Probably the worst event to befall a sqn is the loss of an aircraft and its crew. I had been in post 2 months when the Sqn was night flying. I was home, the phone rang and the duty air traffic controller said: "Sir, one of your aircraft has crashed". One's heart sinks at such news and the need to know about the crew is overwhelming. I jumped into my car and sped to the airfield listening to the Storno radio. It will remain one of my moments of greatest relief when the rescue helicopter pilot reported "2 souls recovered alive."

The crew had experienced a rear-end fire which burnt through the flying control runs. As the Tornado pitched nose down at 1000ft the front seat pilot command ejected them both safely. Unfortunately the ejection injuries sustained by the rear seat pilot precluded him from flying on an ejection seat anymore; he retrained as a multi-engine pilot. As often happens following such incidents humour is to be had. The front seat pilot was a German exchange officer called Bert Stumpf ... the aircraft may well have 'stumpfed' but fortunately Bert did not!

In 1995 we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Sqn's formation. A dinner was held in the main hangar and the murals of historic Sqn aircraft were emblazoned on the end doors; these survive to the present day. Celebrating history and retaining linkages with the past is hugely important as is collecting and collating items of Sqn history for posterity. If a sqn is lucky it may find a person who is prepared to take on the responsibility long term. Maintaining documentation is one thing but researching and enhancing that history and almost bringing it back to life takes dedication.

Part way through my tour a chap called Martyn Ford-Jones contacted me and asked if he could visit the Sqn with his wife Valerie. He wished to view what historical documents and artifacts were held in the HQ. He was made most welcome and spent hours browsing through the books and reports and we practically had to throw him out at cease flying ... but he still came back! And so began a superb relationship between Martyn and XV Sqn for which we are indeed fortunate.

To have such a dedicated researcher, but more than that a superb ambassador, is the Sqn's great privilege.

Despite the workload on personnel there was time to have fun. Reward for the pace of work and, to be honest, the repetitive flying for many specialists meant that all ranks 'beer calls' and aircrew 'lunches of the month' figured highly in the events calendar. So did regular 'weekend rangers' to European airbases; these were very much appreciated. Similarly, visiting the sites of former events in order to remember those who gave their lives while serving on XV Sqn provided variation.

The annual pilgrimages to Vraux (France) or Gellick (Belgium)) were, and I'm sure still are, incredibly important. Often humbling in nature they were also invigorating. Additionally such events provided the opportunity for groundcrew to travel and thus were a significant morale boost providing some relief from the huge task of maintaining so many aircraft.

Sqn exchanges also provided a break from local flying routines and were a source of valuable professional interchange in more ways than one. During my time we had 2 exchanges with French Air Force sqns although the notable exchanges were the football matches that often resulted in raised emotions and certainly some collision damage. Oh, and there was the flying – mustn't forget that – which as always was great fun but, of course, most professional in conduct!

Notwithstanding the fine Gallic hospitality it was the Dutch exchange that was most memorable for me. Yes, I got to fly an F16 but notably this was a time before the vice-like grip of Political Correctness had taken hold. Being aware of how our friends from the Netherlands could get a little risqué and how social gatherings could get out of hand, I had briefed all personnel that no one was to be coerced into an embarrassing situation, particularly in public and certainly no photos were to be taken! At our welcome party it had not gone unnoticed that there were two nubile young ladies serving at the bar somewhat scantily clad.

As the evening progressed and the drink flowed the bargirls divested themselves of their upper body garments and began to circulate in the crowd.

Alarm bells began to ring in my head, but nothing untoward was happening so why make a scene? At this point I was asked if I wished to say something to the assembled gathering and so took my place on the stage. As I prepared to impart some sage like comments a chair was placed immediately behind me and I was pulled onto it. With great agility the two 'hostesses' arrived either side of me and hugged my head, their chocolate covered 'assets' almost suffocating me! As you can imagine I wanted to fight back, but I found myself helpless in their grasp! The reaction of the crowd suggested that I was in no immediate danger so I suffered in silence. It is amazing that despite washing my flying suit the odour of chocolate stayed with me for the rest of the detachment, a constant reminder of a perilous yet morale boosting situation which, thanks to no photos, Facebook or Twitter, was consigned only to the memories of those who were there.

Other notable events during my time as Boss included the first female pilots (2) and navigator to pass out onto fast jets. A superb run of airshows as the Sqn provided the RAF Tornado display team. And, importantly, there was the opportunity for a number of instructional crews to deploy operationally with front line sqns and thus update their skill base and enhance their credibility; this was enthusiastically welcomed.

In the final few months of my tenure, the RAF was invited by the French Government to participate in the Bastille Day flypast over Paris. The lead was given to XV Sqn and we would be the first RAF aircraft to fly over Paris in peacetime since 1938. We deployed 6 aircraft, crews and groundcrew to Reims airbase and 3 Harriers joined us. As lead pilot I was flown in a helicopter over Paris whilst being interviewed by French TV; we all enjoyed their champagne 'thank you' afterwards! I then flew a single Tornado along the route prior to Bastille Day and was thus the very first RAF aircraft over Paris for 58 years.

On 14 July 1996 the weather was poor with a low cloud base, but we were asked to launch and hold. Eventually the cloud lifted to 1,000 feet and we flew a vic 5 formation of Tornados with 3 Harriers behind down the Champs Elysées at 700ft. To participate in such a prestigious symbolic event was a notable achievement for XV Sqn. It was also a huge privilege and a never to be forgotten experience for all who took part.

