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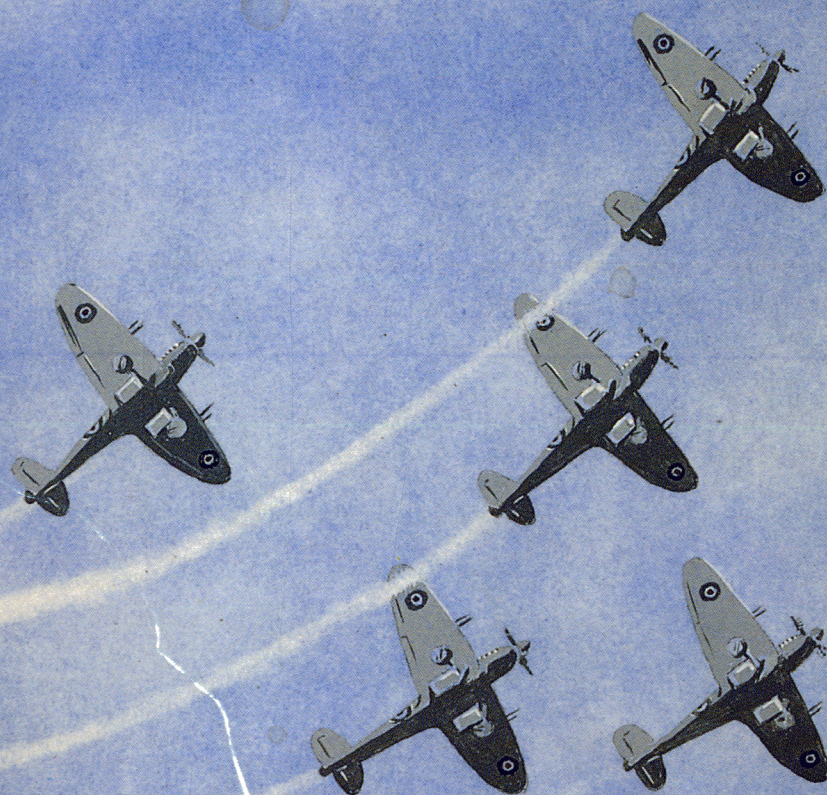
Colin Hinson

In the village of Blunham, Bedfordshire.



The Royal Air Forces Association

THE SQUADRONS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE



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OF THE
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Danbury Mint

Danbury Mint wishes to express its gratitude to Francis K. Mason FR Hist S, AR Ae S, RAF (Retd)
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No 1 Squadron

One of the first four Royal Flying Corps squadrons formed in May 1912, No 1 Squadron was paradoxically only the third to fly aeroplanes, having assumed the activities of No 1 Airship Company, Air Battalion, Royal Engineers. The responsibility for airship operations was transferred to the Naval Wing on 1st January 1914 and it was not until May that year that No 1 Squadron received a collection of light training aeroplanes. It continued training until February 1915 when it moved to France as a Corps reconnaissance unit, flying Avro 504s over the Western Front. Early in 1916 one flight embarked on the air combat rôle with a small number of Nieuport 17s, although reconnaissance remained the Squadron's primary rôle until the spring of 1917. Participating in the great battle of Arras with Nieuport 17s, No 1 Squadron began receiving Nieuport 27s in August as the reconnaissance duties were assumed by other squadrons. By the beginning of 1918, when the S.E.5A arrived in service, No 1 was a dedicated fighting scout squadron, with more than 220 enemy aircraft destroyed to its credit. S.E.5As remained with the Squadron until March 1919, it having taken on the rôle of bomber escort during the final months of the War.

Disbanded in the United Kingdom on 20th January 1920, No 1 Squadron was re-formed the following day at Risalpur, India, flying Sopwith Snipes and Nieuport Nighthawks in the fighter rôle, but moving to Hinaidi, Iraq, on 1st May 1921 to assist in policing in that theatre as part of the British mandate following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

The Squadron was disbanded at Hinaidi in November 1926, only to be reformed once more at Tangmere the following February with Armstrong Siddeley Siskin fighters. Hawker Fury I biplane fighters were revived in February 1932, these being retained until the autumn of 1938 when Hawker Hurricanes were delivered.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, No 1 Squadron was sent to France as part of the Advanced Air Striking Force; it was to be heavily engaged during the Battle of France in May and June of 1940, being tasked with covering the evacuation of Allied forces from the Biscay ports before returning to the United Kingdom.

No 1 Squadron fought during the early stages of the Battle of Britain, mainly in No 11 Group, before being withdrawn early in September 1940 to the Midlands to re-group and re-train in the night fighter rôle, still flying Hurricanes. As Fighter Command assumed the offensive, No 1 Squadron went over to night intruder attacks, converting to Typhoons for daylight bombing sweeps over France. Shortly before the Normandy landings in 1944 it changed to Spitfire IXBs and flew bombing attacks in support of those landings and shortly afterwards joined the defences against the German flying bomb attacks on south-east England.

After the War No 1 Squadron flew early Meteor III jet fighters for a short time, but in 1947 it was relegated to training duties for a year. In the following year it returned to Meteors and converted to the transonic Hunter fighter in 1955, successive versions of that beautiful aeroplane being flown in the tactical support rôle until 23rd July 1969.

That month the Squadron moved to Wittering to become the world's first operational vertical take-off fighter squadron, taking delivery of the radical Hawker-Siddeley Harrier and providing tactical support for ground forces and demonstrating its unique ability to operate away from fixed-base facilities and runways. The Squadron flew numerous detachments to Belize in Central America, and participated with great distinction in the operations to recover the Falkland Islands in 1982. The Squadron currently flies the Harrier GR.7 which possesses a night support capability, still stationed at Wittering.

Squadron formed at Farnborough on 13th May 1912

Squadron Badge granted in July 1936 while stationed at RAF Tangmere. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: The numeral '1' or winged gules. [This device had for some years been used before being formally employed as an official Badge.]

Motto: (Latin) 'In omnibus princeps' — First in all things.

No 2 Squadron



Traditionally associated with battlefield reconnaissance for, and armed support of the ground forces. No 2 Squadron was formed at Farnborough on 13th May 1912 alongside No 1 Squadron. For two years it flew various aeroplanes for training purposes, including Farmans, B.E.2s and Blériot XIs. It accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to France on the outbreak of war in August 1914, and almost immediately began reconnaissance work over the Western Front, flying unarmed B.E.2s. Later it performed artillery spotting duties and continued in this rôle for the remainder of the War, flying B.E.2s and F.K.8s. Two Victoria Crosses were awarded to No 2 Squadron airmen, Lieut W B Rhodes-Moorhouse, the pilot of a B.E.2c in May 1915 (the first air VC ever awarded), and Lieut A A McLeod in May 1918 in an F.K.8.

The Squadron returned to England in February 1919 and was disbanded on 19th January 1920. A fortnight later it was reformed at Oranmore, Co Galway, to support the army in Ireland, flying Bristol

F.2B Fighters. By the spring of 1923 the Squadron was back in England, still with Bristol Fighters, and in 1924 it made its permanent base at Manston, Kent. In April 1927 it was ordered to embark for Shanghai to protect the International Settlement from local Chinese disturbances, but was back at Manston before the year was out. No 2 Squadron flew Atlas, Audax and Hector army co-operation aircraft in succession between 1929 and 1938, moving to Hawkinge, Kent, in November 1935.

On the outbreak of War the Squadron, now equipped with Lysanders, crossed the Channel to France with the Air Component of the B.E.F. However, being forced from its landing grounds by the German offensive of May 1940, it moved back to Kent before the end of that month and contrived to support the Allied armies during the evacuation of Dunkirk.

In April 1942 the Lysanders gave place to Mustang fighter-reconnaissance aircraft and with these the Squadron flew frequent tactical photographic sorties over France and the Low Countries. During the Normandy landings the Mustang pilots spotted for the naval bombardment force. Two months after D-Day the Squadron moved to French landing grounds, accompanying the 21st Army Group during its advance to Holland, being re-equipped with Spitfire XIVs in November 1944.

No 2 Squadron remained in Germany after the War as a tactical reconnaissance unit of BAFO, and during the next 30 years flew the Spitfire XIX, Meteor FR.9 and PR.10, the Swift FR.5, Hunter FR.10 and Phantom FGR.2. In March 1976 the Squadron, still in Germany, was re-equipped with SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1s.

Squadron formed at Farnborough on 13th May 1912.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at RAF Hawkinge, Kent. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: Three concentric circles (from outer, azure, white, gules) overall a Wake Knot or. [The Wake Knot is taken from the arms of Sir Hereward Wake who led the defenders of the Isle of Ely against the Norman invaders; the name Hereward (as in the Motto) is reputed to have translated as 'Guardian of the Army']

Motto: 'Hereward'

No 3 Squadron



In the two years before the First World War No 3 Squadron flew an assortment of aeroplanes for training purposes, taking the most reliable of them to France in August 1914 for reconnaissance work. It was not until early in 1916 that the Squadron standardised on a single aircraft type, the Morane Parasol, for artillery spotting. In September 1917, with the arrival of Sopwith Camels, No 3 became a fighter squadron, remaining as such for many years. Among the famous RFC pilots who served on the Squadron was James McCudden (later VC, DSO and BAR, MC and BAR, MM), the fourth-highest scoring fighter pilot of the RFC with 57 victories — scored while serving with other squadrons.

The Squadron was disbanded in the UK on 27th October 1919, but was re-formed briefly during 1920-21 to fly Snipes in India. It gave another short spell of service at Leuchars in Scotland before being established at Upavon in Wiltshire as a fighter squadron, flying Snipes in 1924 and Hawker Woodcocks between 1925 and 1928; with No 17 Squadron, No 3 was responsible for the night defence of the Midlands and was thus one of the RAF's first specialist night fighter squadrons.

Thereafter, the Squadron flew Bulldogs (which it took briefly to the Sudan in 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis) until 1937, followed by Gladiators for a couple of years. At the beginning of the Second World War it was stationed at Croydon with Hurricanes as part of London's fighter defences, but spent only ten days in France in May 1940 during the German offensive in the West, suffering heavy losses before being withdrawn to train new pilots. No 3 Squadron remained in Scotland throughout the Battle of Britain, providing the fighter defence of the naval base at Scapa Flow.

From April 1941 until the spring of 1943 the Squadron concentrated on night operations with Hurricanes, being largely wasted in the fruitless Turbinlite experiment (collaborating with searchlight-carrying aircraft). Typhoons were then flown on fighter-bomber sweeps over France and the Low Countries until, in March 1944, No 3 became one of the first Tempest squadrons, these potent fighters being used to excellent effect to combat the German flying bomb attacks which commenced soon after the Normandy landings.

The Tempests remained with the Squadron after the War when it was stationed in Germany with the Second Tactical Air Force. In 1948 Vampire jet fighters were received, and these were followed in turn by Hunter 4s in 1954 and Javelin all-weather fighters in 1959. In 1961 No 3 converted to Canberra intruders at Geilenkirchen, moving to Laarbruch in 1968. In 1972 it re-equipped with the V/STOL Harrier tactical reconnaissance and ground attack fighter, remaining in Germany until the reduction of British forces in the early 1990s.

Squadron formed at Larkhill, Wiltshire, on 13th May 1912.

Squadron Badge granted in September 1937 when stationed at Kenley, Surrey. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: On a grey monolith a cockatrice. [Prior to formal Badge approval the Squadron displayed five monoliths in reference to the five large stones of Stonehenge, itself a reference to the Squadron's

early association with Salisbury Plain; to perpetuate this allusion, one such monolith was retained in the official Badge.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Tertius primus erit' — The third shall be first. [This and the cockatrice, a prehistoric flying creature, allude to the Squadron's claim to have been the first in the RFC to fly aeroplanes.]

No 4 Squadron



Formed from a nucleus provided by No 2 Squadron at Farnborough in August 1912. No 4 Squadron flew such aeroplanes as the B.E.2a, Cody Biplane, Voisins and Farmans prior to the Kaiser's War, moving to Netheravon, Wiltshire, in June 1913. It engaged in occasional night flying but these experiments served only to demonstrate the hazard of such operations in those early aircraft. After patrolling the Dover Straits in August 1914, the Squadron moved to France at the end of that month to provide reconnaissance for the BEF, commencing artillery spotting in December 1914 and continuing in these rôles for the remainder of the War and being re-equipped in May 1918 with the notoriously flammable R.E.8. Among the Squadron's pilots was Lieut K.L. Caldwell (later MC, DFC and BAR) who afterwards commanded No 74 Squadron and gained 25 combat victories. The Squadron also undertook operational use of wireless telegraphy (one of the first to do so) and by the end of the War had achieved considerable proficiency in reporting the fall of artillery fire by the use of wireless.

In April 1920 No 4 Squadron received Bristol F.2Bs and detached a flight of these to assist the security forces in Ireland during the winter of 1920-21. The Squadron embarked for Turkey during the Chanak crisis in August 1922, returning to Farnborough a year later. It remained here until 1937, being equipped in turn with the Atlas, Audax and Hector army co-operation biplanes before receiving Lysanders at Odiham in January 1939. With these No 4 moved to France once more in support of the BEF shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War but, like its partner Squadron, No 2, was forced to return to the UK when German columns overran its airfields in May 1940. During the next two years the Lysanders were flown on coastal patrol duties — including air-sea rescue work off the East Coast.

The Lysanders were discarded in 1942 when reconnaissance fighters were delivered to the Squadron, beginning with Tomahawks and Mustangs. Shortly before the Normandy landings these were replaced by reconnaissance Spitfire XIs and Mosquito XVIs for surveillance of German communications in France. The Squadron returned to tactical reconnaissance with the arrival of Typhoons, and with these and the remaining Spitfires supported the Allied armies during their advance to the German homeland in 1944-45.

During the sixteen years following the War No 4 Squadron flew a succession of fighters with the Second Tactical Air Force in Germany, including Mosquitos, Vampires, Sabres and Hunters, but between 1961 and 1970 it reverted to the fighter-reconnaissance rôle when it flew Hunter FR 10s, followed by more than two decades equipped with V/STOL Harriers.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hants, in August 1912.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 when stationed at Farnborough. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A sun in splendour divided per bend gules and sable by a flash of lightning or. [The sun divided by a lightning flash was an allusion to both day and night operations, the flash also referring to the pioneering work with wireless telegraphy by the Squadron.]

