

1475 (DULWICH) SQUADRON ATC

COMMANDING OFFICER'S END OF YEAR REPORT 2007

BY

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT KEVIN MEHMET RAFVR(T)



1. I am delighted to be able to report that 2007 has been an exceptional year for 1475 Squadron. In every aspect of training, we have excelled, but uniquely 2007 has been a very special year for 1475. The Squadron has been showered with praise following the award of two very prestigious and prized awards. In October of 2006, The then Controller of the RAF Benevolent Fund, Air Chief Marshal Sir David Cousins announced that 1475 Squadron would be awarded the Fund's highest meritorious award, its Poignard, in recognition of our fund raising initiatives and support for the Fund. In the RAF Benevolent Fund's history, 1475 Squadron became the ninth



recipient of the Poignard and the only cadet unit to be so honoured. In recognising that great honour, the Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Gordon Moulds authorised the award of the Air Training Corps's highest unit award, the Certificate of Merit to 1475 Squadron. The last time the Certificate of Merit was awarded was in 1992, and that again was to 1475 Squadron. 1475 is now the only unit in the Corps to hold two such Certificates.

2. The Certificate of Merit and the RAF Benevolent Fund Poignard was presented to the Squadron in the grounds of the magnificent Dulwich College on Wednesday evening, 30th May 2007 before an invited audience of 400 guests made up of cadets' parents, friends, former cadets, civic dignitaries which included the Mayors of Southwark and Lewisham, representatives of the City of London and senior military officers. We were honoured to have as the Reviewing Officer the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Torpy, a Haberdasher. The Poignard was presented to the Squadron by Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright, Controller RAF Benevolent Fund. The Certificate of Merit was presented by Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Torpy. Also present was Air Chief Marshal Sir David Cousins, Air-Vice Marshal Chris Harper, the Squadron President, The Ven Canon (Air Vice-Marshal) Robin Turner, Squadron Senior Chaplain, and Air Commodore Gordon Moulds, Commandant Air Cadets.



We were privileged to have had the company of five air marshals and one Air Commodore, making six Air Rank officers at the presentation parade. Also, amongst the senior officers was The Revd (Gp Capt) Richard Lee, Squadron Chaplain. It was pointed out to me that our Air Rank guests totalling 15 stars, certainly made the event a "*star studded night!*"

3. The Squadron received commendations praising our work from The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of the City of London Alderman Sir John Stuttard and the Prime Minister The Rt Hon Tony Blair. During the post parade reception, we were also honoured by the London Welsh Male Voice Choir with a presentation of a plaque to the Squadron to mark our recent achievements.



The 30th May 2007, by any definition, was a historic day for 1475 Squadron. The aftermath has been amazing. Following on from the parade the Squadron was received at Mansion House by the

Lord Mayor. We received an invitation to visit Botswana. The Corporation of London has arranged “work experience” projects for the cadets. We have been invited to mount the Guard of Honour for the Lord Mayor on his show which is watched by 3 million people on BBC1 national television.

4. In June, 21 cadets representing the Squadron were received by the Lord Mayor at Mansion House in recognition and appreciation of 1475’s contribution to the City of London.



Also, in June the Squadron Commander was honoured by the League of the Order of Mercy with the award of the League’s medal for services to young people in the community.

Finally, the Squadron got a quarter of a page (24) mention in the Chief of the Air Staff’s report to Her Majesty the Queen.



MEMBERSHIP

5. 2007 saw an increase in cadet membership to 56



enrolled cadets and a cadre of 20 recruits. The 30 May presentation parade consisted of 76 cadets on parade, one sick and excused duty, and one deployed on as microphone orderly. At the close of the year we saw a drop to 46 cadets and 12 recruits, but with the round of recruiting visits to schools in January 2008, we will be poised to make good those losses without too much difficulty. I am happy to report that the Squadron is healthy in that respect.

CAMPS

6. The Squadron deployed two cadets to RAF Leeming, 12 to RAF Odiham on Summer Camps in July and 20 cadets to Longmoor Camp for two weeks as guests of Wiltshire ACF in August. The Squadron also undertook three weekend camps to Crowborough. In August at Hullavington we had a weekend camp which combined DEA expeditionary training with Gliding as guests of 621 VGS.

7. Two cadets, Sgt D Davila and Cpl H Foley (this year’s Joyce Scholars) attended the full Outward Bound Trust Classic (21 days) Course in July. I am most grateful to Mr Bob Joyce for his continued support in that area of activity.