My final days as Boss literally flew by and on 28 February 1997 I handed over the baton having had a fantastic three years. To command XV Sqn, a sqn on which I had served as a junior officer, was a great privilege. Indeed such a pleasure was to be bestowed on 2 of my junior officers later in their careers, Bill Gibson and Mike Saunders; Nine others also went on to command sqns. I remained in the Service for another 13 years, but my time in command of XV Sqn will rank as the high point of my career. I have now been associated with the Sqn for over 40 years and I look forward to many more, most especially celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2015.



Air Commodore John Matthews, CBE, AFC, 1924-2014



Wing Commander John Matthews was a truly revered XV Squadron Commander from March 1960 to October 1962 at RAF Cottesmore.

When he arrived at Cottesmore it was obvious from the start that he was an experienced and capable leader with considerable ability as an aircraft captain and as a Squadron Commander. During his time as the CO he saw the completion of the introduction of the Mk1a Victor to the Squadron, the provision of aircraft for practice scrambles on simulated nuclear release at Cottesmore or dispersal airfields. The Squadron was frequently involved in Royal Visits, and visits by government ministers, foreign ministers and senior Service personnel. In particular the CO was also closely involved in the introduction of Quick Reaction Alert, with two nuclear armed aircraft and crews on a permanent twenty four hour readiness state. This culminated in the generation of

additional nuclear armed aircraft during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, until all eight Squadron aircraft and crews were at a high state of readiness shortly before the crisis reached its peak.

An incident in June 1962

Following the lucky toss of a coin, David Bywater (a recent XV Sqn Association Chairman, and at the time a new Squadron Captain), elected to leave a previously unserviceable aircraft for the CO to fly. At the end of the four-hour flight, John's Victor was slightly ahead of David's at 2000ft and was about five miles on the approach to land at Cottesmore, when all four engines suddenly stopped.

The Bywater crew heard John call "Mayday" and order his crew to abandon the aircraft. Eric Anstead, the CO's AEO, recalls that he was the first to get out and looked up at the beautiful clean aeroplane (ready for next day's inspection), passing over. Seeing no other parachutes, he had an awful thought that it had only been a practice Mayday! So it was with utter relief he saw the rest of the crew eventually get out and their parachutes deploy. The three rear crew all parachuted safely to the ground and the two pilots also ejected safely. All the crew escaped with minor injuries.

David Bywater states: "This accident could easily have resulted in the loss of the three rear crew members, and there could hardly be a better example of a Captain taking swift, clear and decisive action (Subsequently, the engine failure was determined to be due to a technical fault which could not have been anticipated or remedied by the crew)."

After two and a half years in command, in October 1962, John Matthews received the news of his posting. As a much admired leader it was clear that he would not be allowed to leave without the traditional farewell of a Dining-Out Night from RAF Cottesmore and that members of XV Squadron had every intention of ensuring that he enjoyed a memorable evening, which finished by his being carried on top of a dining table from the Officers Mess to his married quarter. Here he was deposited in a Naval manner by altering the tilt of the table until the incumbent arrived, almost standing, in an upright position in his own hallway!

His daughter recalled the episode at his funeral to much amusement, though his wife, Sheila, was not in raptures at the time.

Early career

John Matthews was a New Zealander who had served in the Pacific theatre during the Second World War and was one those brave pilots who flew Catalinas. It is believed the last RNZAF Catalina flight was piloted by him.

At the end of hostilities he recognised that his career was limited in New Zealand and so joined the RAF in September 1947. He then flew the Lancaster and Halifax in the Maritime and Meteorological Reconnaissance roles and trained as a QFI before completing two years at the CFS Little Rissington as part of the Advanced Squadron Exam Wing. This was followed by two and a half years at Bomber Command Headquarters High Wycombe prior to completing the Victor OCU at RAF Gaydon in early 1960.

Later years

After Cottesmore, John Matthews joined the Joint Services Staff Course before a staff appointment at HQ No 3

Group at RAF Mildenhall, promoted to Group Captain in 1965 and appointed as Nuclear Plans at HQ SHAPE at Mons. In 1968 he became the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff as Deputy Director of Bomber Operations at HQ Bomber Command.

In 1971 he returned to flying operations, undertaking courses on Phantom and Buccaneer in preparation for his appointment in December 1971 as Station Commander at RAF Laarbruch in West Germany.

After a very successful tour in Germany, in January 1974, on promotion to Air Commodore, he became the Senior Air Staff Officer No 1 Group at RAF Bawtry, before retiring from the Service in August 1977. John Matthews was awarded the Air Force Cross in June 1963 and the CBE in January 1974.

Following his Service career he spent some time in local administration before retiring to Cornwall, Sheila's home county. John and Sheila were regular attendees at XV Squadron Reunions at Cottesmore until they became too frail to make the long journey from the South West. After the death of his beloved Sheila he faded rapidly, and died on July 8th 2014. He leaves 2 daughters and several grandchildren, his only son having died in his 50s.

Recollections and Research from Air Cdre David Bywater, with assistance from Flt Lt Peter Roberts and Flt Lt Eric Anstead. The funeral was in Cornwall, but David and Shelagh Bywater, and Peter and Pat Roberts, and Bruce George were able to attend a very nice farewell to a very special man.