Motto: (Latin) 'In futurum videre' — To see into the future.

No 5 Squadron



No 5 Squadron was formed from a nucleus detached from No 3 Squadron at Farnborough on 26th July 1913, being provided with various aircraft for training purposes, including Avro 500 and 504, Farman, Voisin and Blériot XI types. The Squadron flew to France and commenced reconnaissance work as soon as the Western Front stabilised. By mid-1916 the main equipment comprised B.E.2c aircraft which were employed in artillery spotting, although a few Bristol Scouts were on charge to provide occasional escorts. After the battle of Vimy in April 1917, when the Squadron supported the Canadian Corps, equipment was standardised with the unpopular R.E.8, an aircraft that was to be retained for the remainder of the War.

No 5 Squadron returned to the UK in September 1919, having received a few Bristol F.2bs, but was disbanded on 20th January 1920. On 1st April that year No 48 Squadron, also flying F.2bs, was re-numbered 5 Squadron at Quetta, India, to fly patrols over the North West Frontier province and Baluchistan. It continued this work until after the beginning of the Second World War, replacing the aged F.2bs with Wapitis in May 1931. The latter biplanes remained in service until superseded by Hawker Harts in June 1940, these in turn giving place to Audaxes in February 1941.

On the outbreak of war with Japan in December 1941 No 5 Squadron was deployed for the defence of Calcutta, the Audax biplanes being converted to single-seat fighters and joined by a few American Mohawk monoplane fighters. The latter were replaced for ground attack duties in June 1943. In

September 1944 the Squadron was at last given modern equipment and was temporarily withdrawn so as to convert on to Thunderbolts; from December that year No 5 flew in support of the 14th Army in Burma. At the time of the Japanese surrender the Squadron was preparing to support an invasion of Malaya; instead it returned to India and was re-equipped with Tempest IIs in March 1946, and disbanded on 1st August 1947.

On 11th February 1949 No 595 Squadron, an anti-aircraft co-operation unit stationed at Pembrey in south Wales, was re-numbered 5 Squadron, but continued to perform its former rôle, flying Spitfires, Beaufighters, Oxfords and Martinet target tugs. The Squadron was again disbanded in September 1952, only to be re-formed in Germany as a Venom fighter-bomber unit. Further periodic disbanding followed, with active spells flying Meteor night fighters, Javelin all-weather fighters, Mach 2 Lightnings and, most recently, Tornado F 3 fighters.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hants, on 26th July 1913.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1937 when stationed at Risalpur, India. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A maple leaf vert. [The maple leaf recalls the Squadron's close association with the Canadian Corps in the battles of Vimy in April 1917, and Amiens in August 1918.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Frangas non flectus' — Thou mayest break but shall not bend me.

No 6 Squadron



No 6 Squadron boasts a record of continuous service second to none in the RAF yet, because the greater part of this service has been undertaken in the harsh environment of the Middle East, remote from public display, its eminence has been little appreciated at home.

Like the majority of the first RFC squadrons, No 6 was formed at Farnborough some months before the First World War and trained itself in the battlefield reconnaissance rôle. It flew to Belgium on 7th October 1914, but moved back to France when trench warfare became the pattern of operations in Flanders during the winter of 1914-15. Main equipment comprised B.E.2cs, with which No 6 Squadron undertook artillery spotting for the BEF. When the Germans introduced their Fokker monoplane scouts during the spring of 1915 the Squadron received a number of Bristol Scouts so as to provide the vulnerable B.E.2cs with a measure of protection. Artillery spotting and corps reconnaissance constituted the Squadron's main tasks for the remainder of the War, R.E.8s being introduced shortly after 'Bloody April' in 1917.

The Squadron's most illustrious pilot was Major Lanoe G Hawker DSO, who won the Victoria Cross on 25th July 1915 when, flying a Bristol Scout armed with a single-shot cavalry carbine, he attacked three enemy scouts armed with machine guns, destroying one and forcing the others to dive away. This was the first VC to be won for valour in air combat. Hawker was later shot down and killed by von Richthofen when his own victory score stood at nine.

After the War ended, No 6 Squadron, then in Belgium, was deployed to the Middle East without first returning to the United Kingdom. Arriving at Baghdad in July 1919, its first task was to support British and Commonwealth ground forces in their efforts to quell Turkish-backed insurgents in northern Mesopotamia. Later the Squadron undertook policing duties as part of the British mandate to create independent Arab states from the former Ottoman empire, a rôle that occupied No 6 throughout the inter-War period. After disposing of its ancient Bristol Fighters in 1932, it was re-equipped with Gordons until 1935 when Harts were received. By then the Squadron was operating in Palestine and was soon assisting the British ground forces as tension mounted between Jews and Arabs.

The Harts were replaced by Hardys, Gauntlets and Lysanders in the final months before the Second World War, but No 6 Squadron did not start operations against the Italians in the Western Desert until September 1940, now fully equipped with Lysanders in the army co-operation rôle. The following year the Squadron became a tactical reconnaissance unit, receiving Hurricanes, Gladiators and Blenheims.

In 1942, however, No 6 was destined to become the RAF's first dedicated anti-tank Squadron, being re-equipped with Hurricane IIDs, armed with a pair of 40mm guns under the wings. These were first flown against the German Afrika Korps in June in support of the 8th Army, and subsequently during its final victorious advance from Egypt to Tunisia. Later, equipped with rocket-firing Hurricane IVs, the Squadron fought in Italy and the Balkans.

The Hurricanes were finally discarded in 1946 when Tempest VIs were received, and No 6 returned to the Middle East, operating from RAF stations in Cyprus, Palestine, Sudan and Egypt. It re-equipped with Vampires in 1949, and Venoms in 1954, and, after service in Iraq, spent 13 years flying Canberra B.2s, B.6s and B.16s from Cyprus. It was disbanded at Akrotiri in 1969 but the same year re-formed at Coningsby in Lincolnshire with Phantoms. A move to Coltishall in 1974 coincided with conversion to the Anglo-French SEPECAT Jaguar, a potent tactical strike aircraft with which the Squadron is still equipped twenty years later.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hants, on 31st January 1914.

Squadron Badge granted in January 1938 when stationed at Ramleh, Palestine. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An eagle or wings elevated preying on a serpent proper. [The Squadron's former unofficial badge featured the serpent in the form of a numeral '6' and this was perpetuated as the official device.]
Motto: (Latin) 'Oculi exercitus' — The eyes of the army.

No 7 Squadron



Last of the RFC squadrons to be formed prior to the First World War, No 7 was not fully trained when hostilities began and therefore did not move to France until April 1915, taking two flights of R.E.5s which were flown on bombing, battlefield reconnaissance and artillery spotting sorties. After only three months in France, one of the pilots, Capt J A Liddell won the Victoria Cross during a reconnaissance flight near Bruges on 31st July; he was grievously wounded in the thigh by anti-aircraft fire and, as the aircraft plunged down, he fainted. At the last moment he recovered consciousness and, despite extensive damage to the aircraft and its controls, he managed to reach and land at a Belgian aerodrome. One week after his VC award was announced, Liddell died of his wounds.

The R.E.5 was not considered satisfactory, possessing a very poor performance and able to carry only three 20lb bombs on operational flights. The B.E.2c became standard equipment until replaced by B.E.2ds and B.E.2es, which were in turn discarded in July 1917 and replaced by R.E.8s; these remained in service, despite many shortcomings, until the Squadron was disbanded in December 1919.

No 7 Squadron was re-formed at Bircham Newton as a Vimy night bomber squadron on 1st June 1923, these aircraft being flown until April 1927 when Vickers Virginia Is arrived and the Squadron moved to Worthy Down under the command of Wg Cdr C F A Portal (later Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Portal, and Chief of the Air Staff for the greater part of the Second World War). Successively improved versions of the Virginia were flown by No 7 until 1935 when they were superseded by the Handley Page Heyford which remained until April 1938.

Whitley II and III twin-engine monoplane heavy bombers equipped No 7 Squadron during 1938-39; however, although re-equipped with Hampdens and Ansons before the outbreak of war, the Squadron was allocated a training rôle until disbanded in May 1940. Then, on 1st August as the Battle of Britain was approaching its vital stages, No 7 Squadron was re-formed at Leeming in Yorkshire to become the first of the RAF's new four-engine heavy bomber squadrons with the delivery of Short Stirlings. The first operation with these big aeroplanes was flown on the night of 10/11th February 1941 when three aircraft bombed oil storage tanks at Rotterdam. Later, No 7 Squadron's Stirlings added minelaying to their operations and also participated in the three famous '1,000-bomber' raids on Cologne, Essen and Bremen in May and June of 1942.

Later that year No 7 Squadron was one of the first five to form the nucleus of the Pathfinder Force, flying from Oakington. In July 1943 the Squadron converted to Lancasters and, remaining a Pathfinder squadron, continued to participate in Bomber Command's assault on Germany until the end of the War. Indeed, the Lancasters were not superseded by the bigger Lincoln bomber until August 1949. The Squadron was disbanded at Upwood on New Year's Day, 1956.

No 7 was re-formed on 1st November the same year at Honington in Suffolk to fly Vickers Valiants with the RAF's V-bomber force, continuing to do so until again disbanded on 1st September 1962. In May 1970 it re-formed at St Mawgan, Cornwall, as a target facilities squadron, flying Canberras. Most recently No 7 Squadron became a medium-lift helicopter squadron, receiving Boeing Vertol Chinooks in the early 1980s; and in 1983-84 these were deployed from the United Kingdom to Akrotiri, Cyprus, to support the British Force in the Lebanon.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hants, on 1st May 1914.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1939 when stationed at RAF Finningley, Yorkshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: On a hurt seven mullets argent of six points forming a representation of the constellation Ursa Major. [The hurt incorporating mullets was considered appropriate for a night bomber squadron in which astro navigation was commonly practised; the seven stars which comprised the Plough were particularly appropriate to No 7 Squadron and had been adopted in 1926 as an unofficial Squadron badge.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Per diem per noctem' — By day (and) by night.

No 8 Squadron



Formed at Brooklands on 1st January 1915, No 8 Squadron moved to France four months later to provide battlefield reconnaissance and artillery spotting for the British forces on the Western Front. Initial equipment comprised B.E.2cs, but these were replaced by R.E.8s in August 1917 which remained in use until after the Armistice when Bristol Fighters were issued.

After disbanding at Duxford in January 1920, No 8 was re-formed with D.H.9As at Helwan in Egypt on 18th October that year, thus beginning an association with the Middle East that was to last half a century. The Squadron moved to Iraq for security duties in February 1921, thereafter flying from bases at Basra, Baghdad and Hinaidi until 1927 when it redeployed to Aden (Khormaksar), remaining

there until the end of the Second World War.

Located at the southern end of the Red Sea, the Squadron's rôle involved patrolling the Aden Protectorate in support of local levies as well as discouraging hostile activity by marauding tribesmen along the neighbouring coastline. The D.H.9As were replaced by Fairey IIIFs in 1928 and Vincents in 1935. During the Second World War, Blenheims constituted the principal equipment as protection of sea convoys from interference by Italian forces in East Africa occupied much of the Squadron's flying effort. No 8 was also heavily involved in the British operations against Italian East Africa in 1940.

After the end of the war against Italy and Germany, No 8 was disbanded at Aden only to re-surface when No 200 Squadron in India was re-numbered 8 and moved to Ceylon with Liberators in mid-1945 to fly supplies in support of guerilla forces operating in Malaya. These operations continued until September 1945 when No 8 was again disbanded. On 1st September 1946, No 114 Squadron back at Aden was re-numbered 8, thus re-establishing the old association with the Protectorate. Between then and 1971 No 8 Squadron flew Mosquitos, Tempests, Brigands, Vampires, Venoms, Meteors and Hunters in succession, the strategic importance of Aden gradually diminishing as Britain sought to reduce her military responsibilities 'east of Suez'.

No 8 was disbanded at Sharjah in 1971 but was re-formed in January the following year in the United Kingdom, becoming a maritime reconnaissance squadron with Shackletons. More recently No 8 undertook airborne early warning duties with Shackleton AEW.2s, and these have been replaced during the past few years by the Sentry AEW.1.

Squadron formed at Brooklands, Surrey, on 1st January 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1943 when stationed at RAF Khormaksar, Aden. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An Arabian dagger proper sheathed. [The Arabian dagger symbolises the Squadron's long association with the southern Arabian peninsula; the dagger being sheathed implies a policing rather than an aggressive rôle.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Uspiam et Passim' — Everywhere and unbounded. [The motto refers to the Squadron's operations flown to all points of the compass.]

No 9 Squadron



Originally formed at St Omer in France on 8th December 1914 from the HQ Wireless Unit, RFC, No 9 Squadron was quickly dispersed, detaching wireless-equipped flights to Nos 2, 5, 6 and 16 Squadrons for artillery observation early in 1915. No 9 Squadron itself was disbanded on 22nd March 1915 at St Omer, being re-formed at Brooklands on 1st April as a wireless training unit with B.E.2s, Blériots and Farmans. It moved to France in November that year as a bombing and reconnaissance squadron in its own right, equipped with B.E.2es and Bristol Scouts, but these were discarded in favour of R.E.8s in May 1917, and they remained in service until after the Armistice. The Squadron returned to England and was disbanded at Castle Bromwich on the last day of 1919.

Re-formed at Upavon on 1st April 1924, initially with Vimy bombers, No 9 Squadron received Virginia heavy bombers in January 1925 and continued with these aircraft until they were replaced by Heyfords in March 1936. Wellington Is were delivered to the Squadron at Stradishall in Suffolk during 1939, and during the first months of the Second World War these were flown on a number of daylight operations over the North Sea against enemy shipping. Heavy casualties suffered on 19th December 1939 resulted in these daylight attacks being abandoned, and from mid-1940 the Squadron concentrated on night bombing raids against German-occupied Europe, continuing to fly Wellingtons until August 1942 when it converted to Lancasters. Towards the end of the War, the Squadron began carrying 12,000lb Tallboy bombs and took part in the attacks on the German battleship *Tirpitz* which was eventually sunk on 12th November 1944. A No 9 Squadron Lancaster crew member, F/Sgt George Thompson, was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for great gallantry displayed during a daylight raid on the Dortmund-Ems canal on 1st January 1945.