8. A weekend camp in August saw 12 cadets undertake forestry conservation work in Hertfordshire as part of the service phase of the DEA Scheme.

FLYING

8. We have done very well in this area of training. It has been the Squadron's policy to grab flying opportunities where and whenever we can. We will claim unfilled AEF slots and where necessary travelling out of our area of operations to get more flying. In that regard, we travelled to No 621 VGS based at Hullavington and managed over 100 launches over the August bank holiday weekend, achieving 12 GICs. Two cadets, FS J Hay and Sgt S Coulstock in July completed their Gliding Scholarships and were awarded their silver wings. Eight cadets applied for Flying Scholarships in September.

10. Flying and Gliding still remains the highest priority for the Squadron, and I see no reason for that to change in the near future. Flying remains our number one priority.

TRAINING

11. The Squadron still continues to provide its cadets a varied and challenging programme of training to meet its aims.

12. 20 Cadets completed their basic first aid training course and were awarded their badges. 12 cadets have completed their Bronze DEA awards and are now working on their silver. We have silver and gold awards in the pipe line. All cadets over the age of 14 years are taking part in the DEA Scheme.

13. Twelve, six, and four cadets passed their Leading, Senior and Staff Cadet Classification, respectively, in November. Eight cadets passed out from No 21 NCO Course and hosted a graduation dinner for their parents and invited guests at the RAF Club in June.

14. The focus of Squadron training is still on developing Confidence, Communication, Courage and Team Working in the cadets. We are now seeing some excellent results and those cadets who have been promoted to NCO ranks are playing a greater part in running the unit. The Squadron receives excellent support from Mr Christopher Howell, a management consultant, life coach and trainer in the concept of emotional intelligence. Mr Howell's contribution has added a very effective dimension to the Squadron's developmental training initiatives.

SPORT (AND COMPETITIONS)

15. Resounding successes here! We continue to hold our own on the sports field achieving first, second and third places. The year started with the five-a-side competition where the Squadron under the leadership of our Captain of Football, Sgt Stephen Coulstock, retained the title of London Wing Champions for the second year, beating 30 teams in the process. The team then went on to win the London and South East Region (six wings of approximately 300 squadrons) championship, again for the second year in succession.

16. The Squadron was doing very well in the Athletics Championships, before the whole event was rained off and no results published. However, the Wing's team for the region championship consisted of eight 1475 Cadets. Two cadets represented the Region.

17. The Squadron drill team achieved a joint third place and the NCO IC, FS J Hay achieved 7th place in the Drill Instructor competition. Obviously, we need to do some work in this area.

However, the competition consisted of 28 teams. I am pleased with the results, but note that there is room for improvement.

18. The Squadron won the London Wing Swimming championship and four Cadets, Mulvaney, Glennie (Mi), Crane and Sgt Glennie (Ma), Squadron Captain of Swimming, went on to represent the Air Training Corps, winning their Corps Blues.

19. We saw some improvement in the Cross Country competition. FS Hay, Captain of Cross Country, with Sgt Coulstock, Sqn PTI, produced a team that built on last years results and pushed the Squadron's placing from within the top ten to within the top four; certainly in keeping with the Squadron Motto. We will work to winning the championship outright, next year.

RAF PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2007

20. Another first here. 1475 is the first Squadron to enter, let alone win a prize in the Royal Air Force Photography Competition and this year that is exactly what happened. David Griffiths, the Squadron staff photographer, representing the unit won the (Peli UK sponsored) Digital Imaging



Category (G) of the competition with his entry entitled "Remembrance." Mr Griffiths was presented Peli UK products worth £250 by the Chief of the Air Staff at the prize winners'



ceremony on 16 October 2007 at the Ministry of

Defence. Mr Griffiths, on behalf of the Squadron, generously donated the image to the RAF Benevolent Fund with a limited edition print run of 150 for sale at £50 each. Details are published on the Fund's website:- <http://www.raf-benfund.org.uk/trading/Scripts/default.asp>

CEREMONIAL

21. The opening paragraphs cover the Squadron high profile parade of 2007.

22. In September, 12 cadets represented the Squadron at St Giles Church, Camberwell for the annual act of commemoration of the battle of High Wood (1916). In addition to that, the Squadron led Lewisham Borough's remembrance parade in November, and on the day before carried out its duty as the Heraldic Banner Bearers to the Lord Mayor in the City of London.