Peter Roberts
Victor Era Rep

MEETING A XV SQUADRON VETERAN'S CANADIAN FAMILY

One of my tasks, as the Squadron Historian, is to provide dossiers for individuals and families who had a relative who served with No.XV Squadron during World War Two. The dossiers contain known service details relating not only to the subject, but also to those with whom he flew on operational sorties. The dossiers also include all known movement details of the aircraft on which the subject flew, copies of the RAF Form 540's (The Squadron Operational Record Book), photographic images of the RAF Station from which the subject flew and of images of other members of aircrew on the squadron during the same period of service. In the event of the subject failing to return from an operation, all known details relating to the incident are also included, along with the place of burial or remembrance.

Earlier this year, having been approached by a lady requesting details relating to her father's period of service with No.XV Squadron, I duly set about compiling such a document. Happily, in this instance, the subject, Warrant Officer Edward Spannier, successfully completed a full tour of operations with the Squadron.

Having enlisted for service with the Royal Canadian Air Force, completed his training and qualified as a bomb aimer, Edward Spannier embarked for the United Kingdom, where he was attached to the Royal Air Force. Having crewed up at Operational Training Unit, passed the courses at Heavy Conversion Unit and Lancaster Finishing School, Flight Sergeant (as he was then) Spannier was posted to No.XV at RAF Mildenhall.

The dossier being completed, I made contact with the lady, Sandra LaClaire, in order to obtain a postal address for her in Canada. Speaking through email, Sandra informed me that she was coming to England in a few months' time to attend her daughter's wedding in Chelsea.

I gave Sandra the option of having the dossier sent to her through the post or waiting until she was in London, when I would be pleased to present it to her personally. When I added that the 'presentation' could be made at the RAF Club, Sandra was delighted. In Canada, Sandra is an Executive Member of The Canadian Royal Legion – Regina Branch 001.

Originally, the invitation to the RAF Club was for Sandra and her husband Fred but, as the weeks went by, the invitation was extended to Sandra's two daughters, their respective spouse/partner, a newly born grandson and Sandra's closest friend and her daughter. Given that Valerie and I were also in attendance, I hastily contacted the Club to ensure that as hosts, Valerie and I were not exceeding the number of guests we could entertain there.

On the selected day, Wednesday, 16th July 2014, the Club staff could not have been more helpful, especially when the principle guest arrived on crutches having sustained a leg injury. The chairs at the east end of the Cowdray Room were carefully arranged in an order that did not offend or detract from the elegance of the room. Refreshments were offered to our guests, by the Club staff, once we had welcomed our guests.

The ambiance of the entrance hall, staircase and Cowdray Room itself were not lost on the visitors and they were excited about what the rest of the building, and the day, held in store for them.

It has to be admitted that it was a bit of a squeeze fitting us in all one of the 'dining cubicles' in the Running Horse Tavern. The thought of an English type pub, in the basement of a building in the heart of London, seemed somewhat bizarre to our Canadian guests. However, having managed the task of getting everyone seated, they then wanted to try English drinks (Pimms went down a treat with the ladies) and food. A friendly debate ensued after lunch as to who would settle the tab and, at her insistence, Sandra won the day.

Once the tables had been cleared of plates and glasses etc and having ensured the surfaces were clean, I produced the document they were all waiting to see. The size and thickness of the dossier produced a few initial gasps, but once Sandra started to view the contents, a few tears of emotion were shed. A great deal of time was spent perusing the documents, which in turn led to many questions being asked. During this same period, using her iPad, Sandra produced copies of her father's log book and other documentation, all of which generated many more questions.

As the presence of the document sank in, Sandra raised the question as to whether the dossier should return with her to Canada, or whether it should stay in England with her daughters. However, that same thought had some time previously entered my mind and, as a result, unbeknown to Sandra, I had prepared a second copy, which I presented to one of her daughters. More tears of joy.

Needless to say, Sandra wanted to take some photographs of the occasion and, with that thought in mind, I suggested the Badge Corridor would be the ideal location. On the way to the first floor, we initially stopped in the ground floor corridor to look at the artworks, then in the Club Bar and finally in the Library.

The stained glass window above the rear staircase drew much praise and explanation. The Ballroom, which was being set up for a function later that evening, looked superb and again drew many favourable comments as the visitors looked through the already opened doors.

Then, finally, the Badge Corridor itself; the visitors did not know where to look first, up, down, this wall or the wall behind them. Having discovered the XV Squadron Badge, on the wall close to the doors leading into the Cowdray Room, the excitement grew. Cameras were produced and a number of photographs were taken, some as a group and some with the dossier displayed. Some of those photographs Sandra informed me would appear in the Canadian Royal Legion newsletter, along with a write-up about her visit.

Not only did Sandra take home a dossier, but also numerous photographs and many happy memories.

Given that in the majority of cases, the dossiers I compile are for relatives who are just names and postal addresses, it is therefore a welcome change to be able to present a dossier personally to a recipient. With this thought in mind, Valerie and I would like to express our thanks to the Management and Staff at the RAF Club for the help and assistance we received, enabling us to meet and entertain a XV Squadron veteran's Canadian family.

Martyn R. Ford-Jones

AN ACT OF REMEMBRANCE DUDZELE, BRUGES, BELGIUM SATURDAY, 28th JUNE 2014



On Sunday, 7th July 1940, three Bristol Blenheim twin-engine bombers of No.XV Squadron, took-off from RAF Wyton, Huntingdonshire, to undertake bombing and reconnaissance sorties over Belgium.

