

1475 (DULWICH) SQUADRON ATC

COMMANDING OFFICER'S END OF YEAR REPORT 2008

BY

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1. Last year was a historic and magnanimous year for 1475 Squadron. On 30 May 2007, the Squadron was presented two most prestigious awards; the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund's Poignard and the Air Training Corps's Certificate of Merit. During a meeting with a very close



friend and a generous supporter of the Squadron, I was asked how I was going to follow those successes of 2007. That was a very interesting question indeed. I should like to record my response here in my annual report. Those achievements are unique and tend to come around very rarely, so the Squadron is not seeking to win more awards for the sake of it, but rather we will continue the work we do and if that attracts accolades, then will be only too pleased to receive them. However, one cannot ignore such awards, and since being honoured by the RAF Benevolent Fund and the Air

Training Corps, the Squadron's profile has increased dramatically. I have made it my aim to build on our success. That is to say, during 2009 I will exploit our new found status and the dividend flowing from that to initiate new projects to provide a more effective training package for our cadets.

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

2. The year 2008 was the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force, our parent service. We were delighted to have been able to join the commemorations by dedicating our bi-annual concert to the Royal Air Force. Representatives of the Squadron were able to attend the Service of Commemoration in April at St Clement Danes, the Central Church of the RAF and the Presentation of New Colours by Her Majesty the Queen at RAF Fairford in June. In spite of very tight budgets and very busy schedules, I am amazed at the level of support the Squadron gets from the RAF. I am grateful to the stations, squadrons, units and our RAF Service helpers for all their support. It is most appreciated and we are very grateful.



MEMBERSHIP

3. 2008 is a good example of building on our successes of the previous year. We saw an increase in cadet membership from 56 enrolled cadets and a cadre of 20 recruits to 104 cadets and two recruits. That figure is likely to increase when the next recruit intake is admitted in February 2009. 1475 Squadron is now the second largest in London Wing and one of the largest in the Corps. We were delighted to welcome to the Squadron the Regional Commandant, Gp

Capt Les Hakin OBE on one of his routine training visits on 12 November. Gp Capt Hakin was pleasantly surprised at the almost 100% increase in our membership. On final parade, he congratulated the Squadron and commended us for our success in recruiting. I am happy to report that the Squadron is healthy in that respect. Sadly, our long serving Squadron Warrant Officer, WO Mark Bird left us to take command of 56 (Woolwich) Squadron in May. Our loss of course, is 56 Squadron's gain. WO Bird's contribution to 1475 has been immense and on behalf of all at High Wood Barracks, I wish him and 56 all the very best. However, we did gain the services of Flt Lt Thomas Hawkins RAF (Rtd) who joined us as a Hon Civilian Instructor, taking on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme portfolio. I bid Mr Hawkins a warm welcome back (as he was on the staff before and during his RAF service) and wish him every success with his appointment.



4. I was very pleased to have FS Ben Wiles promoted in August to Cadet Warrant Officer; our first in five years! Unfortunately, his appointment was short lived as up on going to university, CWO Wiles joined the OTC and consequently had to resign from the ATC. I wish Officer Cadet Wiles all the best for the future. However, on the plus side, he will be attached to us as a service helper, to assist the Squadron where possible.

CAMPS

5. The Squadron deployed five cadets to RAF Aldergrove in October, 12 to RAF Waddington and two cadets to RAF Honington on Summer Camps in July. The Squadron also undertook three weekend camps to Crowborough. In August at Hullavington, we had a weekend camp which combined DofE expeditionary training with gliding as guests of 621 VGS.

6. Three cadets, Sgt L Fearon and FS J Glenny (this year's Joyce Scholars) and Cdt H Ward attended the full Outward Bound Trust Classic (21 days) Course at Ullswater in July. I am most grateful to Mr Bob Joyce for his continued support in that area of activity and to Mr John Taylor for his sponsorship.

7. Six SNCOs attended a Camp at Sennybridge, Wales as guests of Colfes School CCF in October. The Squadron SNCOs took part in weapon handling and infantry skills training. During the camp they also completed a food handling and hygiene course and received their competency certificates. We sent two cadets on an overseas expedition to Sri Lanka and two on a Youth Sail Training Cruise in the North Sea. Two members of Squadron staff were selected as leaders to take cadets from London Wing on expedition to South Africa. Five of our cadets are on the expedition which will take place in July 2009.