No 9 Squadron arrived in India in January 1946, but was too late to operate against the Japanese, returning instead to the UK in April that year, converting to Lincolns at Binbrook in July. Canberra jet bombers arrived in May 1952 and these were flown against the terrorists in Malaya during the spring of 1956 before the Squadron was deployed to Malta for bombing attacks against Egypt during the Suez crisis in October that year.

In 1962 No 9 Squadron became a component of the V-force, flying Vulcan B.2s from Coningsby, Cottesmore and Waddington in turn. On 6th January 1982 the Squadron, at Honington once more, became the first to equip with the Tornado GR.1 supersonic bomber, an aircraft it continues to fly today.

Squadron formed at St Omer, France, on 8th December 1914.

Squadron Badge granted when stationed at RAF Scampton in November 1936. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A bat proper. [This alludes to the Squadron's former night bombing rôle.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Per noctem volamus' — Throughout the night we fly.

No 10 Squadron



No 10 Squadron was formed at Farnborough on 1st January 1915 with a nucleus provided by No 1 Reserve Squadron, being equipped almost exclusively with B.E.2 variants, which it flew to France in July that year. From the outset and until the end of the War, No 10 was tasked with artillery observation, light bombing and tactical reconnaissance, the B.E.2s being replaced by F.K.8s in September 1917. Among the famous pilots to serve with No 10 was Capt J I T Jones, DSO, MC, DFC and BAR, MM, who gained 40 air combat victories when with No 74 Squadron.

After being disbanded on 31st December 1919, No 10 Squadron re-formed at Upper Heyford on 3rd January 1928, equipped with Hyderabad bombers, to be replaced three years later by Hinaidis. Virginias arrived in 1932, followed by Heyfords in 1934. The first monoplane bombers—Whitleys—were received in January 1937 as the Squadron moved to Dishforth in Yorkshire, and it was with these aircraft that No 10 went to war in 1939. The first nine months following the outbreak of hostilities were spent dropping propaganda leaflets over Germany, but bombing raids started following the launching of the Wehrmacht's offensive in the West.

Halifax four-engine heavy bombers replaced the Whitleys in December 1941, and in due course joined the main force of Bomber Command in its long bombing crusade against Germany and enemy-occupied Europe. The Halifaxes were retained for the remainder of the War and the Squadron was moved to Transport Command on 7th May 1945, converting to Dakotas before flying to India in October that year. It was disbanded at Poona in December 1947.

A year later it re-formed at Oakington in Cambridgeshire, again with Dakotas, with which it participated in the Berlin airlift in 1949. Once again it was disbanded in February 1950, but, when re-formed at Scampton in January 1953, it was back in Bomber Command, now flying Canberra jet bombers; in 1956 it was detached to Cyprus at the time of the Suez crisis, being disbanded when it returned home early in 1957.

No 10 was re-formed on 15th April 1958, this time to fly Victor B.1s with the V-force at Cottesmore until 1964. In 1966 it returned to Transport Command, flying the VC-10 four-jet transport on the RAF's trunk routes to the Far East. It has continued to operate VC-10s for the past 25 years, embracing the transport, ambulance and in-flight refuelling tanker rôles, based at Fairford, Gloucestershire, and Brize Norton, Oxfordshire.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hants, on 1st January 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in September 1937 while stationed at RAF Dishforth, Yorkshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An arrow palewise or point downwards winged gules. [The arrow pointing downwards is intended to be synonymous with the bombing rôle of the Squadron.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Rem acu tangere' — To hit the mark.

No 11 Squadron



Formed around a nucleus provided by No 7 Squadron, No 11 Squadron became an independent unit on 14th February 1915, flying to France with Vickers F.B.5 Gunbuses on 25th July that year. It re-equipped with F.E.2b two-seat fighters in June 1916 to engage in armed reconnaissance behind the German lines. Bristol F.2b Fighters were flown during the last year of the War, and the Squadron was disbanded on 31st December 1919 at Scopwick.

It re-formed on 13th January 1923 at Andover as a light bomber squadron, moving to Bircham Newton in Norfolk later that year, flying D.H.9As, Fawns and Horsleys before deploying to India in 1928, where it remained for eleven years flying Wapitis and, later, Hawker Harts.

In 1940 No 11 Squadron moved to the Middle East, participating in the early stages of the Greek campaign with Blenheims. After a short period in the Western Desert, Palestine and Iraq, the Squadron was moved to Ceylon in March 1942, in time to take part in attacks on the Japanese carrier force which attacked the island the following month. It then moved to India for operations against the Japanese in northern Burma, the Blenheims being replaced by Hurricane fighter-bombers in September 1943, these being retained until June 1945 when the Squadron converted to Spitfire XVIIs and XVIIIIs. It arrived at Singapore at the time of the Japanese surrender and subsequently joined the Allied forces of occupation in Japan.

No 11 Squadron disbanded at Miho in Japan on 23rd February 1948, but re-formed at Celle in Germany the following October with Mosquito VIs. Thereafter, until 1966 when it again disbanded, it flew Vampire and Venom fighter-bombers, Meteor night fighters and Javelin all-weather fighters. It was re-formed at Leuchars on 1st April 1967 to fly Lightnings with Fighter and Strike Commands, and most recently has been equipped with Tornado F.3s.

Squadron formed at Netheravon on 28th November 1914, becoming independent on 14th February 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1939 while stationed at Risalpur, India. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: Two eagles proper volant in pale. [The pair of eagles, symbolising speed and strength, were taken to represent the two-man crews of the aircraft flown in the First World War.]
Motto: (Latin) 'Ociores acioresque aquilis' — Swifter and keener than eagles.



No 12 Squadron

Formed at Netheravon, Wiltshire, on 14th February 1915 as a tactical reconnaissance unit, No 12 Squadron was sent to France in September that year with a variety of aircraft which included Bristol Scouts, Voisins, R.E.5 and 7, and B.E.2 variants. In due course the equipment achieved standardisation with the R.E.8 which continued in service from August 1917 until July 1919. The Squadron remained in Germany with the occupation forces until disbanded at Bickendorf in July 1922 when equipped with Bristol Fighters.

Becoming a light bomber squadron when re-formed at Northolt on 1st April 1923, No 12 was provided with an initial complement of D.H.9As until the arrival of Fairey Fawns in 1924 which coincided with a move to Andover, where the Squadron remained until 1935.

In June 1926 No 12 became the first and only Squadron in the RAF to receive the Fairey Fox light bomber, an aircraft whose performance eclipsed that of any fighter then in service, prompting the adoption of a fox's mask as the Squadron's unofficial badge (a device that was to be perpetuated ten years later when official Badges were introduced, together with an appropriate motto). The excellent Fox remained in service with No 12 Squadron until superseded by the Hawker Hart in 1931.

Harts, and the improved Hind, continued to serve (including a year in the Middle East during 1935-36) until 1938 when the Fairey Battle light bomber was introduced. Unfortunately the Battle monoplane, though ostensibly representing a significant technical advance from the former biplanes, proved to be underpowered and inadequately armed, shortcomings that became all too evident early in the Second World War. No 12 Squadron (known familiarly in the RAF as the Dirty Dozen) was in France when the German offensive in the West was launched on 10th May 1940. It was ordered to attack the key river bridges in Belgium in an attempt to delay the enemy's advance but, being set upon by modern German fighters, suffered disastrous losses. In one such attack by No 12 Squadron's Battles, all three aircraft went down; the leading pilot, Fg Off D E Garland, and his observer, Sgt T Gray, were awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously — the first RAF VCs to be awarded in the Second World War.

The Battles were quickly withdrawn from operational service and in November 1940, No 12 Squadron assumed the heavy bombing rôle and converted to Wellingtons. These were replaced by Lancasters in November 1942, being based at Binbrook in Lincolnshire for operations with Bomber Command's Main Force.

No 12 Squadron escaped disbandment in the immediate post-War years, being re-equipped with Lincolns in August 1946, these being exchanged for Canberra jet bombers in 1952. Ten years later the Squadron joined Bomber Command's V-force when it began flying Vulcans at Coningsby and later Cottesmore. In 1969 it was re-formed at Honington in Suffolk to fly Buccaneer S.2 low-level strike aircraft, principally in the maritime rôle. The Squadron is currently equipped with Tornado GR.1Bs based at Lossiemouth.

Squadron formed at Netheravon, Wiltshire, on 14th February 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1937 when stationed at RAF Andover, Hants. *Approved* by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A fox's mask affronté proper. [This recalls the Fairey Fox aircraft which the Squadron flew during the 1920s, the motto emphasising the superiority of that aeroplane over any other then in service with the RAF.]

Motto: 'Leads the field'.

No 13 Squadron



Like other early Squadrons of the RFC, No 13 went to France as a corps reconnaissance unit in October 1915, having been formed at Gosport on 10th January that year. Its B.E.2cs were replaced by R.E.8s during 'Bloody April' in 1917, remaining with the Squadron in France until March 1919 when it returned to England and was disbanded at the end of that year. Its most illustrious pilot during the War had been Albert Ball who, after transferring to fighter squadrons, went on to shoot down 44 enemy aircraft, winning the VC when serving with No 56 Squadron in June 1917.

In the inter-War years No 13 Squadron served as an army co-operation unit, being re-formed in 1924 at Kenley and going on to fly the Atlas, Audax and Hector from stations on Salisbury Plain. It was re-equipped with Lysanders in January 1939, having moved to Odiham, Hants, and accompanied the BEF to France after the outbreak of war in 1939. Heavy casualties during the Battle of France forced the remnants of the Squadron to be withdrawn to England to re-equip and train new crews. In 1941 it converted to Blenheim bombers, though continuing in the close support rôle; the Squadron was, nevertheless, called upon to accompany Bomber Command's first 1,000-bomber raid over Germany

in May 1942, and flew in support of the Dieppe landing in August that year, laying smoke screens over the beaches.

Soon after the Allied 'Torch' landings in North Africa in November 1942, No 13 Squadron moved to Algeria with Blenheim Vs and began night raids and coastal patrols in the central Mediterranean in support of the Allied invasions of Sicily and Italy, joining in bombing attacks on German road and rail targets. Bostons were received in October 1944 and the Squadron moved to Greece in September 1945 where it was disbanded in April 1946.

Five months later No 680 (Photographic Reconnaissance) Squadron was re-numbered 13, while continuing in the PR rôle. Its Mosquito PR 34s were re-deployed to Egypt in December that year and the Squadron converted to Meteor PR 10s in January 1952. It moved again, this time to Cyprus, in February 1956 where it converted to Canberra PR 7s, and later flew Canberra PR 9s from Malta until 1978 when the Squadron returned to the United Kingdom, taking up residence at Wyton. Most recently No 13 Squadron has been equipped with Tornado GR.1A aircraft.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hants, on 10th January 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1937 when stationed at RAF Odiham, Hants. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of a dagger a lynx's head affronté. [The dagger had featured in a former, unofficial badge displayed by the Squadron, whereas the Lynx's head was newly introduced to signify vigilance.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Adjuvamus tuendo' — We assist by watching. [The motto was selected as being appropriate to an army co-operation squadron.]

No 14 Squadron



No 14 Squadron was formed at Shoreham, Sussex, on 3rd February 1915 and was sent to the Middle East the following November for support of the army throughout the theatre, being equipped principally with B.E.2 variants. During the Palestinian campaign the Squadron flew bombing attacks, acquiring a few DH 2, Bristol and Nieuport single-seat fighters with which to provide escorts. When No 111 Squadron assumed these fighter duties, No 14 was able to concentrate its efforts on closer co-operation with the ground forces. The Squadron was disbanded on 4th February 1919.

On 1st February 1920 No 111 Squadron was re-numbered 14 at Ramleh in Palestine, and for the next twenty years was engaged in policing duties in Palestine and Transjordan, flying from Ramleh and Amman with Bristol Fighters, followed in turn by DH 9As, Fairey IIIFs, Gordons and Wellesleys.

When Italy entered the Second World War on 10th June 1940, No 14 Squadron was deployed to the Sudan, and soon began raids with the Wellesleys on Italian forces in Eritrea. Blenheims replaced the Wellesleys and with its new aircraft the Squadron returned to Palestine and Iraq in 1941, but in October that year it was switched to operations in the Western Desert in support of the Eighth Army, collaboration which only ended after the invasion of Italy in 1943, by which time the Squadron had re-equipped with Martin Marauder medium bombers. After operating for some months from Sardinia in 1944, the Squadron made its way home to Britain and eventually assembled at Chivenor, Devon, in October, being equipped with Wellingtons the following month for the anti-submarine rôle.

The Squadron remained at Chivenor until disbanded on 1st June 1945. On the same day No 143 Squadron, flying Mosquito Vs at Banff, was re-numbered 14 and continued in being until again disbanded on 31st March 1946. The following day No 128 Squadron at Wahn in Germany assumed the number 14.

Now operating in the fighter-bomber rôle with the 2nd Tactical Air Force, No 14 was stationed in turn at Wahn, Celle, Fassberg, Oldenburg, Ahlhorn and Gutersloh, and between 1946 and 1962 was equipped with Mosquitos, Vampires, Venoms and Hunters. In 1962, with a move to Wildenrath, the Squadron's rôle was changed to night interdiction as Canberra B(1) 8s were taken on charge. This phase continued until 1970 when the Squadron re-equipped at Bruggen with Phantom FGR 2s, these in turn being discarded in favour of Jaguar GR 1s in April 1975.

Panavia Tornado GR 1s began to re-equip the RAF strike squadrons in NATO during 1983, and these replaced the Jaguars at Bruggen, it being No 14 Squadron's turn in 1985, and these aircraft remain in service to this day.