The second aircraft to leave Wyton's runway, with Pilot Officer Hugh Bamber at the controls, supported by Sgt John Holdsworth as observer and Sgt George Reid as air gunner, was Blenheim Mk.IV, serial R3896, coded LS-X. The crew's brief was to bomb advancing German troop columns and photograph movements along canals between Terneuzen and Ghent.

Unfortunately, the British bomber's track across enemy occupied skies had been noted by German coastal batteries and the information subsequently relayed to appropriate Luftwaffe fighter units. Two Messerschmitt BF109 fighters from the enemy airfield at Waalhaven, south of Rotterdam, took-off to intercept the bomber.

As the Blenheim turned over Bruges the two German fighters attacked. Black smoke issued from one of the engines and R3896 slowly began to lose altitude. Pilot Officer Bamber fought with the controls as he headed for Zeebrugge and the English Channel, but it was all in vain. A parachute was seen to billow open as the stricken bomber flew over Dudzele, to the west of Bruges. Unfortunately, there was insufficient height for the 'chute to fully deploy and the airman was killed on impact with the ground. The same fate struck the second crew member to jump from the burning aircraft. With the pilot still at the controls, the bomber pitched over and crashed into the canal on the edge of Dudzele village.

Seventy-four years later, the villagers of Dudzele came together, along with many dignitaries and especially invited guests, to remember and honour the three airman. Amongst the invited guests were the pilot's sister, Mrs Theodora Cooper, her son Timothy and his partner Andrea. Unfortunately, all efforts to trace family members of the two other airmen proved unsuccessful. No.XV Squadron was represented by the historian and Mr Looey Law, who also acted as driver and photographer to the former.

Martyn Ford-Jones and Looey Law were greeted on arrival at Dudzele by Paul De Vuyst, who conducted them to a large private house in the centre of the village, where they were introduced to members of the Dudzele Combattants League, local councillors and Mrs Cooper and her family. A welcome drink, in the form of Champagne, preceded a semi-formal lunch for approximately twenty guests.

After lunch, the ceremonial side of the day's events commenced with everyone gathering outside the Bruges General Cemetery. There, led by a piper and a drummer, the cortege filed slowly through the cemetery towards the Commonwealth War Graves Commission section, where the three members of XV Squadron aircrew had been laid to rest.

Having gathered in front of the Cross of Sacrifice, with Peter Coppens officiating, Paul De Vuyst began the ceremony with a few words of welcome, which he followed with a comparison of how two World Wars had brought the Belgian and English people closer together. He spoke of how the last few remaining witnesses to the event in 1940, whom he had previously interviewed, described that the crew, "...had fulfilled [their] engagements, they passed beyond the narrow confines of duty in an unequal struggle".

The formal laying of wreaths commenced with Theodora Cooper and Timothy laying tributes on the graves of the three crew members. This was followed by the Historian, for and on behalf of No.XV (R) Squadron, laying a wreath in memory of P/O Bamber, Sgt Holdsworth and Sgt Reid. Following the laying of floral tributes by other interested associations, groups and individuals, the attendees formed up, again, behind the piper and drummer, and filed out of the cemetery.

On arrival back in Dudzele, many people who had not been to the cemetery had gathered in the local community centre in preparation for the parade to the crash site. Not only had the size of the gathering increased enormously due to many of the locals putting in an appearance, but also to the arrival of many World War Two military vehicles and their occupants; all of whom would take part in the parade.

In the community centre, above the babble of voices, the parade marshal's dulcet tones requested everybody to adjourn to the car park, where they were instructed to form up again behind the piper and drummer; on this occasion joined by a town band.

With the local streets closed off to traffic, the music of a military march filling the air, the throng marched out of the car park and meandered its way through the people lined streets to the canal on the other side of the village. At the rear end of the column, the roar of engines announced the cavalcade of vehicles comprising Jeeps, personnel carriers and an assortment of other WWII machines.

Having arrived at the crash site, the carnival atmosphere died down and a more sombre and dignified approach returned, as those attending the ceremony gathered round in a large circle on the canal bank.

Peter Coppens took to the podium and described what had actually happened on the site, where we were all gathered, seventy-four years earlier. He told how his own father, then only fifteen years old, had witnessed the demise of both the aircraft and its crew. He also read out the crew's names, in both a mark of respect and gratitude.

As permanent marks of respect to the XV Squadron crew, both an information board and a beautifully carved wooden bench, suitably positioned on the canal bank, were unveiled; the latter jointly by the XV Squadron historian and Mr Keith Franklin, a member of the Blenheim Society.

Following a personal presentation to Mrs Theodora Cooper, from the Dudzele Combattants League and the taking of numerous photographs, the parade returned to Dudzele, where a further ceremony, to commemorate the liberation of the village by Canadian troops, during September 1944, took place outside the Memorial Chapel.



It is with sadness that we record the loss of several former members of the Association, almost all of whom flew with No.XV Squadron during World War II.

Flight Sergeant Bernard Adkins, who passed away during January 2012, was a navigator. He was posted to No.XV Squadron, along with P/O Alan Sellwood and the rest of his crew, during August 1944. Between 29th August and 16th December 1944, Bernard, who undertook his aircrew training in Canada, completed a total of 30 operational sorties.

