



1 (Fighter) Squadron

Association Update November 2016

Since summer 2015 it has been another brilliant chapter in the life of the oldest and finest Fighter Squadron in the Royal Air Force. The year has seen the Squadron move into a superb new building, develop swing-role tactics, deploy on the largest NATO Ex for a decade, hold very high readiness for contingency operations, and lead the first Typhoon deployment to Op SHADER in response to the Parliamentary vote for Syrian airstrikes on 2 Dec 15.



In August we took control of an outstanding new Headquarters building at RAF Lossiemouth, formally opened by the 1(F) Sqn Patron, ACM Sir Peter Squire. The internal layout of this purpose-built facility was designed in partnership with the architects, and has enabled an outstanding level of integration across the Squadron. We now possess world-class security, connectivity, planning and briefing rooms, and have fully integrated mission support, engineering and operations. We are also extremely fortunate to have a superb history room which doubles as a meeting and conference room, and contains much of the illustrious memorabilia from the Squadron's Operational past. The room is watched over by the famous photo of the Squadron at Clairmarais during the First World War, and has been named after Lt Col Maitland, the first OC. The sortie briefing rooms (Demozay, Clowes and Halahan) highlight iconic pilots. We are also very fortunate to have converted a mezzanine floor of a hangar annex into 'The Robin Olds Bar', which the US Air Attaché kindly opened during the Association weekend. We have been in contact with the Olds

family who are hoping to make a pilgrimage to the north of Scotland at some point in the coming months. In recent weeks we also welcomed the US Chief of Staff, Gen Welsh, to the Robin Olds Bar, where he presented the Squadron with a Stars and Stripes flag from the Olds family, which we will proudly fly on the Sqn every year on 4 July.



US Air Attaché, Col 'Flak' Willis



USAF Chief of Staff, Gen Mark Welsh III, visits the Robin Olds Bar

The formal opening weekend was enormously successful, and it was fantastic to welcome so many of the Association and Affiliated members, and those from the Barbers and Surgeons Livery Company who have been extraordinarily generous with their support to the Squadron in recent months.

The end of the summer saw 1(F) Squadron increase its tempo to high readiness, in line with the Typhoon Force readiness cycle, and with it conduct the first swing-role armament practice camp (APC) that the RAF has achieved for some years.



This saw formations fire an ASRAAM, employ a Paveway 4 precision-guided bomb, and fire the aircraft's 27mm cannon during a single sortie. This was an excellent end-to-end test of the platform's weapons systems, and highlighted the Typhoon's ability to switch from one discipline to another.

October saw us deploy to Albacete in Spain, now the home of TLP training. This was in order to take part in Ex TRIDENT JUNCTURE, a NATO-led Exercise which involved 30 nations, 36,000 personnel, over 140 aircraft and 60 ships. 1(F) Squadron, together with the Tornados of 31 Sqn and the AAR Voyagers of 101 Sqn took part in large COMAOs, switching between Air Interdiction, Offensive Counter Air and Defensive Counter Air sorties, often taking the role of Mission Commander. We also conducted Close Air Support sorties, and Air Combat training with local Spanish Eurofighters and FA18s, and Turkish F16s. The Typhoon helmet mounted sight and ASRAAM combination proved to be a potent mix.



After returning from Spain in November, the Squadron was placed on very high readiness to provide a deployed air security presence. In the end our services were not required but it did provide the opportunity for a good recce to the Mediterranean.

However while still at high readiness, the dreadful Islamic Militant attacks in Paris brought the question of Syrian airstrikes to the forefront of UK politics. Following the Parliamentary vote on 2nd Dec 2015, 1(F) Sqn deployed just 10 hours later to RAF Akrotiri. Conducting air strikes immediately on arrival, the Sqn undertook Close Air Support, Dynamic Targeting and Air Interdiction sorties by day and night across Iraq and Syria until the middle of April. This was a highly kinetic period of activity with hundreds of strike sorties during the deployment.



We returned to a balmy (!) RAF Lossiemouth for a summer of Quick Reaction Alert and a period of regeneration. We welcomed some new pilots, including a French Exchange Officer, and managed to work them all quickly through their combat ready work-up syllabus. We also had the delights of a STANEVAL Assurance visit, which pleasingly awarded us with an ABOVE AVERAGE report – only the second time in the Typhoon's Service that this has been achieved. (The first being awarded to 1(F) Sqn in 2014 – of course!)



1(F) Sqn makes it onto TMS Twitter

We also took the opportunity to conduct some Force Development activity in London, which provided an excellent opportunity to maintain esprit-de-corps. We held a fantastic joint 1(F) / 31 Sqn 'SHADER Supper' at the Barbers and Surgeons Livery Company, where it was superb to dine with some Association members. The following days included a tour of the House of Lords; attendance at the CDS handover ceremony at MOD Main Building; steaks at the US Air Attaché's residence; the presentation of a Squadron cake to the Test Match Special Team at Lords (during which time we recruited Henry Blofeld as a Sqn honorary member); the Tower of London Ceremony of the Keys and a rooftop Jacuzzi bar.



We were also given the privilege of intercepting the very first RAF F35 formation as it flew into UK airspace in order to support RIAT and Farnborough airshows over the summer. We launched 2 Typhoons to the Outer Hebrides where they joined with 3 Lightning II aircraft en-route from the US, and flew in formation with the RAF's 5th Generation aircraft.



The Squadron supported the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford for a glorious weekend in July, where we set up a cottage industry providing all of society with 1(F) Squadron merchandise, and flew daily sorties in formation with the F35 and Red Arrows.



In late September the Squadron set off to Exercise BERSAMA LIMA in Malaysia. As part of the Five Power Defence Arrangement (Malaysia, Singapore, UK, Australia, New Zealand) the UK contributes annually to this large Joint Exercise. For a period we became 1 (Central India) Squadron after a longer than anticipated stay in Delhi during the trail, but after making it to Malaysia we conducted some superb training with both the Royal Malaysian Air Force and Royal Australian Air Forces. In particular the opportunity to get familiar with the tail end of SU30s during Air Combat Training was of superb tactical value. We also had to step-in at short notice after the Red Arrows cancelled their flypast over the Petronas Towers due to poor weather up country, with a 1(F) Sqn VIC flypast in front of the Malaysian VIPs and British High Commissioner.



So it has been another fascinating year and an excellent chapter in the Squadron's illustrious history. I hope very much that you see some of the spirit, ethos and achievement from your own time on the Squadron evident in the enthusiasm and dedication of the serving members. You are always enormously welcome to visit, explore the history room, meet some of the current team, and perhaps sample something refreshing from the Robin Olds Bar.

OC 1(F) Sqn

In Omnibus Princeps



AAR with a KC10

OP SHADER assets mark HM the Queen's 90th Birthday



A visit to the Typhoon detachment by the CFACC, Gen Brown

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US Commander in charge of @CJTFOIR air campaign to defeat #Daesh thanks crews at @RoyalAirForce Akrotiri #CJTFOIR

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Rt Hon Michael Fallon meeting the team