Squadron formed at Shoreham, Sussex, on 3rd February 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1937 when stationed at Ramleh, Palestine. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A plate winged or and charged with a cross gules throughout and surmounted by the helmet and shoulder-piece of a suit of armour proper. [The St George cross recalls the period in the Squadron's history when, in Palestine, it was stationed close to the reputed burial site of the saint; the suit of armour is suggestive of the Crusades.]

Motto: (Arabic) — I spread my wings and keep my promise. [The motto was recommended by Emir Abdullah and is a quotation from the Koran.]



No 15 Squadron

This Squadron was formed at Farnborough from a nucleus provided by No 1 Reserve Squadron on 1st March 1915 and reached France on 28th December that year, equipped with B.E.2Cs. No 15 was sent forward to the Western Front and began flying reconnaissance and artillery spotting sorties almost immediately, setting a pattern of operations little changed during the remainder of the War—except for a short period in March 1918 during the Germans' last great offensive when the Squadron was ordered to fly bombing ground support sorties. By that time, however, the old B.E.2s had been replaced by R.E.8s.

In common with so many others, No 15 Squadron was disbanded soon after the War but, in this instance, it was to be re-formed in March 1924 as an armament testing squadron at the RAF Station at Martlesham Heath in Suffolk. Almost all the aircraft which subsequently entered squadron service with the RAF passed through the hands of No 15 Squadron's pilots who thus played a unique part in the Service's history. Indeed, the Squadron also tested many aircraft which, because they failed to meet the standards demanded at Martlesham, failed to proceed beyond the prototype stage.

In 1934 the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment became a fully autonomous unit with its own established test pilots, and No 15 Squadron in turn re-formed at Abingdon, Berkshire, as a line squadron flying Hawker Hart light bombers. These gave place to Hinds in March 1936, and Battles followed in June 1938. No 15 Squadron took its Battles to France with the Advanced Air Striking Force on the outbreak of war the following year.

The Squadron was, however, ordered home in December 1939 to re-equip with Blenheims at Wyton, thus missing the Battle of France in which the Battle-equipped squadrons suffered crippling casualties. The Blenheims only stayed with No 15 Squadron until November 1940 as it then became a heavy bomber unit, flying Wellingtons.

In April 1941 it again re-equipped, this time with Stirlings—the second of Bomber Command's squadrons to do so. One of its aircraft was subscribed by Lady Rachel MacRobert and named MacRobert's *Reply* in memory of her three sons who had been killed flying with the RAF. In August 1942, No 15 Squadron moved to Bourn in Cambridgeshire and the following December converted to Lancasters at Mildenhall. During the course of subsequent operations with Bomber Command the Squadron's Lancasters dropped 13,124 tons of bombs; one of its aircraft completed no fewer than 134 bombing sorties, the second highest number recorded by any of the RAF's heavy bombers.

No 15 Squadron was selected to become a peacetime unit, and re-equipped with Lincolns in February 1947, once more stationed at Wyton. These were replaced by Washingtons (the RAF name given to the American B-29 Superfortress), the largest aircraft then to have served with squadrons of Bomber Command. The Washington, however, proved to be a disappointment, being found difficult and expensive to maintain, and No 15 Squadron discarded them in 1953 in favour of Canberras, these being deployed to Cyprus during the Suez crisis in 1956.

The Canberra was in turn followed by the Handley Page Victor four-jet heavy bomber which No 15 Squadron flew at the V-bomber base at Cottesmore from September 1958 until October 1964 when the Squadron was disbanded. In October 1970 it re-formed at Honington in Suffolk to equip with Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S.2Bs, and flew these to its new base at Laarbruch in Germany the following year.

The latest aircraft to be flown by No 15 Squadron is the Panavia Tornado, with which it re-equipped on 5th July 1983 and continues to fly today. One of the Squadron's aircraft was named *MacRobert's Reply*, recalling the famous wartime Stirling bomber so distinguished.

Squadron formed at Farnborough on 1st March 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at RAF Abingdon, Berks. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A hind's head affronté proper erased at the neck between two wings elevated and conjoined in base or. [The hind recalls the Hawker Hind aircraft with which the Squadron was equipped at the time the Badge was granted.]

Motto: 'Aim sure'.



No 16 Squadron

No 16 Squadron's early history followed the pattern established by the other RFC squadrons formed before and shortly after the outbreak of the Kaiser's War. It came into being at St Omer in France on 10th February 1915 when flights detached from Nos 2, 5 and 6 Squadrons were amalgamated into a single squadron. It was however not until the end of that year that the B.E.2c became standardised on the Squadron, undertaking tactical reconnaissance and artillery observation for the remainder of the War and changing to R.E.8s in May 1917. It was disbanded at Fowlmere near Cambridge on 31st December 1919.

No 16 Squadron re-formed at Old Sarum near Salisbury on 1st April attached to the School of Army Co-operation, a training unit which had been established at Brooklands in 1915. It flew Bristol F.2b Fighters until 1931 when it received Atlas aircraft which, in turn, were replaced by Audaxes in 1933.

The following year ties with the Army Co-operation school were broken, the Squadron becoming an ordinary independent unit, although it remained at Old Sarum until 1940.

In 1938 No 16 was the first Squadron to receive the new Lysander monoplane—itsself the last type to be purpose-designed for the army co-operation rôle as characterised at that time. The Squadron did not accompany the BEF to France at the beginning of the War, as did other Lysander squadrons yet, coincidentally, crossed to the continent only a month before the great German offensive opened on 10th May 1940. As No 16 Squadron had no operational experience, it was quickly withdrawn back to England, thereafter flying supply-dropping sorties from the Kent coast to the Allied forces retreating towards Dunkirk.

It was not until April 1942 that Mustangs were received, by which time the whole pattern of army co-operation tactics had undergone radical changes (although Lysanders continued to fly with No 16 Squadron until 1943).

In September 1943 the Squadron's operational rôle was changed to that of photographic reconnaissance and Spitfire XIs were flown at both high and low altitude over France to gain photographic evidence prior to the Allied landings in Normandy in June 1944. No 16 Squadron was disbanded shortly after the War on 20th October 1945.

On 1st April 1946 No 56 Squadron was re-numbered 16, flying Tempests in Germany. These were followed by Vampire 5 fighter-bombers in 1948, Venoms in 1954, and Canberra B (I) 8 intruders in 1958. In June 1972, when based at Laarbruch, No 16 Squadron converted to Buccaneer S 2s, and more recently was accorded Reserve status, being currently equipped with BAe Hawk T 2A dual-rôle trainers.

Squadron formed at St Omer, France, on 10th February 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in November 1936 while stationed at Old Sarum, Wiltshire. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: Two keys in saltire the wards in chief, that in bend or that in bend sinister sable. [The keys and the motto symbolise the unlocking of secrets to the army; the gold and black tinctures represent day and night operations.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Operta aperta' — Hidden things are revealed.

No 17 Squadron



This Squadron has, in the course of its long and distinguished life, served in a diversity of foreign theatres unsurpassed by any other British fighter squadron, with operations in the Near, Middle and Far East as well as outstanding service in the Battle of France and the great Battle of Britain.

Formed at Gosport, Hants, on 1st February 1915, No 17 Squadron was earmarked from the outset for service in the Middle East, and embarked for Egypt in November that year, arriving the following month when it began flying reconnaissance sorties over the Turkish positions in Sinai; at the same time it sent detachments to Arabia as well as supporting British forces fighting the Turks in the Western Desert.

In July 1916 the Squadron re-assembled at Salonika in Macedonia with B.E.2c, D.H.2 and Bristol Scout aircraft and later flew in support of ground forces on the Bulgarian border. After the Armistice No 17 re-equipped with D.H.9s and Sopwith Camels, sending one flight to support the White Russian forces at Batum, while the other two remained stationed at Constantinople with the Allied forces of occupation in Turkey. The Squadron was disbanded at San Stephano in Turkey in November 1919.

Re-formed with Sopwith Snipes at Hawkinge, Kent, on 1st April 1924, No 17 Squadron took its place in the fighter defences of the United Kingdom, a rôle it was to play until 1941. In 1926 it was re-equipped with Woodcocks and moved to Upavon where, alongside No 3 Squadron, it specialised in night fighting, although the Woodcock was not deemed suitable for this task. Gamecocks were flown briefly in 1928, but were soon replaced by Bulldogs, the Squadron being moved to Kenley in 1934. In 1936 it was the first squadron to be equipped with the Gloster Gauntlet fighter, a fact that is recalled by the Squadron Badge which depicts an ancient gauntlet.

No 17 Squadron kept its Gauntlet biplanes until only three months before the outbreak of war in September 1939, being issued with Hurricane Is with which it moved to its wartime station at Debden the same month. The Squadron was not sent across the Channel until the later stages of the Battle of France, being tasked with covering the retreat of British forces towards the ports in the west of that country, and being withdrawn in mid-June from the Channel Islands to Debden at the time of the final French collapse.

With no time to spare to rest and train replacement pilots, No 17 Squadron was quickly in action in the Battle of Britain, based both at Debden and Tangmere. During one of its final combats in 1940 on 8th November, it engaged a formation of about 30 Ju 87 dive bombers with a fighter escort, and was credited with a tally of 13 enemy aircraft destroyed and a further seven probably destroyed. The Squadron was finally given the opportunity to rest when sent north to Scotland in April 1941.

In November that year No 17 Squadron embarked for the Middle East, but was diverted to Burma with Japan's entry into the War, arriving at its destination in time to provide some cover for the retreating British and Commonwealth forces as the Japanese swept northwards through the Burma jungles. When eventually cut off at Lashio, the surviving Squadron Hurricanes were flown to India as the ground echelons made good their escape overland to the Indian border.

After joining the defence of Calcutta in 1941 the Squadron was moved to Ceylon in August 1943, and in March the following year began to re-equip with Spitfire VIIIs, with which it moved back to the Burma front in November. No 17 Squadron was preparing to support the invasion of Malaya at the time of the Japanese capitulation, and afterwards joined the Commonwealth forces of occupation, being disbanded at Iwakuni in Japan on 23rd February 1948.

The Squadron was re-formed at Chivenor, Devon, on 11th February 1949 to undertake anti-aircraft co-operation duties, flying Beaufighter target tugs and Spitfires until again disbanded in 1951. It re-formed in Germany with the 2nd Tactical Air Force at Wildenrath equipped with Canberra PR 7s, subsequently changing to Phantom FGR 2s at Bruggen in 1970, and to Jaguar GR 1s in July 1975. It was No 17's turn to re-equip with Tornado GR 1s while still at Bruggen before the end of 1984, and this Squadron sent aircraft and crews to participate in the Gulf War of 1991, flying the extremely hazardous strike sorties against Iraqi airfields and installations with great skill and bravery.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hants, on 1st November 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at RAF Kenley, Surrey. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A gauntlet proper. [The device alludes to the Gloster Gauntlet fighters with which the Squadron was equipped at the time the Badge was granted.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Excellere contende' — Strive to excel.

No 18 Squadron



Formed at Northolt on 11th May 1915 from a nucleus provided by No 4 Reserve Squadron, No 18 Squadron was ordered to France in November that year as a fighter-reconnaissance unit equipped with Vickers Gunbuses. These aircraft had become outmoded since being ordered into production and proved hopelessly outclassed when confronted by the nimble German fighting scouts. The Vickers aeroplanes were accordingly replaced in April 1916 by F.E.2bs for use in support of the Cavalry Corps and were fairly heavily committed during the Battle of the Somme that summer. Tactical day bombing was undertaken after the Squadron re-equipped with D.H.4s in May 1917, the Squadron continuing in this rôle for the remainder of the War. No 18 was disbanded on 31st December 1919.

The Squadron was not re-formed until 20th October 1931 when it was issued with Hart light bombers at Upper Heyford, these being replaced by Hinds in 1936. Blenheims arrived in May 1939 and No 18 took these to France with the Air Component in September that year. It was heavily involved in the Battle of France the following year, carrying out daylight bombing attacks in the battle area and suffering heavy casualties accordingly. After being withdrawn to the United Kingdom the Squadron switched its attacks to the Channel ports when invasion threatened, these raids later being afforded fighter escorts.

In October 1941 the Squadron was detached to Malta to carry out attacks on enemy shipping in the central Mediterranean, the surviving crews returning to Britain in March 1942. Blenheim Vs were then taken to North Africa at the time of the Torch landings in Algeria, but heavy losses suffered in daylight raids on German bases in Tunisia resulted in the Squadron being switched to the night bombing rôle. It was while leading one such daylight raid at low level on Bizerta airfield on 4th December 1942 that the squadron commander, Wg Cdr H G Malcolm, won a posthumous Victoria Cross while leading a formation of nine Blenheims; undeterred when confronted by overwhelming numbers of enemy fighters, Malcolm pressed ahead with his attack—all nine Blenheims being shot down, his own aircraft being the last to fall.

No 18 Squadron was re-equipped with Boston light bombers in March 1943 and stayed in the Mediterranean theatre for the remainder of the War, being disbanded in Greece on 31st March 1946. A short spell with Lancasters in Palestine during September 1946 was followed by nine months in South East Asia performing meteorological duties during 1947 with Mosquitos.

In December 1947 the Squadron re-formed at Waterbeach, near Cambridge, flying Dakotas with Transport Command, taking part in the Berlin airlift in 1949. After disbanding in 1950, No 18 Squadron re-formed as a Canberra bomber squadron at Scampton in 1953, continuing in this rôle until, in 1958, it converted to Victor B 1s with the V-force.

In January 1964 the Wessex (helicopter) Trials Unit became No 18 Squadron at Odiham, since when the Squadron has flown helicopters exclusively. Moving to Germany, the Squadron retained its Wessex aircraft until the early 1980s when it re-equipped with Chinooks, and more recently with Puma HC 1s.

Squadron formed at Northolt, Middlesex, on 11th May 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at RAF Bircham Newton, Norfolk. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A pegasus rampant gules. [The pegasus commemorates No 18 Squadron's close association with the Cavalry Corps during the Battle of the Somme during 1916.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Animo et fide' — With courage and faith.