FLYING

8. Once again, 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 travel 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 140 gliding launches over the August bank holiday weekend, achieving 12 GICs. Two cadets, FS J Hay and Sgt S Coulstock were awarded Flying Scholarships and will start their flying training in the Summer of

2009. In the April, Sgt H Foley and in July Sgts L Fearon and M Shah completed their Gliding Scholarships and were awarded their “wings.” Sgt Fearon was invited to become a Flight Staff Cadet on 615 Volunteer Gliding Squadron and to continue to advanced gliding training. Sgt Fearon will take up his appointment as Staff Cadet in January 2009. Ten cadets applied for Flying Scholarships in November. Including those on annual camps we managed to secure 74 AEF sorties.

9. In April, at the invitation of Mr Paul Fellows five cadets were selected to join “The Squadron” (<http://www.removablemedia.com/northweald/squadron.htm>) for a day at North Weald for their Formation Flying Week. The cadets saw how formation flying and aerobatic manoeuvres were planned and executed. As the day came to a close the five cadets were treated to a flight each in high performance display aircraft where some amazing aerobatic manoeuvres were undertaken. I record here my thanks to Mr Fellows for organising the event and the staff at “The Squadron” for hosting us.

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 is what 1475 is all about.

TRAINING

11. The Squadron still continues to provide its cadets with 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. Two cadets have completed their Bronze DofE 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 DofE Award Scheme. FS Stephen Coulstock was selected for the HQAC Junior Leaders Course which runs from Sep 08 to Jun 09.

13. 22, four, and six cadets passed their Leading, Senior and Staff Cadet Classification, respectively, in November. 13 cadets passed out from No 22 NCO Course. They hosted a graduation dinner presided over most ably by Cadet Cpl Sarah Crane, the course leader, for their parents and invited guests at the RAF Club in June. Colonel Clinton Riley from the CVQO, Cadet Training Centre Frimley Park attended as the guest of honour with Mr Christopher Howell, consultant to the Squadron on management and leadership training as principal guest. No 23 NCO Course kicked off in November with 21 out of 30 candidates selected as ready to undergo the six months training programme.



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 SNCO ranks are playing a greater part in running the unit. The Squadron continues to receive first class support from Mr Christopher Howell, a management consultant, business 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. Sport is a very important element of the Squadron’s training policy. We believe it is the key to building team work and confidence in the development of our cadets. Therefore it is not surprising that we have resounding successes in this area of training and a great improvement on

last year's performance! The Squadron devotes 25% of its training programme to sport. 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, FS Stephen Coulstock, retained the title of London Wing Champions for the third year, beating 30 teams in the process.

16. The Squadron Athletics Squad consisting of 29 cadets under the Captain of Athletics FS Jake Hay took on 23 squadrons and won the 2008 London Wing Athletics Championship in May. Ten cadets went on to represent the Wing and four represented the Region.

17. The Squadron achieved 6th place (out of 29 teams) in the annual drill competition and the NCO IC, FS J Hay achieved 6th place in the Drill Instructor competition. Obviously, we need to do some work in this area. However, those of whom attended our ceremonial parades know that our standard of drill is excellent. I am, therefore, somewhat puzzled as to why we do not achieve higher marks and whilst I am pleased with the results, there is room for improvement in the area.



18. The Squadron won the London Wing Swimming Championship in September and two cadets, FS Glenny, Captain of Swimming, and Cpl Crane, went on to represent the Air Training Corps, with FS Glenny winning two Corps Blues and being crowned the Corps breaststroke champion.

19. We saw a most welcome improvement in the Cross Country competition. FS Hay, Captain of Cross Country, with Sgt Coulstock, Sqn PTI, produced a team that built on last year's results and pushed the Squadron's placing from within the top ten in 2006 to within the top four in 2007 and last year to runners up; in keeping with the Squadron motto. The Squadron was placed 2nd in the Championship, 2nd in boys overall, and 2nd in the U15, U17 and U20 age classes; with 4th and 6th respectively in the Jnr and Snr girls' classes We will work towards winning the championship outright, next year.