Following the end of hostilities, Bernard transferred to RAF Transport Command, with whom he undertook missions to the Middle East and India, flying on Avro York aircraft.

In civilian life, following demob from the Royal Air Force, Bernard Adkins trained as a teacher and later became a Headmaster. The Association extends belated condolences to Bernard's family.

Warrant Officer Edward 'Ted' Duncombe sadly died on 30th December 2013, less than two months after he had joined the Association. The details relating to his operational tour with XV, and subsequent crash-landing on a Dutch railway track on the night of 31st March 1941, were recorded in the last newsletter.

Although unaware of the existence of the current day XV Squadron, or the XV Squadron Association, we are given to understand that Edward was very pleased to have been re-acquainted with his old squadron. In remembering him, the Association offers sincere condolences to his family.

Bernard Dye, who through no fault of his own, had a very short relationship with No.XV Squadron, died on 30th January 2014.

On completion of his training at No.1651 Conversion Unit, Bernard and his crew were posted to XV Squadron at RAF Mildenhall during December 1943. Due to the fact the squadron had just commenced converting to Lancaster bombers, Bernard and his crew were immediately sent off to No.3 Lancaster Finishing School at RAF Feltwell, for instruction on how to fly the Avro manufactured aircraft.

Having successfully mastered the techniques of flying a Lancaster bomber, Bernard and his crew were sent back to RAF Mildenhall. They commenced flying training exercises, with No.XV Squadron on 8th January 1944.

On the night of 20th/21st February, Bernard was sitting in the mid-upper turret of a Lancaster, as the bomber slowly made its way around the taxi-track in the middle of a long line of aircraft all lining up for take-off. Prior to reaching the runway, a difference of opinion occurred involving a couple of the crew members and the aircraft was ordered back to its dispersal point.

As a result of the situation on the aircraft, the crew was broken up and Bernard was posted to No.622 Squadron (formed from "C" Flight, XV Squadron), based across the far side of the airfield at RAF Mildenhall. Bernard went on to successfully complete a full operational tour.

Bernard was one of a small group of 622 Squadron veterans, who attended the Badge Presentation Day, at RAF Brize Norton, in December 2013, following the re-formation of the Squadron a year earlier.

The Association sends its sincere condolences to Bernard's son and all his family.

Warrant Officer Bob Kendall, ex-wireless operator, ex-prisoner of war and supporter of all things XV Squadron, died during February 2014.

Bob was posted to No.XV Squadron, at RAF Mildenhall, on 18th June 1944, along with his pilot, Flight Sergeant Norman Overend, RNZAF, and the rest of the crew.

They commenced operational flying on the night of 23rd June and continued through until 12th September 1944, when Bob and the crew failed to return from their 19th operational sortie.

Five of the crew survived the fighter attack, but the pilot and mid-upper gunner both died as a result of the attack.

Bob was captured a short while after baling out of the stricken aircraft and spent the rest of the war as a PoW. Those day and times left a terrible image in his mind. He was also all too aware that he had survived, but two of the crew had not.

Bob, along with George Thomson, the crew's navigator, who was also captured, became a member of the XV Squadron Association and supported all the reunion's and functions whenever possible.

On Monday, 4th October 2010, Bob, accompanied by George Thomson, made a visited to RAF Lossiemouth, where they were both reunited with XV Squadron for the first time in 66 years. With Bob living in Leeds, it was a long trip, but one he thoroughly enjoyed and felt worth making the long journey for. A write-up of the visit was published in an earlier newsletter shortly after his visit to Scotland.

Whenever attending the reunions, be they at Mildenhall, Wyton or some other location, Bob was always supported by his wife, Pauline, who would undertake the long drives from their home in Leeds.

It is to Pauline, their sons and extended family that the XV Squadron Association extends sincerely condolences.

In the last Newsletter, we inadvertently reported Bob's name as Kelland. Thanks to George Thomson for pointing out the error. – Ed.

John F Martin joined the RAF in 1942 and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer on passing out and trained as a Bomb Aimer, completing a full tour of operations on Lancasters with 90 Sqn by the end of 1944. Post-war, John retrained as a navigator and spent time with XV Sqn flying Lincolns between 1948-51. After several tours at home and abroad, he left the RAF in 1966, working in the taxation sector until retirement in 1986. Married for 66 years to Sheila (who died in 2013), John passed away in hospital in Epping Forest on 28 August 2014. We offer our sincere condolences to his family.



John Martin at Pershore in 1960

REMEMBERING A SHORT STIRLING BOMBER CREW

Shortly after 4 o'clock on the morning of 11th April 1942, a badly shot up Short Stirling bomber was attempting to land at RAF Wyton, having endured a long, hard struggle back from an attack against Essen. Due to the runway being blocked by another aircraft, the pilot of the ailing bomber was instructed to 'go round again', whilst efforts were made to rectify the situation. Unfortunately, as Squadron Leader Drummond Wilson continued to struggle with the controls, an already damaged oil pipe broke, causing both starboard engines to seize up. The unstable bomber lurched over and impacted with the ground near Cow Lane, Godmanchester, approximately one mile south-south-east of Huntingdon.

The 12th July 2014, dawned a bright, beautiful, sunny morning. For a sleepy little town like Godmanchester, there seemed to be a lot more traffic and a larger number of people than usual milling around for a Saturday morning. The observant locals may have realised these people were all making their way to the old Queen Elizabeth School. They were, however, not going to attend a school function, but had been specially invited by Roger Leivers to help celebrate and remember Squadron Leader Drummond Wilson and his crew.