No 19 Squadron



Although No 19 Squadron was formed in response to the threat posed by the German introduction of the Fokker monoplane over the Western Front in 1915, its move to France was so long delayed that the aircraft with which it was equipped were unsuitable for air combat and it was not until the end of 1916 that No 19 became fully engaged as a fighter and ground attack squadron, eventually flying Sopwith Dolphins throughout 1918.

It was disbanded in 1919 but re-formed in 1923 as an established interceptor squadron at Duxford, equipped in turn with such famous fighters as the Snipe, Grebe, Siskin, Bulldog and Gauntlet—all two-gun biplanes. In August 1938 the Squadron achieved fame as the first RAF Squadron to receive the immortal Spitfire, with which it fought over Dunkirk and gained a moderate degree of success in the Battle of Britain.

As RAF Fighter Command took the initiative in 1941, No 19 Squadron joined the growing cross-Channel offensive, flying sweeps over the French coast, as well as escorting aircraft of Bomber Command on raids over enemy-occupied Europe. In 1944 Mustangs replaced the Spitfires and the long range of these excellent American fighters enabled the Squadron to accompany Allied bombers much further afield, as well as escorting strikes by Coastal Command Beaufighters and Mosquitos against enemy shipping.

After the War, No 19 Squadron flew Hornets, Meteors, Hunters, Lightnings and Phantoms with RAF Fighter and Strike Commands based in the United Kingdom, the last Phantom being discarded in January 1992. Since then this long-established Squadron has been allocated to Reserve status, and undertakes the fast jet training rôle, flying Hawks at Chivenor in Devon.

Squadron formed at Castle Bromwich on 1st September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at RAF Duxford, Cambridgeshire. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: Between wings elevated and conjoined in base or a dolphin head downwards proper. [The dolphin recalls the Sopwith Dolphin aircraft with which the Squadron was equipped in 1918.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Possunt quia posse videntur' — They can because they think they can.

No 20 Squadron



Formed at Netheravon on 1st September 1915, and trained on a miscellany of aircraft, No 20 Squadron arrived in France in January 1916 under orders to assume armed reconnaissance duties over the Western Front with its F.E.2bs, a rôle it continued to perform for the remainder of the War in France. F.E.2ds were delivered in June 1916 and these were in turn replaced by Bristol F.2b Fighters in August 1917.

After the Armistice, instead of returning to the United Kingdom and eventual disbandment, No 20 was deployed to India, arriving at Bombay on 6th June 1919 at the beginning of an association with the sub-continent that would last for the remainder of the term of British rule. The Squadron's rôle was to be that of patrolling the North-West Frontier with Afghanistan, assisting the frontier police and ground troops in their efforts to control the excesses of the local tribesmen. The initial inventory of Bristol Fighters was made to last a dozen years before replacement by Wapitis in 1932 and Audaxes in December 1935.

In June 1941, coinciding with a move to Secunderabad in southern India, the Squadron was re-equipped with Blenheim light bombers; a year later, with Lysanders, it moved to West Bengal to assist in the defence of Calcutta against the Japanese. It was not until February 1943 that modern combat aircraft were issued to the Squadron as the old concept of army co-operation was abandoned in favour of aggressive close support, a policy supported by the arrival of Hurricane IIB fighter-bombers. These were soon joined by Hurricane IIDs as the nature of operations dictated a greater emphasis on anti-tank attacks; the 40mm guns, and later 60lb rocket projectiles, carried by these aircraft, were soon shown to be particularly effective against Japanese armoured vehicles and river craft.

The Hurricanes (latterly the Mark IV version) remained in front-line service up to the end of the war against Japan, and No 20 Squadron's last two years in India were spent flying Spitfires and Tempests; it was disbanded at Agra on 1st August 1947.

After eighteen months as an anti-aircraft co-operation squadron, based in Wales between 1949 and 1951, No 20 was re-formed as a day fighter squadron with the 2nd Tactical Air Force in Germany flying, in turn, Vampires, Sabres and Hunters, before disbanding at Gutersloh in December 1960. The Squadron next re-formed at Tengah, Singapore, in July 1961 with ground-attack Hunters and soon after served as a SEATO detachment in Thailand to counter communist activities on the Thai/Laos border. In 1969 a flight of Pioneers was formed to assist forward air control operations.

The Squadron was disbanded in 1970, but in December that year it re-formed as a Harrier close-support squadron at Wildenrath in Germany, and continued with this aircraft for the next quarter-century, flying the GR 1, GR 3 and GR 7 versions, and in the early 1990s was accorded Reserve status.

Squadron formed at Netheravon, Wiltshire, on 1st September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1937 while stationed at Miramshah, India. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of a rising sun or an eagle sable wings elevated perched on a sword of the first. [The rising sun symbolises the Squadron's long association with the East, and the sword, in the shape of a Talvar, is symbolic of the collaboration with the Indian army.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Facta non verba' — Deeds not words.

No 22 Squadron



After a period of training, No 22 Squadron flew to France on 1st April 1916 for armed reconnaissance work over the Western Front, equipped with F.E.2bs. With the growing opposition from German fighting scouts, casualties quickly increased and the F.E.s were replaced in mid-1917 by Bristol Fighters. However, as the number of R.E.8-equipped squadrons in France grew, No 22 began to concentrate more on air combat, often flying escorts for the specialist reconnaissance machines. The Squadron's most successful pilot in this respect was Capt J E Gurdon DFC and BAR who shot down 27 enemy aircraft during the final year of the War.

After being disbanded at Ford, Sussex, in December 1919, No 22 Squadron was re-formed at Martlesham Heath as a component of the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment, alongside No 15 Squadron, with special responsibilities for handling and performance assessment of new aircraft. When the A & AEE became an autonomous unit in 1934, No 22 Squadron re-formed at Donibristle as a torpedo-bomber unit flying Vildebeests, a rôle in which it continued until well into the Second World War.

During the Abyssinian crisis of 1935, No 22 was moved to Malta to discourage Italy from employing naval forces in the Mediterranean to broaden its colonial aggression. In 1936 the Squadron returned to Britain, moving to Thorney Island two years later. In 1939 the Vildebeests were replaced by the twin-engine Beaufort. These aircraft were used initially for minelaying but, as early difficulties with torpedoes were overcome, the Squadron undertook more aggressive operations, and it was one of its pilots, Fg Off K Campbell, RAFVR, who won the Victoria Cross posthumously when, in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, he attacked the German battlecruiser *Gneisenau* anchored in the confined waters of Brest harbour on 6th April 1941; his torpedo struck the German ship only seconds before the Beaufort plunged to destruction. Repairs to the *Gneisenau* kept her in port for nine months.

A year later No 22 Squadron flew to the Far East, to be based in Ceylon until the end of 1944 to guard against any repetition of the Japanese carrier attacks in the Indian Ocean of 1941. No such attacks occurred and the Squadron was engaged principally in anti-submarine patrols and convoy escort, being re-equipped with Beaufighters in June 1944.

No 22 Squadron was disbanded on 15th August 1946 at Singapore after a short spell flying Mosquitos, and was not re-formed until February 1955 when it became a helicopter search and rescue squadron stationed in the south of England, equipped first with Whirlwinds and then Wessex HAR 2s; it was still flying Wessex HC 2s in 1994.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hants, on 1st September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at Hal Far, Malta. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: On a torteau a Maltese cross throughout overall a Greek character pi sable fimbriated. [The Maltese cross refers to the location of the Squadron at the time the Badge was granted; the Greek character recalls that during operations in France during the First World War No 22's aircraft took off over No 7 Squadron's lines, hence the mathematical symbol pi, or '22 over 7'.]

Motto: (French) 'Preux et Audacieux' — Valiant and brave.

No 23 Squadron



No 23 Squadron was formed at Gosport on 1st September 1915, training on Caudron G IIIs, Farmans and Avro 504As, and moved to France in March 1916 to fly armed reconnaissance sorties over the BEF's sector of the Western Front with F.E.2bs. These were exchanged for Spad S VIIIs in February 1917 as the Squadron began to fly ground attack sorties against German troop concentrations behind the lines. Spad S XIIIIs joined No 23 in December that year until both types were replaced by Sopwith Dolphins in March 1918, and these continued in service until the Squadron was disbanded at the end of 1919.

It was re-formed in July 1925 with Snipes at Henlow, and thereafter the Squadron flew a succession of fighters, including the Gamecock, Bulldog and Demon between 1926 and December 1938 when No 23 Squadron was stationed at Wittering, Northamptonshire. With the arrival of Blenheims to replace the Demons, the rôle of the Squadron was changed to night fighting, although then being wholly dependent on collaboration with searchlights combined with a relative lack of targets, No 23 Squadron

had little success in air combat during the first few months of the Second World War.

In December 1940 No 23 Squadron began to fly intruder sorties over German bomber airfields during the night blitz which raged against British cities during that winter, and in March 1941 the American Havoc replaced the Blenheims in the night fighting rôle, being joined by Bostons the following February. Mosquito NF IIs eventually equipped the Squadron in July 1942 and these were flown to Malta to continue intruder attacks over Sicily, Italy and Tunisia until December 1943 when No 23 moved to Sardinia.

On 1st June 1944, after having re-formed in the United Kingdom, the Squadron began flying Mosquito VI intruders on night bomber support operations, based at Little Snoring in Norfolk with No 100 Group. No 23 Squadron was disbanded on 25th September 1945.

It re-formed at Wittering a year later, flying Mosquito NF 30s, and later NF 36s, these being followed by Vampire and Venom night fighters at Coltishall in the 1950s, and by Javelins until 1964, by which time the Squadron had moved north to Leuchars. Here it converted to Lightnings which it continued to fly until it received Phantoms at Coningsby, with which it moved once again, this time to Wattisham in Suffolk in February 1976. In 1983 it was deployed to the Falkland Islands, being based at Stanley for several years. More recently it re-equipped with Tornado F 3s.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hampshire, on 1st September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in April 1937 while based at RAF Northolt. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An eagle gules preying on a falcon or.

Motto: (Latin) 'Semper aggressus' — Always having attacked.



No 24 Squadron

It is a paradox that, although No 24 Squadron was the first dedicated British fighter squadron ever to be formed, it only spent three years equipped with fighter aircraft, and then gave seventy-five years of uninterrupted service as a communications and transport squadron.

The Squadron was formed at Hounslow Heath on 1st September 1915, and was sent to France on 7th February 1916 with D.H.2 fighters. Despite being a pusher biplane and therefore not as nimble as the German Fokker and Albatros fighting scouts, it was a single-seater and was armed with a forward-firing machine gun, the pilot enjoying an unrestricted field of view forwards.

In its early months in France No 24 Squadron scored numerous successes, at least four of its pilots gaining more than 20 victories. Inevitably, however, the D.H.2 became hopelessly outclassed and, during 'Bloody April' of 1917, these fighters were superseded by D.H.5s and, in the following December, by the excellent S.E.5A with which the Squadron remained equipped until January 1919.

No 24 Squadron was re-formed on 1st April 1920 with unarmed Bristol Fighters at Kenley, using these aircraft for communications purposes and as VIP taxis. During the next seventy-five years it flew more than forty different types of aircraft, ranging in size from the Cirrus Moth to the Armstrong Whitworth Ensign for communications and transport purposes, being based in turn at Kenley, Northolt and Hendon before 1946 when it moved to Basingbourn. On the outbreak of the Second World War it had begun by flying a mail service to the BEF; in 1942 it opened a mail service to the beleaguered island of Malta, and the following year operated a VIP York transport and, using Dakotas, opened up a number of long-distance routes.

Since the War it has operated as a line transport squadron, being equipped in turn with Yorks, Lancastrians, Hastings and Hercules, and continues to fly the latter, drawing aircraft from the Lyneham Central Servicing Wing as required.

Squadron formed at Hounslow Heath on 1st September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1937 while stationed at Hendon, Middlesex. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A blackcock proper tail plumage displayed. [The blackcock is a fast-flying bird and, when displaying its plumage, takes an aggressive stance—symbolic of the Squadron's preparedness to react to aggression.]

Motto: (Latin) 'In omnia parati' — Ready in all things.



No 25 Squadron

Pre-eminent among the fighter squadrons of the RAF throughout much of its long service, No 25 Squadron was formed at Montrose on 25th September 1915 with the staff, student pilots, ground personnel and aircraft of No 6 Reserve Squadron. It was one of those units hurriedly created to counter the depredations of the German Fokker monoplanes which had gained ascendancy in the skies over the Western Front earlier in the year and was only the second (after No 24 Squadron) to be declared a fighter squadron in the RFC.

The Squadron moved to France in February 1916 equipped with F.E.2b pusher biplanes, aircraft which soon showed themselves to be inferior to the new generation of German fighting scouts, and

casualties—particularly among the less experienced pilots—were fairly heavy. In due course the Squadron tended to be given more reconnaissance and bombing tasks and fewer fighting patrols, the latter being flown by the more experienced pilots. And it was a 25 Squadron F.E.2b, flown by Lieut G R McCubbin on 18 June 1916, which shot down the famous German pilot, Max Immelmann, the first great fighter ace to fall in air combat.

The degree to which the F.E.2bs had become outclassed was clearly demonstrated during 'Bloody April' in 1917, and No 25 Squadron was among the first to be ordered to convert to the DH.4 the following month, probably the best light bomber of the First World War, and with it flew and fought with great distinction for the remainder of the War, participating in the great battles of the Somme, Arras, Ypres and Cambrai, as well as the eventual breakthrough of the Hindenburg Line in 1918. At the time of the Armistice the Squadron was converting to the D.H.9A.

After a spell in Germany with the forces of occupation, No 25 returned to England and was disbanded on 31st January 1920, only to be re-formed the following day at Hawkinge in Kent as a fighter squadron, shortly to be equipped with Sopwith Snipes. As squadron after squadron disbanded, it was not long before No 25 was the only surviving fighter squadron deployed in Britain, and Hawkinge the only fighter station.

By the summer of 1922 a few other squadrons had been re-formed, and No 25 was ordered to Turkey in September at the time of the Chanak crisis, returning to Hawkinge with its Snipes a year later. In October 1924 the Squadron began converting to Gloster Grebes and, after chronic flutter problems with these little fighters had been overcome, No 25 Squadron pilots gave scintillating displays of aerobatics and air drill at the annual Hendon air pageants. Siskins replaced the Grebes in 1929, and these in turn gave way to Hawker Fury Is in February 1932. A flight commander on the squadron at this time was Victor Beamish, one of three brothers who gained undying fame during the Second World War.

