

# 1 (Fighter) Squadron: First In All Things

Among the RAF units that fought the Battle of Britain, Number 1 (Fighter) Squadron is one of the few that continues in the same role. Today equipped with the Eurofighter Typhoon, the squadron is stationed at RAF Lossiemouth, Moray. Paul E Eden recounts its history

**I**t is a great privilege to serve on 1(F) Squadron. We are the oldest military flying squadron in existence, and every member of the team is proud of our heritage and history, and determined to maintain the high standards and finest traditions of those who have gone before.

"This is a particularly poignant year, since it marks not only the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, but also the centenary of 1(F) Squadron's first operational deployment during World War One (as a Royal Flying Corps' squadron). Between March and June 1915 we flew hundreds of combat sorties over the Western Front, conducting bombing, reconnaissance, and air

combat (dogfighting), so while we think of today's multi-role capability as being a new concept, in fact it has been at the heart of Combat Air since its very inception," says Wing Commander Mike 'Sooty' Sutton, who took over as Officer Commanding 1(F) Squadron in October 2014.

On May 13, 1912 the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) had come into being and No. 1 Company, Air Battalion, Royal Engineers was redesignated as 1 Squadron, RFC. Its first equipment – three airships – arrived in the autumn and the squadron continued as a lighter-than-air unit until May 1, 1914. After a period of working up, it deployed to France with RAF B.E.8 and Avro 504 aircraft in February 1915.

Reconnaissance was the primary mission, continuing when the squadron re-equipped with Moranes from December. In March 1916 it took its first fighters, Nieuport 17 C.1 biplanes, with which to defend its Moranes. Thus began the unit's tenure as a fighter squadron, emphasised in January 1917 when it relinquished the reconnaissance role altogether. Air fighting was now the primary concern, although enemy trenches were machine-gunned and bombed during the Battle of Messines that summer. By the end of the year, with improved Nieuport 27s on strength, 1 Sqn's scoreboard for aerial victories stood at 200.

Paveway IV has introduced a precision laser/GPS-guided weapon to the Typhoon's armoury. No. 1(F) Sqn has taken a key role in introducing the capability. © UK MoD Crown Copyright 2015