23. On 30 November, five cadets acted as ecclesiastic mace bearers at the service of thanksgiving for the life of Air Marshal The Lord Garden at St Clement Danes church. Lord Garden was a good friend and keen supporter of the Squadron and will be greatly missed.

24. The Squadron annual dinner, our ladies guest night, once again took place jointly with the Curzon Club on 6 October at the RAF Club. 70 members of the Squadron, Curzon Club and invited guests enjoyed an entertaining evening, with music provided by the Curzon Club Quartet. Our guest of honour was AM Sir Rob Wright with Councillor Barrie Anderson, Chairman Lewisham Council, the principal guest. Air Chief Marshal Sir David Cousins was also there.

BAND

25. The Band continues to flourish and the cadets enjoy being part of it. The band under its new Drum Major, Cpl D Copping led the Lewisham remembrance parade spectacularly. The Band NCOs have taken steps to renovate a number of instruments that were in need of attention and we should, in the new year, be in a position to provide more instruments to the cadet

bandsmen. All members of the squadron are members of the band. This arrangement also serves to provide each cadet the minimum 25 hours of project training for their classification training.

AFFILIATIONS

26. This year also saw the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers elevate 1475 Squadron from associate to full affiliation. We have always received excellent support from the Company since receiving their Colour in 1991.

27. The Royal Society of St George (City of London Branch) is also a supporter of the unit and each year appoints the St George's Cadet of the Year Award and hosts him or her to be a guest at the annual St George's Day Banquet. This is indeed a magnificent platform where the cadet and by extension the Squadron gets tremendous exposure within the City of London. This year's winner is Cpl David Copping.

28. We continue to enjoy excellent associations with our affiliated schools; Forest Hill School and St Thomas Apostle College, now in its 36th year of association. Those schools provide the mainstay of our recruits. Although, our association with Haberdashers' Aske's Hatch College is still intact, we have stopped our recruiting visits there since a CCF unit was established in the school in September 2006. The Squadron has been encouraged by the Haberdashers' Company to develop ties with the CCF unit and this is in our strategic considerations for the future.

29. The Curzon Club continues to function, in a very loose sense of the term, as a "*league of friends*" for the Squadron where CC members provide excellent support for us. The Highwoodians also provide support, but I want to develop this more and have it established as a more organised association.

RAF BENEVOLENT FUND

30. Once again we have publicly re-affirmed our commitment to support the RAF Benevolent Fund. This saw the Squadron produce our, now fourth, Jack Lane memorial



Christmas concert in aid of the Fund featuring the London Welsh Male Voice Choir. Miss Ann-Louise Straker offered her services as the guest soprano, and whilst the figures are yet to be worked out, it does look as though we have raised another £6000* for the Fund. The

concert was on 13th December 2007 at St Clement Danes Church in the

presence of ACM Sir David Cousins, AM Sir Rob Wright, and we were delighted to have present Air Commodore P P Reddy, Air Advisor Indian High Commission. There was an excellent turnout and judging from the feedback received, the evening was most successful and enjoyed by all.



CONCLUSION

31. The Squadron is in very good shape and I am most grateful to my staff for their support and loyalty in making the Squadron what it is. Their commitment and hard work never fails to amaze me. Such dedication is the key to the Squadron's excellent standing and success. I must also lavish praise on my cadets for their amazing loyalty and dedication for their Squadron which is the engine of their drive and determination to succeed that enables us to achieve so much.

32. I must acknowledge with gratitude and appreciation the support that 1475 Squadron received from its governing committee, The City of London, in particular the Haberdashers' Company and the Lord Mayor. Forest Hill School and St Thomas Apostle College. The London Borough of Lewisham, and all our other generous benefactors; they know who they are.

33. 1475 Squadron holds unique appointments, patronages and honours and is by any definition a remarkable unit, but all that cannot count for anything if we do not play our part in the community and in particular within the Royal Air Force family; 'our family!' I am grateful for all the support we receive in helping us to fulfil that role. It is a privilege to command such a Squadron.

KEVIN MEHMET
Flight Lieutenant
Officer Commanding
31 December 2007

**The concert accounts were completed on 7 Jan 08 and the sum raised amounted to £6184.75*



*1475 (Dulwich) Squadron Air Training Corps
30 May 2007*

CERTAMUS VINCERE