The early 1930s were the heydays of the interceptor biplane, and No 25 Squadron was one of only three selected to fly the Fury, and went on to win every available flying, gunnery and navigation trophy, as well as dominating the Hendon shows for many years, culminating with extraordinary displays of tied-together formation aerobatics. The squadron commander in the mid-1930s was William Dickson, later Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir William, and Chief of the Air Staff.

After short spells flying Demons and Gladiators, No 25 Squadron converted to Blenheim night fighters and in 1939 was the first squadron in the world to equip with airborne radar, flying defensive patrols over the North Sea. It also participated in the first fighter attacks of the War on a German base when, with No 601 Squadron, the Blenheims attacked the seaplane station at Borkum.

No 25 Squadron flew and fought in the Battle of Britain although, being engaged in night fighting, its crews saw little combat until the daylight raids petered out and the night blitz started in the autumn of 1940. By then the Squadron was converting to the new Beaufighter. In November that year No 25 moved to Wittering to cover the Midlands under the command of David Atcherley, one of the famous twin brothers whose achievements and exploits over many years are legendary in the Service.

Next came a spell in Northern Ireland to protect the sea approaches to Liverpool before the Squadron was ordered to Church Fenton where it converted to the Mosquito II night fighter in October 1942, beginning intruder sorties the following February in addition to its home defence patrols. A few Mosquito VIs were taken on charge for intruder work, but in December 1943 the Squadron changed to the Mosquito NF.XVII with its new American centimetric interception radar. By this time the Squadron was enjoying considerable success among enemy air and ground targets, this despite the low intensity of German air activity; on one sortie a pilot, Flt Lt J Singleton, destroyed three Junkers Ju 188s in quick succession over the Humber (after the War he returned to command the Squadron).

During the last year of the War No 25 Squadron took a leading part in the night defence against the German flying bombs, specialising in attacks on enemy bombers carrying the unpleasant weapons at low altitude over the sea — they were particularly difficult targets.

After the War No 25 Squadron was selected to continue in being as a peacetime night fighter unit and made its base at West Malling in Kent in 1946, first with Mosquito NF.30s and soon after with NF.36s. For three years it returned the lowest accident record in Fighter Command, and one of its pilots, Master Pilot Steinke, won the individual air gunnery trophy — beating all the day fighter pilots in the Command. In 1951 it became the world's first jet night fighter squadron, taking delivery of two-seat Vampire NF.10s. These were replaced by twin-engine Meteor NF.12s and 14s in 1954, and four years later by Javelin FAW.7 and 9 all-weather fighters. In 1962 the Squadron gave up its aircraft to become a surface-to-air missile squadron with Bloodhound SAMs based initially at North Coates in Lincolnshire before being deployed to Germany.

No 25 Squadron returned to fighters in 1989 when it equipped with Tornado F.3s at Leeming in Yorkshire. For several years it provided the RAF's solo display Tornado, flown by Flt Lts Archie Neill and Jim Brown, and in 1991 the Squadron was formally adopted by the town of Folkestone in recognition of its long association with the nearby former airfield at Hawkinge. Aircraft of No 25 Squadron participated in Operation Desert Shield, flying sorties over the Persian Gulf to detect any Iraqi aircraft posing a threat to the United Nations forces. More recently its Tornados have been involved in operations over Bosnia, and in 1994 the Squadron won the annual international fighter classification in competition with all American and European squadrons, gaining the highest assessment of combat and readiness efficiency ever recorded by a competitor.

Squadron formed at Montrose, Angus, on 25th September 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 when stationed at RAF Hawkinge, Kent. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: On a gauntlet a hawk rising affronté all proper. [This device had been adopted by the Squadron some years before official approval of Badges, the hawk being an oblique reference to the Squadron's location at Hawkinge between the World Wars and to the Hawker Fury aircraft with which the Squadron was equipped.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Feriens tego' — Striking I defend. [An allusion to the Squadron's rôle in the fighter defence of the United Kingdom.]

No 27 Squadron



This Squadron was formed as a fighting scout unit on 5th November 1915 at Hounslow Heath and trained on Martinsyde Elephants, taking them to France in March 1916 and reaching Fienvillers in June, whence it would operate for almost a year. Unfortunately the Martinsydes did not measure up to expectations and their lack of agility in air combat resulted in No 27 Squadron transferring to the bombing and reconnaissance rôles, a change that dictated its operations during the remainder of the War; indeed, the Martinsydes were replaced by D.H.4 light bombers in September 1917, and then D.H.9As in May 1918. The Squadron disbanded in January 1920.

On 1st April that year, No 99 Squadron at Mianwali in West Bengal, India, was re-numbered 27, and continued to fly its D.H.9As on patrols over the North West Frontier. This duty continued until 1939, Wapitis having been received in 1930. A year was then spent as a training unit before Blenheim fighters were delivered to No 27 at Risalpur in October 1940, and the Squadron deployed to Singapore in the following February. Most of the Blenheims were destroyed on the ground during the Japanese invasion, and the survivors were flown to Sumatra where, after further casualties, the Squadron ceased to exist in February 1942.

No 27 Squadron was re-formed at Amarda Road in India on 19th September that year, being equipped with Beaufighter VIs for operations in the fighter-bomber rôle over Burma. For a short time the Squadron flew rocket-armed Beaufighters and gained an outstanding reputation for its use of these projectiles among Japanese targets in the jungle. Mosquito VIs replaced the Beaufighters in April 1943, but owing to its wooden structure, the Mosquito proved neither ideal nor popular among the Squadrons in Burma, and in March 1944 No 27 Squadron returned to Beaufighters, this time the Mk X version. After a nine-month period working in specialised air-jungle rescue work at the end of the War, No 27 Squadron was disbanded on 1st February 1946.

It re-formed at Oakington, Cambridgeshire, in Transport Command on 24th November 1947, flying Dakotas, and operated these aircraft during the Berlin Airlift in 1949-50, and disbanded once again on 10th November 1950. It next re-formed on 15th June 1953 as a Bomber Command squadron flying Canberras at Scampton, and was involved in operations during the Suez crisis of 1956, but was again disbanded in December that year. It became part of the V-force on 1st April 1961 flying Vulcan B 2s at Scampton, this being the first Wing to be armed with the Blue Steel stand-off weapon. The Vulcan B 2s were replaced by the SR 2 strategic reconnaissance version in 1973, flying from Waddington, Lincolnshire, and in May 1983 became the third Tornado interdictor-strike squadron to fly the new Tornado GR 1A based in the United Kingdom.

Stationed at Marham in Norfolk alongside No 617 Squadron, also with Tornados, No 27 Squadron followed it in the American Strategic Air Command's bombing contest in 1985 and, apart from winning, returned even with better results than the illustrious 617. No 27 Squadron contributed aircraft and crews to the United Nations' force in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm, these taking part in highly skilled attacks on the Iraqi airfield installations and other pinpoint objectives.

Squadron formed at Hounslow Heath on 5th November 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at RAF Kohat, India. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A elephant statant vert. [The elephant recalls the Martinsyde Elephant aircraft with which the Squadron was first equipped when it arrived at the Western Front in 1916.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Quam celerrime ad astra' — With all speed to the stars.

No 28 Squadron



Formed on 7th November 1915 at Gosport as a training unit, No 28 Squadron was equipped with F.E.2bs with which it moved to Yatesbury in July 1917; among its staff pilots at this time was Capt W G Barker, a 23-year-old Canadian who, serving later with Nos 139 and 201 Squadrons, amassed a total of 53 air combat victories and in the final days of the War was awarded the Victoria Cross for taking on a formation of 60 enemy aircraft single-handed, shooting down four of them despite being severely wounded.

No 28 Squadron itself fought on the Italian front before returning to Britain to disband on 20th January 1920. On 1st April that year No 114 Squadron at Ambala in India was re-numbered 28 and, with Bristol

F.2b Fighters flew internal security sorties over the North West Frontier province, being re-equipped with Wapitis in September 1931; in June 1936 it received Audaxes, remaining at Ambala until moved to Kohat in February 1939. In September 1941 No 28 changed to Lysanders and deployed to the Burma front in January 1942, converting to Hurricanes in December that year. The Squadron became heavily engaged in operations against the Japanese, Spitfire IXs joining the Hurricane IIC fighter-bombers in July 1945.

Immediately after the War the Squadron moved to Malaya with Spitfire VIIIs and XIVs, and to Kai Tak, Hong Kong, in May 1949 to reinforce that colony's defences as the civil war in China threatened the stability of the theatre. The Spitfires were superseded by Vampires in 1951, followed by Venoms in 1956 and Hunter FGA 9s in May 1962. With the withdrawal of permanent British forces in the Far East in the 1960s, No 28 Squadron was disbanded at Kai Tak on 31st December 1966.

The Squadron re-formed as a helicopter transport support squadron in April 1968 flying Whirlwind HAR 10s, again at Kai Tak, being also responsible for search and rescue operations in the colony. In January 1972 the Whirlwinds were replaced by Wessex HC 2s, the latter still in service with the Squadron in the early 1990s.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hants, on 7th November 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at Ambala, India. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: In front of a demi-pegasus argent winged or a fasces gules and argent. [Choice of the demi-pegasus recalls the White Horse carved in the hills near Yatesbury, where the Squadron was stationed early in its history.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Quicquid agas age' — Whatsoever you may do, do.



No 29 Squadron

Vying with No 25, No 29 Squadron is one of the most famous of the RAF's night fighter squadrons, most recently flying the Tornado Mach 2 fighters. It was formed at Gosport from a nucleus provided by No 23 Squadron on 7th November 1915. Equipped with D.H.2 fighters, it moved to France in March 1916 to fly escort for the squadrons engaged in reconnaissance work over the Western Front. Among those pilots who flew with the Squadron at that time was a Flight Sergeant J T B McCudden who shot down three enemy aircraft before being commissioned, winning the Military Medal and then the MC; after being posted to other squadrons he added the Victoria Cross, two DSOs and a Bar to his MC, to become the most decorated RAF pilot of the Kaiser's War, and the fourth-highest scoring pilot with 57 victories. No 29 was re-equipped with Nieuport 17s in March 1917 and during the following month was heavily engaged in air combat with German scouts during the period of the Arras offensive when casualties, particularly among those reconnaissance squadrons, reached disastrous proportions, known as 'bloody April'. During the summer of that year the Squadron became adept at destroying German observation balloons, and was employed in ground strafing at the Third Battle of Ypres.

In April 1918 No 29 Squadron took delivery of S.E.5As which it flew for the rest of the War, accompanying the Allied forces of occupation into Germany after the Armistice. It returned to the United Kingdom and was disbanded at Spittlegate (Grantham) on 31st December 1919. It re-formed at Duxford on 1st April 1923, flying Sopwith Snipes, but these were replaced by Gloster Grebes in January 1925, and these were in turn superseded by Siskin IIAs in 1928, and by Bulldogs during the summer of 1932, by which time No 29 was stationed at North Weald.

The Squadron became a two-seat fighter squadron in March 1935 with the delivery of Hawker Demons, and with these it was deployed to Egypt at the time of the Abyssinian crisis later that year, returning a year later (after a short period flying Gordons) to North Weald. In December 1938 No 29 re-equipped with Blenheim fighters and was soon training for the night fighter rôle. It was, however, not until the Battle of Britain that No 29 began night patrols in earnest and scored a handful of victories in countering the Luftwaffe's sporadic night activity. Not convinced that the Blenheim was suitable as a night fighter, the squadron commander, Wg Cdr S C Widdows, flew many night patrols by himself in a Hurricane, but was unable to find any enemy aircraft illuminated by searchlights.

The first Beaufighters to arrive on the Squadron were taken on charge during November 1940, but they did not become operational until February 1941, and thereafter No 29's victory tally mounted steadily under Widdows' leadership. In April 1941 the Squadron moved to West Malling and was therefore well placed to meet enemy night raiders on their way to attack London, and even more so when the Germans attacked Canterbury. With a change to Beaufighter VIs in March 1943, No 29 began to fly night intruder operations over enemy bomber airfields in France, and in November that year claimed its 60th enemy aircraft destroyed.

For the rest of the War, No 29 Squadron was equipped with Mosquito night fighters, flying its first intruder operations with the Mark XIII in May 1944; for much of the remainder of that year, however, the Squadron was engaged in combating the German flying bomb campaign—both intercepting the incoming bombs at night and flying patrols to spot and attack the launch sites. In the final weeks of the War No 29 converted to Mosquito NF 30s and, in one of these, a pilot managed to shoot down one of the new Messerschmitt Me 262 jet fighters.

In October 1946 the Squadron returned to West Malling where it remained until 1950 with Mosquito

NF 36s, and where a fierce rivalry existed with the station's other night fighter Squadron, No 25. No 29 then moved to Tangmere, re-equipping with Meteor NF 11 jets late in 1951, and Javelins in 1957. The next year it moved to Leuchars in Scotland where Javelin FAW 9s were delivered in 1962 and with these big fighters the Squadron was deployed to Cyprus and thence on a nine-month detachment to Zambia in 1965.

On return to the United Kingdom No 29 Squadron made its base at Wattisham and converted to Lightning F 3s, but disbanded in July 1974. Later that year it was re-formed at Coningsby where it equipped with Phantom FGR 2s which it retained until converting to Tornado F 3s in the late 1980s. The Squadron contributed aircraft and crews to No 5 (Composite) Squadron which was sent to the Persian Gulf in August 1990 to fly CAP sorties to guard against interference by Iraqi aircraft in the build-up of United Nations forces protecting Kuwait.

Squadron formed at Gosport on 7th November 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in April 1937 while stationed at RAF North Weald. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An eagle in flight gules preying on a buzzard or. [The eagle perpetuated a similar device used in an unofficial Squadron badge during the First World War; the introduction of a buzzard signifies the air combat rôle of the Squadron.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Impiger et acer' — Energetic and keen.