Roger, a member of the Porch Museum in Godmanchester, has dedicated a great deal of his time, effort and energy studying, researching and collating material relating to the crash of Short Stirling bomber, N3703, LS-G, and its crew. It is also his dream to be able to raise sufficient funds to erect a permanent memorial in the crews' memory.

Roger managed to bring together a number of people who also have an interest in the circumstances of the crash on that April morning back in 1942. Amongst the invited guests were members of the crews' families, Pino Lombardi, Chairman of the Stirling Project, and Roy Palmer, owner of the 1930's Squire Supercharged Rally Car, previously owned by Squadron Leader Drummond Wilson.

On display in the old Queen Elizabeth School hall, were many items of interest, including log books, photographs, newspaper cuttings and personal items all relating to former members of XV Squadron who had an association with S/L Drummond Wilson or with the stricken bomber. With regard to the Stirling bomber aircraft, Pino Lombardi exhibited a number of items relating to the work he and his dedicated team have produced, in their efforts to reconstruct a replica of this huge aircraft. Amongst the items Pino displayed were many items of equipment actually used on Stirling bombers.

Having read in the national press, a short while ago, about the circumstance relating to the passing of Sergeant Stan Franks, a former flight engineer with No.XV Squadron, Roger decided to honour Stan's memory with a small but fitting display in the school hall. Stan was found dead in his home, after not being seen for a number of days. At first it was thought that Stan would have a pauper's funeral, but the generosity of the British public ensued that this would not be the case. The remainder of the amount raised also benefitted various RAF charities.

Having allowed the guests to congregate, chat and view the many items on display, Roger formally welcomed everybody to the event. He gave a short speech on why we were all there and made mention of one or two of the guests with a special connect to either the Stirling bomber and/or No.XV Squadron.

Mr Roy Palmer, the first speaker, was invited to address the gathering and explain how he acquired the rally car which had once been the property of S/L Drummond Wilson. Having moved out into the car park, standing in the warm sunshine, the assembled group were able to admire the car as Mr Palmer told them about the car's history.

The next item on the day's agenda was, literally, a step back in history. We were requested to split into two groups and, when instructed, took a short walk down the High Street and into a back lane where a small terrace of Victorian houses stood. On entering the first house we came to, one was amazed to see the whole house decorated in 1940's style, complete with authentic household furniture, appliances, crockery and artefacts of the time. The house even came complete with outside storage shed and loo! However, the biggest surprise came when it was revealed that the owner was 32-year-old Ben Sansom who had not only spent many years and thousands of pounds producing this environment, but also lived in the house. Needless to say Ben is somewhat of a local celebrity, who has appeared on television and in the national press.

Back at the school, the afternoon session consisted of two talks, one by Pino Lombardi on the Short Stirling bomber, the other by Roger on a more in-depth talk about the Godmanchester Stirling. However, without being detrimental to the two speakers, the highlight of the afternoon was the flypast of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Lancaster bomber.

Roger had pulled off the coup of the year, by contacting the BBMF and informing them that a dedicated group, gathered in Godmanchester, were honouring the crew of a Stirling bomber killed there in 1942. Although it was 'touch and go', the navigator on board the Lancaster telephoned Roger to inform him that the aircraft would divert from its allotted course, in order to fly over the town, en-route to its next engagement.

As this news spread, many of the local townspeople joined our number and gathered in the park adjoining the school.

A huge roar of appreciation went up as the Lancaster flew over the trees, across the open expanse of the park, banked gently round over Godmanchester and climbed slowly away. Those with keen eyesight also saw the rapid flight of a Spitfire, trying to catch up with the Lancaster, as the latter gently climbed away. Although Roger Leivers had help and assistance from the Porch Museum, local supermarkets and a band of volunteers who help to put the day together, he really has to be congratulated on producing a remarkable and enjoyable day. And he wants to do it all again next year and the year after etc.

Martyn R. Ford-Jones
XV Squadron Historian



The Squire Supercharged Rally Car



Part of the Stirling Project display

AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN HERO

As part of Valerie's birthday celebrations, during the third week of June, we decided to spend a few days in Leominster. Our route, from Wiltshire, took us up into Gloucestershire, west on the M50 and then across-country towards Ledbury. As neither of us had ever visited this charming little market town before, we decided it was a good opportunity to stop, have lunch and a good look around.

Having satisfactorily achieved our first aim, we then set off to see what this town, where John Masefield was born, and which was often visited by the Brownings and Wordsworth, had to offer. At the top of Church Lane, a very narrow, cobbled, uphill thoroughfare lined with 15th and 16th-century buildings, stands the Church of St Michael and All Angels, which dates from the 12th century. The first thing the visitor notices is that the very imposing bell tower is free-standing, a monument in its own right, away from the main structure of the church; the reason for this being that, originally a fort stood on the site.

The church is well worth a visit and there is much to interest the visitor, especially as the church came under siege during the English Civil War. Situated on the internal wall, adjacent to the musket shot scarred wooden doors of the church, are tablets bearing the names of those associated with the town who perished in two World Wars.