RAF PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2008

20. Following last years success, Mr David Griffiths our appointed staff photographer entered the 2008 RAF Photographic Competition and on this occasion achieved a second place for the Squadron. However, we were delighted to learn that the RAF Benevolent Fund had selected two of Mr Griffiths's photographs; *Remembrance* (2007 competition winner) and an image from the our 2007 Christmas concert to go on the cover of its 2008 Christmas cards. Mr Griffiths continues to produce excellent pictures for the Squadron which is an ideal way to record our



achievements and activities for posterity. Mr Griffiths also produced another image; *Heritage* priced at £25 per print for the RAF Benevolent Fund which is being sold as a limited edition print with all proceeds going to the Fund. I am grateful to Noritsu for sponsoring the printing of *Heritage*. Details are

published on the RAF Benevolent Fund's website:-

<http://www.raf-benfund.org.uk/trading/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=214>

CEREMONIAL

21. The Squadron's first ceremonial commitment was to provide the four Cadet NCOs to carry the ecclesiastic maces at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Air Training Corps in February at the Central Church of the Royal Air Force, St Clement Danes. The four NCOs conducted themselves in an exemplary fashion.

22. On 11 June, the Squadron turned out a full Guard of Honour to welcome our President, Air Vice-Marshal Christopher Harper, AOC No 1 Gp RAF, on his visit to the unit. 57 cadets were on parade. The President spent the evening touring the HQ and chatting to the cadets. He conducted a leadership seminar with the students of No 22 NCO Course before hosting a question and answer session on final parade.

23. On 15 September, the Squadron paraded with our neighbouring unit, 78 Cdt Company ACF at the High Wood war memorial to mark the occasion of its restoration. Councillor Lewis Robinson presided. Members of the public were invited back to High Wood Barracks for a reception, sponsored by the London Borough of Southwark. As in previous years, the Squadron Band (consisting of 52 Cadet Bandsmen) led Lewisham Borough's remembrance parade in November. On the day before 30 cadets carried out our, now well established, duty as the Heraldic Banner Bearers to the Lord Mayor in the City of London. It rained the whole day, and I was most impressed how well the cadets conducted themselves in spite of getting soaked to the skin and being ready for duty the following day in Lewisham.



24. The Squadron annual dinner, our ladies guest night, once again took place jointly with the Curzon Club on 4 October at the RAF Club. 72 members of the Squadron, Curzon Club and invited guests enjoyed an entertaining evening, with music provided by the Curzon Club Quartet and a piper from the Scots Guards. Our guest of honour was Air Commodore Prasad P Reddy of the Indian Air Force, representing His Excellency the High Commissioner for India accompanied by his lady wife and our principal guest was Air Commodore Ian Stewart, Commandant Air Cadets, RAF Cranwell accompanied by his lady wife too. During the dinner, the Squadron Secretary, Dr Anthony Smoker handed a cheque for £6185.75 being the sum raised at our Christmas concert on 13 December 2007 to Air Cmdre Stewart to present, on behalf of the Squadron, to Wing Commander Earnie Bohm, Director of Planning and Policy who was representing Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright, Controller RAF Benevolent Fund.



25. On 12 November, we hosted Group Captain Les Hakin, Regional Commandant London and South East. He was escorted by the Squadron *Head Boy*, FS Jake Hay and Cpl Sarah Crane. He toured the unit and spoke to virtually each and every cadet. He expressed to me how impressed he was with what we were doing at 1475 and commended our efforts, in particular breaking the 100 mark with our numerical strength. He congratulated the Squadron during his final parade address to cadets and presented the newly qualified staff cadets with their landyards.

26. Wednesday 10 December saw our year close with a spectacular Beating Retreat ceremony performed by the Squadron Band. 62 Cadet Bandsmen performed a series of slow and quick marches to 150 invited guests consisting of cadets' parents. Sqn Ldr Colin Gale, London Wing Band Officer was present, representing OC London Wing.

BAND

27. The Band continues to flourish and the cadets enjoy being part of it. The band led the Lewisham remembrance parade magnificently. Last year I reported that we were increasing the number of instruments for the band. This indeed we did with the purchase of new mouth pieces, bell-lyres and replacements skins for the drums. This was all much needed equipment to cater for the increased numbers in the band. As a matter of Squadron policy, all cadets join the band. This arrangement also serves to provide each cadet the minimum 25 hours of project training for their classification training. The Band had the “last say” (as it were) of 2008 by performing the Beating Retreat ceremony on our last parade of the year on Wednesday 10 December led by our newly appointed Drum Major, FS Jonathan Glenny.