No 30 Squadron



Formed at Farnborough, Hants, in October 1914 (although its number was not allocated until 24th March 1915) No 30 Squadron embarked for Egypt in November 1914, arriving at Ismailia the following month. With a mixed complement of B.E.2s and Farmans, the Squadron flew reconnaissance patrols along the Suez Canal in support of forces opposing the Turks in Sinai. A second flight was formed in April 1915 to protect the oil pipeline between Abadan and Basra.

In 1916 the whole Squadron assembled in Mesopotamia and took part in the operations to support the besieged garrison at Kut. During the last year of the War No 30 Squadron flew what was probably the greatest variety of aircraft by any in the new Royal Air Force, including Martinsydes, Spads, R.E.8s, D.H.4s and Vickers F.B.19s.

The Squadron was not disbanded after the War, but was reduced to a cadre at Baghdad. It was brought up to full strength on 1st February 1920, and constituted an element of the permanent forces tasked with policing Iraq, mandated to Britain by the League of Nations, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Between the World Wars No 30 was equipped with R.E.8s, D.H.9As, Wapitis and Hardys, flying from RAF stations in Iraq and Egypt.

At the time of Italy's entry into the Second World War, the Squadron was operating in the Western Desert, but moved to Greece in November 1940 at the beginning of the Balkan campaign equipped with Blenheim fighters. In April 1941 it was involved in the Battle of Crete before being forced to retire once more to Egypt.

Converting to Hurricanes for the defence of Alexandria during the latter part of 1941, No 30 was then ordered to the Indian Ocean arriving in Ceylon in March 1942 in time to counter the Japanese carrier attacks on the Island the following month.

It was not until February 1944 that the Squadron was transferred to the Burma front, taking with it Hurricane IICs, but these were replaced by Thunderbolts in July that year; these fighters remained in use until 1946, and the Squadron was disbanded in India in December.

No.30 Squadron re-formed as a Transport squadron at Oakington in November 1947 and flew Dakotas in the Berlin airlift two years later, these being superseded by Valettas in 1950 and by Beverleys in 1957. Since 1968 the Squadron has flown Hercules transports, No.30 being a component of the Lyneham Wing.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hampshire in October 1914.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1938 while stationed at Habbaniya, Iraq. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A date palm tree proper. [The palm tree alludes to the original deployment of the squadron to Egypt.]

Motto: (French) 'Ventre a terre' — All out



No 31 Squadron

Formed at Farnborough on 11th October 1915, No 31 Squadron embarked for India and arrived at Risalpur on 26th December, equipping with B.E.2cs and Henry Farmans; its task was to co-operate with the Indian Army in the North West Frontier province, continuing with this work after the War in Europe had ended.

It was re-equipped with Bristol Fighters in 1919 and continued to fly these until 1931 when they were replaced with Wapitis. In April 1939 the Squadron's rôle was changed to bomber-transport while stationed at Lahore where it converted to Valentia biplane transports, these being replaced by Douglas DC-2s in 1941 (before Japan's entry into the War). In April 1942 Dakotas began arriving and by May the following year the Squadron was fully re-equipped with the later type.

For the remainder of the War — except for a short period in 1944 spent in glider-towing training — No 31 Squadron was engaged in supporting the 14th Army in Burma, transporting troops, evacuating wounded and dropping supplies to the ground forces fighting in the jungles. After the Japanese capitulation the Squadron moved to Singapore, but was then deployed to Kemajoran in Java to support Allied forces, and was disbanded on 30th September 1946. Re-formed two months later in India, it was heavily engaged in transport duties during the final year of Britain's military presence in the sub-continent, being disbanded once more on 31st December 1947.

On 19th July 1948 the Hendon-based Metropolitan Communications Squadron was numbered 31 Squadron, equipped with Anson transports (and later with Devons), and as such continued until March 1955 when it reverted to its former designation. No 31 was re-formed as a first-line photographic reconnaissance Squadron on the same day, flying Canberra PR 7s at Laarbruch in Germany until 31st March 1971 when it was disbanded.

No 31 Squadron was re-formed at Bruggen on 7th October 1971 to fly Phantom FGR 2s, discarding these in favour of Jaguars in December 1975. These gave place to Tornados during the summer of 1984 when No 31 became the first German-based RAF Squadron to receive these new interdictor-strike aircraft.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hampshire, on 11th October 1915.

Squadron Badge granted in June 1937 while stationed at Drigh Road, India. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of a wreath of laurel vert a mullet or. [The mullet is an exact representation of the Star of India, and the laurel wreath is symbolic of the distinguished service given by the Squadron while stationed on the sub-continent.]

Motto: (Latin) 'In caelum indicum primus' — First into the Indian skies.

No 32 Squadron



No 32 Squadron was formed as a fighting scout unit at Netheravon, Wiltshire, on 12th January 1916, and transferred to the Western Front in May that year, flying patrols and frequently engaging enemy scouts over the trenches. The D.H.2, with which No 32 was equipped, was flown with great effect during the great Battle of the Somme, which opened on 1st July; on that day the squadron commander, Maj L W B Rees, sighted a formation of ten German bombers and attacked, forcing two down and causing the others to retreat, though he himself had been wounded. For this action he was to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Providing escorts for bombing raids and flying ground attack sorties, No 32 continued with D.H.2s until they were replaced by D.H.5s in May 1917, these being flown for trench strafing during the Third Battle of Ypres. No 32 Squadron re-equipped with S.E.5As in January 1918 and was in frequent action during the great German offensive of March that year, and in the final Battle of Amiens.

After the Armistice the Squadron returned to England and was disbanded at Croydon on 29th December 1919. It re-formed on 1st April 1923 as a metropolitan fighter squadron, stationed at Kenley with Snipes, reaching its full complement of three flights in 1924. Between then and 1938 No 32 Squadron flew almost the whole inventory of classic British interceptor biplanes—Grebbs, Gamecocks, Siskins, Bulldogs and Gauntlets—before receiving the RAF's first monoplane fighter, the eight-gun Hurricane.

The Squadron was not sent to France in 1939 but, stationed at Biggin Hill early in the Battle of France, flew sorties over the retreating BEF as it fell back on Dunkirk. After a brief period to re-train at Wittering, No 32 returned to Biggin Hill in time to take a prominent part in the Battle of Britain. Commanded by Sqn Ldr J Worrall, the Squadron pioneered the formation head-on attack when intercepting enemy bomber formations, instead of the traditional diving quarter attacks which had hitherto proved largely ineffective. On account of heavy casualties, the Squadron was again withdrawn to the north at the end of August 1940.

After night flying training No 32 became a night intruder fighter-bomber squadron, for which the Hurricane was found to be suitable, but after only a short period in this rôle during the summer of 1942 it was sent to Algeria immediately after the Torch landings to mount defensive patrols over the Allied supply ports in North Africa. The Squadron converted to Spitfires in 1943 and flew these to Italy in October that year, and to Greece in 1944. It subsequently served in Palestine from February 1945

until May 1948 when it moved to Cyprus, still flying Spitfires.

No 32 Squadron re-equipped with Vampire 3 fighters while in Cyprus, but moved to the Persian Gulf with Venom fighter-bombers in 1951. In 1957, back at Nicosia in Cyprus, it became a bomber squadron flying Canberras, continuing in this rôle until disbanded on 3rd February 1969. Simultaneously the Metropolitan Communications Squadron, stationed at Northolt, was re-designated No 32 Squadron, with Basset and Andover transports, and Sycamore helicopters. During the 1970s it flew a mixed complement of Andovers and HS.125s, and Whirlwind helicopters, later replacing the last-named with Gazelle HT 3s and HCC 4s.

Squadron formed at Netheravon, Wiltshire, on 12th January 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1936 while stationed at Biggin Hill. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A hunting horn or stringed azure. [The hunting horn was selected as being appropriate for an interceptor fighter squadron, its rôle at the time the Badge was granted. The radio call 'Tally ho!' was customarily made on sighting the enemy.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Adeste comites' — Rally round comrades.



No 33 Squadron

When No 12 Squadron moved to France in September 1915 it left behind a small number of pilots and ground personnel who were posted to Filton, near Bristol, and on 12th January the following year they provided the nucleus of a new Squadron, No 33. Two months later this moved to Bramham Moor in Yorkshire as a Home Defence unit to help guard against German airship attacks on the industrial Midlands. Flying B.E.2cs and 2ds at the outset, the Squadron re-equipped with F.E.2bs in November 1916, and Bristol Fighters in June 1918; Avro 504Ks (modified as night fighters) followed in August that year. Despite flying hundreds of defensive patrols the Squadron found no enemy targets and was disbanded on 13th June 1919.

No 33 Squadron was re-formed at Netheravon on 1st March 1929 as a day bomber unit flying Horsley medium bombers, these being replaced when the Squadron was the first to take delivery of the famous Hawker Hart light bomber in February 1930. It was deployed to Egypt in 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis and, unlike most other squadrons similarly deployed, remained in the Middle East, becoming a fighter squadron in February 1938 and taking delivery of Gladiators at Ismailia.

The Gladiator biplane was, at that time the most modern RAF single-seat fighter in the Middle East, and continued as such until some weeks after Italy's entry into the War; No 33 began equipping with Hurricanes in September 1940 and moved to Greece in February for the final stages of the Balkan campaign. As the Germans' advance neared Athens, No 33 Squadron was given the almost hopeless task of beating off the heavy Luftwaffe attacks on the ports through which the Allied forces were being evacuated, and it was a young South African pilot, Sqn Ldr MT St J Pattle, who commanded the Squadron, frequently flying several combat sorties in a single day, and eventually raising his victory score to over 40 before being killed in action over Piraeus harbour on 20th April 1941. He had been awarded the DFC and BAR, and his score was the highest achieved by an RAF fighter pilot in the Second World War. No 33 subsequently fought over Crete, its last Hurricane flying back to Egypt on 19th May.

The Squadron continued flying Hurricanes over the Western Desert until December 1943 when it eventually converted to Spitfire Vs, and in April 1944 returned to the United Kingdom, in time to take part in the Normandy operations and the invasion of Europe. It converted to Tempest Vs at the end of the year and joined the Second Tactical Air Force in Holland during February 1945. The Squadron moved to Germany at the end of the War and remained there until 1949 when it was re-deployed to Malaya to fly ground attack sorties against the Communist guerilla forces operating in the jungle, first with Tempest 2s and later flying Hornets. In March 1955 the Squadron merged with No 45 Squadron and ceased to exist.

No 33 re-formed as a night fighter Squadron on 15th October 1955, flying Venom NF 2s at Driffield, and these were replaced by Meteor NF 14s in 1957 in preparation for the all-weather Javelin FAW 7s which were taken on charge in July the following year at Leeming. No 33 Squadron was disbanded at Middleton St George in November 1962.

Re-formed as a surface-to-air guided missile squadron armed with Bloodhound SAMs, No 33 was deployed in Malaysia for air defence duties from March 1965 until January 1970, when it was disbanded once more, and in June 1971 it re-formed as the first RAF squadron to be equipped with Puma HC 1 helicopters, being based at Odiham in No 38 Group in the tactical support rôle, equipment and operational rôle that have continued into the 1990s.

Squadron formed at Filton, Bristol, on 12th January 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at Mersa Matruh, Egypt. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A hart's head affronté couped at the neck proper. [The hart recalls that No 33 Squadron was the first to be equipped with the Hawker Hart light bomber.]

Motto: 'Loyalty'



No 39 Squadron

Originally intended as a Home Defence Squadron to defend London from German airship raids, No 39 was formed on 15th April 1916 at Hounslow with flights of B.E.2cs detached to airfields at Hainault Farm, Suttons Farm and Hornchurch. In August that year the Squadron headquarters were moved to Woodford and a fourth flight deployed to North Weald Bassett. Almost immediately the Squadron achieved outstanding successes, and on 3rd September that year Lieut W Leefe Robinson shot down the Schütte-Lanz airship SL.11 at Cuffley, Hertfordshire—the first enemy airship to fall on British soil, and a victory which brought the award of the Victoria Cross. Within a month three further German airship raiders, L.31, L.32 and L.33, had fallen, two of them to the guns of the Squadron's B.E.s, and the third shot down by anti-aircraft guns in collaboration with No 39. No further airship was destroyed, but when the Gotha aeroplane raids started in 1917, the Squadron was involved once more. In an action during the final night attack by Gothas on London during the night of 19th/20th May 1918, Lieut A J Arkell (flying a Bristol Fighter, with which the Squadron was then equipped) found and destroyed a Gotha bomber which had survived interception by another British fighter. No 39 Squadron was disbanded on 16th November 1918.

On 1st July 1919 No 37 Squadron was re-numbered 39; equipped with D.H.9A light bombers it moved to Spittlegate in 1923 until December 1928 when it left for service in India, to fly patrols with Wapitis over the North West Frontier province. These aircraft were superseded by Harts in 1931 and, after a move to Singapore in 1938, the Squadron re-equipped with Blenheim bombers. It was re-deployed again, this time to the Middle East, in May 1940, where it remained until August 1942 when, as the tide of war moved westward, its theatre of operations shifted to the central Mediterranean. By then the Squadron's rôle had also changed as Beaufighters were being flown on anti-shipping operations off the coasts of North Africa, a rôle in which No 39 continued to operate until February 1945, when Marauder bombers were taken on charge. These were joined a year later by Mosquito Vis, but on 8th September 1946 the Squadron was disbanded at Khartoum in the Sudan.

After re-forming in Kenya in 1948 for less than a year as a Tempest unit, No 39 became a night fighter Squadron, first with Mosquitos and then with Meteors, based in Egypt and Malta until 1958, and it was while stationed in Malta during 1958 that No 39 Squadron was re-equipped with Canberra PR 3s in the photo reconnaissance rôle; and it has continued to fly later versions of the Canberra ever since, having returned to England in 1970 to take up its station at Wyton.

Squadron formed at Hounslow on 15th April 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at Risalpur, India. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A winged bomb vert palewise. [A winged bomb featured in an earlier, unofficial badge displayed by the Squadron when it flew D.H.9As during the 1920s.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Die noctuque' — By day and night [The motto also originated in the years when the D.H.9A was flown by the Squadron.]