As my eyes scrolled down the list of names, taking in the ranks and regiments/units of each man, Valerie drew my attention to a number of folders, on a table, situated immediately under each of the Rolls of Honour I was perusing. On opening one of the folders, more out of curiosity than interest, Valerie was amazed at the page lying open before her eyes. She slowly read the entry and, seeing the significance, made the comment to me *"You had better read this"*.

The page that Valerie had drawn my attention to related to a man by the name of Percy Ernest Clark. The name meant nothing to me, but I read on.

Percy E Clark was born on 9th March 1891, at Southend-on-Sea, Essex, his birth being registered at Rochford, near Southend, between April and June, that same year. He was the son of Francis Clark, the Managing Director of the Southend Gas Company and Eliza Clark nee Cordley.

Young Percy was obviously interested in engineering as, on leaving school he signed up to a seven year apprenticeship with the Southern Railway. When the First World War broke out, Percy enlisted for service with the Royal Naval Air Service and rose to the rank of Petty Officer. He was employed as a Ships Engineer involved in experimental work with airships. When the Royal Naval Air Service amalgamated with the Royal Flying Corps, to form the Royal Air Force, Percy Clark transferred to the new service.

With the end of hostilities, Percy returned to civilian life and took employment with University Motors, based in Piccadilly. He appeared to have remained in this job until the dark storm clouds of war started to form over Europe again. During 1938, he was asked if he would consider going back on the Air Force Reserve list, which he obviously did as, the following year, at the age of forty-eight, he was called up for active service. Flight Sergeant Percy Ernest Clark served with both Fighter Command and Bomber Command.

It was the last entry on this particular page that stunned me, and caused me to draw it to the attention of the readers of the Mildenhall Register Newsletter. That entry read:

[Flight Sergeant] Clark died suddenly of a heart attack at RAF Mildenhall on 17th December 1941, aged 50.

In the thirty-three years I have been associated with RAF Mildenhall, I have never heard of any stories relating Flight Sergeant Percy Ernest Clark or his service in two world wars. If it had not been for the Church of St Michael and All Angels, I still would not have known.

How easily the names of those who gave service to our Country, in two world wars, can be so easily lost. Percy Clark, and many like him, is almost a 'Forgotten Hero'.

Martyn R. Ford-Jones

SERGEANT ALFRED 'ALF' BEAZLEY-LONG

I remember many years ago, during the mid-1980's, standing chatting with Flight Lieutenant Len Miller, DFC, at one of the Mildenhall Register reunions. As we chatted about the night Len and his crew were shot down, a number of other people gathered round, including a small-framed man who was listening attentively to Len's account of the events that night in April 1944. Realising the small-framed man was standing beside him, Len turned and introduced me to Alf Beazley-Long, the flight engineer who was with Len and the crew that fateful night. This was to be the first of a number of occasions that I met Alf.

Sergeant Alfred 'Alf' Beazley-Long, who died in late 2013, was posted to No.XV Squadron on 29th August 1943. He was flight engineer on Pilot Officer Charles Woodley's crew, with whom he flew a total of seven operational sorties on Short Stirling bombers. Following conversion to Avro Lancaster bombers during December 1943, Alf flew a further four Ops, with Pilot Officer Woodley, on the 'new' bomber.

Due to Charles Woodley's temporary posting to other duties on 14th February 1944, Alf needed to find another crew with whom to complete his tour of operational duties. Two weeks earlier, on 29th January, Sergeant Alf Pybus the flight engineer on Len Miller's crew had been killed in action, following an attack by a night-fighter during a raid on Berlin. Alf Beazley-Long joined Len Miller's crew, as flight engineer and flew a total of ten operations with the latter. On the night of 27th/28th April 1944, Alf was to undertake his last operational sortie with Len Miller, and his last sortie of the war. Approximately eighty miles from the target, Friedrichshaven, the Lancaster was attacked by a German night-fighter, piloted by Oberleutenant Martin 'Tino' Becker. In a devastating attack four of the crew were killed. Flight Lieutenant Miller was blown out of the aircraft and evaded capture, whilst the remaining two crew members, who had successfully baled out of the stricken bomber, were taken prisoners of war.

Alf, who was one of the latter two crew members, was incarcerated in Stalag Luft 6 and Camp 357, was to remain a prisoner until liberated a year later.

One rarely heard Alf talk about his experiences at the Mildenhall reunions. He always seemed to be the quiet one, standing to one side, letting his pilot tell the stories. Although quiet, he was easy to get on with and will be missed by those who knew him.

The Committee and Members of the Mildenhall Register offer their sincere condolences to Alf's family

Denis Austen Wheatley

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of Fg Off Denis Wheatley, a pilot of XV Squadron during the 1950s, who passed away at the end of September 2014 in Scarborough aged 85.

Born in Stockton on Tees, Denis joined Morris Motors of Cowley. National Service was deferred because of his 5-year apprenticeship, before joining the RAF at No1 RU at Padgate in September 1952 until March 1953.

ACTU at Cranwell, followed by a period at Kirton-in-Lindsey before joining 1FTS at Moreton-in-the-Marsh in July 1953 on No22 Course. Denis was awarded his wings on 6 July 1954. After further training, he arrived at RAF Honington to join XV Squadron on 23 March 1956, just in time to take part in the Suez Crisis. Flying with Fg Off Payne and Australian Fg Off McEwen, he completed three bombing raids over Egypt.