AFFILIATIONS

28. We continue to receive support from the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers. In August and September, the Company supported two training visits to Outward Bound Trust’s Ullswater Centre and Arnhem for the Commanding Officer. The purpose of the visit to Ullswater was to see first hand the excellent training 1475 cadets receive on the OB Classic Courses. The Squadron was invited to take part in the Arnhem commemorative marches. I went along to see if that was something 1475 should be doing. I shall discuss the initiative with my staff before reaching a decision, but the event certainly is something we should consider offering the older cadets. I was very grateful to my guide who made sure I was at the right place at the right time during my stay in Arnhem.



29. 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 and hosts him or her to be a guest at their annual St George’s Day Banquet. This is indeed is a splendid platform where the cadet and by extension the Squadron gets tremendous exposure within the City of London. This year’s winner was FS Daniel Davila.

30. We continue to enjoy excellent associations with our affiliated schools; Forest Hill School and St Thomas Apostle College, now in its 37th year of association. Those schools provide the mainstay of our recruits. Although, our association with Haberdashers’ Aske’s Hatcham College is still intact, we did stop our recruiting visits there since a CCF unit was established in the school in September 2006. However, during a brief discussion with the College’s contingent commander, Captain Martin Hudson, we agreed that there was a possibility that 1475 could be of assistance to Hatcham by way of providing the air element. Hatcham CCF does not have an air section. This initiative is in keeping the Haberdashers’ Company’s wishes to develop ties with the Captain Hudson’s CCF unit and this is in our strategic considerations for the 2009.



31. 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, the Squadron “old-boys” association, also provide support. I reported last year that I wanted to develop this in to a more formal organisation. However, I regret that I have to report this year that matters have not moved very far as I am having difficulty in finding committee officers to organise and run the association. This is in my “in-tray” and an ongoing project!

RAF BENEVOLENT FUND

32. At our annual dinner in October, we once again publicly reaffirmed our commitment to support the RAF Benevolent Fund, when presenting to the Fund the proceeds (£6185.75) of our,

now fourth, Jack Lane memorial Christmas concert in aid of the Fund featuring the London Welsh Male Voice Choir with guest soloist, Miss Ann-Louise Straker. In return, I am most grateful for the interest and the support we receive from the Fund. We hope to repeat our 2007 success by staging another concert, our 5th, and already plans are being made with my first meeting with the principals on 22 January 2009. The date is set for Thursday 10 December 2009. That could change, but it is the date we are aiming for.

CONCLUSION

33. The Squadron is in very good shape and we have certainly built on our successes of 2007. Whilst acknowledging the support we receive from many a quarter, none of what we do, and do well, could be possible without the dedication and commitment of my Staff. I am most grateful to my two officers; my deputy Flt Lt Matthew Impey and my Adjutant Fg Off Richard Wash for their support and loyalty in making the Squadron what it is. Their 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 tremendous loyalty and dedication to their Squadron. It is their loyalty and dedication that is the engine which drives the Squadron to succeed and enables us to achieve so much. I must also pay tribute to the Squadron NCO Cadre led by the Squadron *Head Boy*, FS Jake Hay. Their skill in managing so large a number of cadets is commendable and I thank them all for the way they carry out their duties as junior managers and as role models to the junior cadets.

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.

34. Finally, as I was preparing to write this report, I read the news in the "air rank appointments list 09/08" dated 19 Dec 08 that our President will be appointed Deputy Commander of NATO Joint Force Command on promotion to the rank of Air Marshal with effect from 31 March 2009. We were all absolutely delighted and very pleased for Air Marshal Harper and so on behalf of my officers, cadets and all members of the Squadron, past and present, I record my hearty congratulations and wish our President every success with his new responsibilities.



KEVIN MEHMET
Flight Lieutenant
Officer Commanding
31 December 2008



"Escort to the Squadron Colour"
A watercolour by the late John Burchill Esq

1475 (Dulwich) Squadron Air Training Corps

Serving the Royal Air Force Family



The Squadron's Aim

To develop in its cadets, confidence, courage, communication and teamwork through a host of practical initiatives centred on aviation, sporting competition, adventure training and service to the community. The 1475 Squadron's commitment to competition is in keeping with its spirit and character justly summed up in its motto: Certamus Vincere (pronounced kert-a-mus win-ker-e) Latin for "Strive to Win".

CERTAMUS VINCERE!