When the Squadron disbanded in 1957, Denis was posted to RAF Wittering where he stayed until his release from the RAF in 1960. He subsequently tried Air traffic Control at Hurn, but wasn't too keen on that, subsequently moving into the petrol retail business in South London from 1963 – 1973. He subsequently moved to Wrelton in North Yorkshire until he retired in 1991.



Fg Off Payne, Denis Wheatley and Fg Off McEwen

Fg Off STANLEY WATSON

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner

It is with sadness that the Association records the loss of another of XV Squadron's World War Two flyers. Stanley Graham Watson was born in Burntisland, on the north side of the Firth of Forth, Fife, Scotland, on 8th January 1921. As soon as he was able, young Stanley enlisted for service with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Having undertaken his training, and qualified as a wireless operator, Stanley was promoted to the rank of sergeant and posted to an operational training unit. He then moved on to a heavy conversion unit, where he became acquainted with the intricacies of the Lancaster bomber. At the end of August 1943, having been declared ready for operational flying duties Sergeant Watson was posted, along with his pilot and crew, to No.620 Squadron, based at RAF Chedburgh, Suffolk.

A few nights after his arrival at Chedburgh, on 5th September 1943, Flying Officer Johnny Crozier, Stanley's pilot, was detailed to fly as second pilot with Flight Sergeant P. G. Quayle on an attack against Mannheim. Unfortunately, the Stirling MK.III bomber, serial EH931, coded QS-O, on which Johnny Crozier was flying, was attacked by an enemy night-fighter and shot down. Four of the crew were killed, whilst the remaining four, including F/O Crozier, survived and were all taken prisoners of war.

Being without a pilot to lead them, Stanley Watson and the remainder of the crew were re-mustered pending the arrival of a new pilot. Within two months of losing his original pilot, Sergeant Watson reported for duty at RAF Mildenhall, as a member of the crew headed by Sergeant Alan Amies. With No.XV Squadron undergoing conversion from Stirling bombers to Lancaster bombers, the months of November and December 1943 were taken up with training flights and various flying exercises. It was not until 14th January 1944, that the squadron was declared ready for operational flying. That same night,

Sergeant Watson undertook his first operational sortie with No.XV; an attack against Brunswick. This was to be the first of fourteen such attacks that Stanley Watson participated in, flying with Alan Amies. The targets they attacked, between January and April, included three raids on Berlin, two sorties against Stuttgart, Aachen, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Madgeburg and Nuremburg. During March/April, Stanley Watson was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

By the beginning of May 1944, Alan Amies had become both an experienced pilot and a popular member of the squadron. He had also been granted a commission and promoted in the rank of Acting Flight Lieutenant. On the night of 11th/12th May 1944, F/L Amies was instructed to participate in an attack, with an inexperienced crew, against Leuven. Unfortunately, the aircraft was shot down by a night-fighter and crashed with the loss of the whole crew.

Seven days after the loss of his pilot and friend, Stanley found himself flying with another very experienced pilot who had been awarded a DFC very early in his operational career. It was with Flight Lieutenant Oliver Brooks DFC that Stanley would fly further operational sorties; a number of which were in preparation for the D-Day landings. Apart from two mine-laying sorties, and three against further Germany cities, Stanley also flew against targets at Bolougne, Le Mans, Lisieux and Trappes.

When Squadron Leader Brooks completed his 'tour' of operations, Stanley Watson and the rest of the crew flew with Squadron Leader Pat Carden, DFC, another experienced pilot and former flying instructor. Under Pat Carden's guidance, Stanley completed a further seven operational sorties, all but one being against targets in France, where German troop resistance caused problems for the advancing Allied armies.

Later, having been posted away from No.XV Squadron, Stanley joined No.75 (New Zealand) Squadron. He was granted a commission in the rank of Pilot Officer, received promotion in the rank of Flying Officer and was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross; the latter being gazetted on 26th October 1945.

Stanley Watson, described by his family as a quiet, thoughtful and courageous man, died on 29th October 2014, two months after his beloved wife Margaret, whom he had married 1945. His funeral took place at Whitley Bay Crematorium on 21st November 2014.

The Association offers its most sincere condolences to Stanley's son Richard, and the rest of Stanley's family including his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

XV Squadron 100th Anniversary Reunion Dinner Officers Mess RAF Wittering Stamford Lincolnshire

29 May 2015

Full details will appear in the update newsletter in the Spring. Gp Capt Graham Bowerman has very kindly offered to organise the event for the Association.

From the Secretary

As you will see on this page the **100th Anniversary Reunion and Dinner is being organised at RAF Wittering on 29 May 2014**. We aim to publish further details with a booking form in early April. Details will be sent out primarily by email, as that is the cheapest method. So if you have received this newsletter in the old-fashioned post, but have an email address please let me know what it is. Then we will be able to save some of the money that is currently spent on sending

out paper copies of the newsletter. I try to keep this newsletter within the basic Royal Mail Second class post size limit, which is why the text may be smaller than some of you would prefer. If you are not sure about receiving an electronic version of the newsletter, you may wish to download a copy from the website to try out. You will also receive any information we wish to pass out to the membership quicker than by Royal Mail.

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Flt Lt Chris Stradling receives his 5000 hours Tornado badge from OC XV(R) Sqn.



Flt Lt Stu Alexander (L) achieved 2000hrs Tornado on the same sortie as Stradders achieved 5000hrs. The crew are seen here with Gp Capt Chappell, the RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander after their flight.