No 41 Squadron

No 41 Squadron was formed at Gosport on 14th July 1916 from a nucleus previously designated No 27 Reserve Squadron. It was intended from the outset to be a fighting scout squadron and trained with such obsolescent aircraft as the Vickers F.B.5 and D.H.2 before moving to France the following September with F.E.8s. Although obliged to fly these aircraft on fighting patrols over the Western Front, they were found to be thoroughly unsuitable for this work, yet were retained in service on No 41 Squadron until D.H.5s became available in July 1917. Even these aircraft were generally disliked by most pilots, and it was not until the arrival of the S.E.5A in 1918 that the Squadron was able to prove its true worth in air combat, even though most of its operational effort was in ground attacks. The Squadron's highest scoring pilots at this time were the Canadian, Capt W G Claxton DSO, DFC and BAR, with 39 air combat victories, and Capt W E Shields, DFC and BAR, with 24 — all their victories being scored while with No 41.

The Squadron was disbanded on 31st December 1919 at Northolt, but re-formed there on 1st April 1923 with Snipes, these being replaced with early Siskins the following year. Apart from almost a year spent in the Middle East during the Abyssinian crisis in 1935-36, No 41 Squadron remained a metropolitan interceptor squadron flying a succession of biplane fighters, namely Bulldogs, Demons and Fury IIs until, in January 1939, it was issued with Spitfire Is.

No 41 Squadron fought with considerable distinction during the Battle of Britain despite suffering very heavy casualties, among its well-known pilots being Plt Off G H Bennions DFC (8 victories during the Battle, who led the Squadron in combat despite his junior rank, before being grievously wounded), and Plt Off E S Lock (16 victories, later DSO, DFC and BAR). After the great battle No 41 Squadron, which continued to fly Spitfires for the remainder of the War, joined Fighter Command's offensive sweeps over France, sometimes providing escorts for Bomber Command's attacks across the Channel. Equipped with Spitfire XIIs the Squadron was also tasked with intercepting the fast-flying Focke-Wulf Fw 190 tip-and-run fighter-bombers in their attacks against the English Channel ports, and later the

German flying bombs. During the final months of the War, No 41 joined the 2nd Tactical Air Force on the Continent to fly armed reconnaissance sorties. It was disbanded in Germany on 1st April 1946.

On the same day, No 122 Squadron in Scotland was re-numbered 41 and, shortly after, moved to Wittering as an instrument training unit. It returned to operational status in June 1948 when it re-equipped with Hornet twin-engine fighters, converting to Meteor jets in 1951 and Hunter 5s in 1955. In 1958 No 141 Squadron at Coltishall was re-numbered 41, and the Squadron continued to fly Javelin all-weather fighters until disbanded at Wattisham in 1963.

In 1965 No 41 Squadron was re-formed as a Bloodhound surface-to-air missile unit being deployed at West Raynham until 1970. It became a flying unit once more in 1972, equipping with Phantoms in the fighter-reconnaissance rôle at Coningsby in No 38 Group before moving to Coltishall with Jaguars in 1977. As recently as 1990-91 these aircraft and their crews took a prominent and very effective part in the Gulf War, and subsequently in security operations over northern Iraq, flying Jaguar GR 1As from bases in Turkey for the protection of the Kurdish population.

Squadron formed at Gosport on 14th July 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1937 while stationed at Catterick, Yorkshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A double-armed cross gules. [Choice of this device recalls that No 41 Squadron first landed at St Omer when it arrived in France in the First World War; this cross is featured in the Arms of St Omer.]

Motto: 'Seek and destroy'



No 42 Squadron

Formed on 1st April 1916 at Filton, Bristol, as a corps reconnaissance unit, No 42 Squadron moved after training to France in August with B.E.2es, flying artillery spotting and support reconnaissance sorties over the Western Front until re-deployed to the Italian Front in December 1917 with R.E.8s. However, it was hurriedly returned to the Western Front in March the following year when the major German offensive opened. Shortly after the Armistice the Squadron returned to England to be disbanded on 26th June 1919 at Netheravon.

No 42 Squadron was not re-formed until 1936 when, well into the pre-War expansion period, 'B' Flight of No 22 Squadron provided the nucleus of aircraft and crews for a new Vildebeest torpedo-bomber squadron. And it was not until April 1940, when stationed at Thorney Island, that No 42 received modern aircraft, namely Beauforts. After the collapse of the Low Countries and France under the German onslaught of 1940, the Squadron engaged in minelaying and other anti-shipping operations along the coasts of northern Europe, and these continued until June 1942 when No 42 flew out to the Far East, pausing briefly in the Mediterranean theatre to carry out attacks on enemy shipping at the time of the Battle of Alamein. However, it was not until December that the Squadron assembled in Ceylon, still flying Beauforts.

Blenheim Vs equipped No 42 for much of 1943 after having moved to India for operations on the Burma front. In August that year the Squadron began converting to Hurricane IIC fighter-bombers and ground attack operations started in December, continuing until May 1945. It was disbanded on 30th June that year, but the next day No 146 Squadron was re-numbered 42, and this Squadron then flew Thunderbolts until the end of the year when it was again disbanded.

On 1st October 1946 No 254 Squadron was re-numbered 42, while flying Beaufighters with Coastal Command, and these duties were continued until No 42 Squadron was again disbanded in October the following year.

When the Squadron was next re-formed, in July 1952, it was to become a maritime reconnaissance unit, that rôle being performed ever since. No 42 received its first Shackletons at St Eval in Cornwall, and replaced the early MR 1s with MR 2s in 1954, and these continued in service until 1966, the Squadron in the meantime having moved to St Mawgan in October 1958. The Shackleton MR 3 served on No 42 from 1965 until 1971, when the four-jet Nimrod MR 1 was introduced, and Nimrod MR 2s still equipped the Squadron in the 1990s.

Squadron formed at Filton, Bristol, on 1st April 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1938 while stationed at RAF Thorney Island, Sussex. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: On a terrestrial globe azure and argent the figure Perseus or. [The figure of Perseus symbolises the achievement of a desired objective with the means available, while the Squadron flew aircraft powered by the Bristol Perseus engine. The globe signified worldwide activities.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Fortiter in re' — Bravely in action.



No 43 Squadron

Famous as 'The Fighting Cocks' since the inter-War period when, it flew Gloster Gamecocks which prompted its Badge design, No 43 Squadron gained its reputation for panache in flying during the golden age of the Fury I biplane fighter.

It was formed at Stirling in Scotland on 15th April 1916 and moved to France with Sopwith 1½-Strutters as a fighter reconnaissance squadron in January 1917, receiving Sopwith Camels in September that year, and with these it flew fighting patrols and ground attack operations for the remainder of the War, receiving Snipes in the final months. Its highest-scoring pilot during this period was Captain H W Woollett DSO, MC and BAR, who was credited with the destruction of 35 enemy aircraft (of which six victories had been gained previously while flying with No 24 Squadron). On one occasion he shot down six German aircraft in a single day.

No 43 Squadron was disbanded on 31st December 1919 and, when re-formed on 1st July 1925 at Henlow, it was again equipped with Snipes. These were, replaced by Gamecocks in 1926 and the Squadron moved to Tangmere at the end of the year; here it remained until soon after the beginning of the Second World War. The Gamecocks were replaced by Siskins in 1928, and then by Hawker Fury Is in May 1931. The Squadron continued to fly the Mark I Fury until February 1939, by which time the Hurricane had been in squadron service elsewhere for more than a year.

Hurricanes replaced the Furies in time to enable No 43 to become operational before the outbreak of war in September 1939, but the Squadron was not sent to France; instead it was posted north until May the following year when it returned to Tangmere to cover the evacuation of Allied forces from Dunkirk. No 43 Squadron was heavily engaged in the early weeks of the Battle of Britain under the command of Sqn Ldr J V C Badger DFC until this officer was shot down and grievously wounded on 30th August (and died of his wounds shortly after), and the Squadron was withdrawn to the north a week later to rest and train new pilots.

No 43 did not return to the south of England until June 1942 when, for a few weeks, it flew offensive sweeps and intruder sorties. In September it was withdrawn from operations to prepare for a move to North Africa. It arrived in Algeria shortly after the Torch landings and began defensive patrols with Hurricane IIC cannon-armed fighters over the supply ports as the Allied armies advanced into Tunisia.

Spitfires were received in February 1943 and the Squadron moved to Malta to cover the invasion of Sicily and, after a short period based in Italy, transferred to Corsica to fly fighter patrols over the Allied landings in southern France in mid-1944. Thereafter No 43 returned to the Italian front where it remained for the rest of the War, being disbanded in May 1947.

The Squadron was re-formed at Tangmere once more on 11th February 1949 when No 266 Squadron was re-numbered, flying Meteor 4s with Fighter Command. During the 1950s Meteor 8s were followed in turn by Hunter 1s, 4s and 6s before No 43 was deployed, first to Cyprus and then to Aden with ground-attack Hunter 9s. It was disbanded in 1967 but re-formed in 1969 at Leuchars with Phantoms. These aircraft remained with the Squadron until the late 1980s when they were replaced by Tornado F 3s, and the Squadron participated in Operation Desert Shield during 1990-91, flying CAPs over the Persian Gulf.

Squadron formed at Stirling on 15th April 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in July 1936 while stationed at RAF Tangmere. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A gamecock proper. [The gamecock was chosen as the Squadron's unofficial badge device at the time it was equipped with fighters of that name, and this device was perpetuated when Badges were officially sanctioned; by then the Squadron was widely known as 'The Fighting Cocks'.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Gloria finis' — Glory is the end.

No 45 Squadron



Equipped at the outset with Sopwith 1½-Strutters, No 45 Squadron was formed at Gosport on 1st March 1916, taking these aircraft to France in the following October where it flew fighter patrols over the Western Front until the autumn of 1917. Sopwith Camels joined the Squadron and with these No 45 was transferred to the Italian Front where it remained until September 1918 when it returned to France, joining the Independent Force to provide escorts for British bombers which were embarking on strategic operations against German towns and cities. The Squadron was disbanded on 31st December 1919.

No 45 re-formed in Egypt on 1st April 1921 to pioneer air routes in the Middle East flying Vickers Vimy bombers before being equipped with Vernons as a bomber-transport Squadron in Iraq during 1922. In 1927 it was absorbed into No 47 Squadron, but re-formed soon after as a light bomber squadron, equipped with D.H.9As at Heliopolis in Egypt. It remained in the Middle East until well into the Second World War, flying Fairey IIIFs, Harts, Vincents, Gordons, Wellesleys and Blenheims. In 1940-41 the Squadron was involved in the East African and Iraqi campaigns, and in February 1942 No 45 was despatched with its Blenheims to Burma in an attempt to stem the Japanese advance in that

country. The Squadron became scattered and had to re-assemble in India the following month. In December it re-equipped with American Vengeance dive bombers, but these were found to be unsatisfactory and in February 1944 No 45 converted to Mosquito VI fighter-bombers, aircraft which were also unsuitable for operations in the humid heat of Burma owing to their wooden structure.

In May 1946 the Squadron was deployed to Ceylon where it received Beaufighters. A move to Malaya in 1949 was accompanied by a change to Brigand B 1s for operations against the Communist guerilla forces at large in the jungles, these aircraft being replaced by Hornet F 3s in 1951, and by Vampire and Venom fighter-bombers in 1955. Two years later the Squadron converted to Canberras in the United Kingdom, retaining these bombers until disbandment in January 1970.

No 45 Squadron was re-formed at West Raynham on 1st August 1972 with Hunter 9s as a ground-attack training squadron until disbanded once more in 1976 while stationed at Wittering. The Squadron was given Reserve status when, in December 1983, it became the 'shadow' unit of the Tornado Weapons Conversion Unit, flying Tornado GR 1s.

Squadron formed at Gosport on 1st March 1916

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while based at Helwan, Egypt (but detached temporarily to Kenya). Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A camel passant azure winged gules. [The camel refers to the Sopwith Camel fighters with which the Squadron was equipped during the First World War; both the device and the motto had been in use for many years in an unofficial Badge before being officially approved in 1936.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Per ardua surgo' — Through difficulties I arise.



No 47 Squadron

Later to become one of the RAF's most famous transport Squadrons, No 47 was originally formed as a ground support unit at Beverley in Yorkshire on 1st March 1916, embarking for Greece on 6th September that year to support the British, French and Serbian forces fighting the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian armies in Macedonia. Flying a mixed complement of B.E.2cs and 2ds, B.E.12s and 12as, Bristol Scouts, D.H.2s, F.K.8s and S.E.5As, the Squadron continued to harass the hostile forces in the air and on the ground until, in the closing weeks of the War, Bulgaria signed an Armistice. In April 1919, No 47 was sent with Sopwith Camels to aid the Russian White Armies in the north Caucasus.

On 1st February 1920, No 206 Squadron was re-numbered 47 at Helwan in Egypt, being equipped with D.H.9As the following year and dividing its flying operations between the Canal Zone and the Sudan until 1927 when the whole Squadron assembled at Khartoum, re-equipping with Fairey III Fs. Gordons and Vincents were flown in succession until 1940 when replaced by Wellesleys. During the campaign to eliminate the Italian colonies in East Africa, the Squadron's Wellesleys flew bombing attacks and, following the Italian surrender, No 47 was engaged in anti-submarine patrols off the Egyptian coasts.

Equipped with Beaufort torpedo-bombers, and later Beaufighters, the Squadron began anti-shipping strikes in the central Mediterranean in October 1942 and continued these operations over the Aegean until March 1944 when it was transferred to India as part of a strike wing. Conversion to Mosquitos proved abortive when their airframes were found to suffer failure in the heat and humidity, and No 47 reverted to Beaufighters in November that year. Mosquitos returned in February 1945 after suitable modifications had been made, and attacks continued with rockets against Japanese transport and troop concentrations in Burma until the end of the War. The Squadron was deployed to Java in November 1945 to assist in the elimination of maverick Japanese guerilla bands active on the island. The Squadron was disbanded at Butterworth, Malaya, on 21st March 1946.

On 1st September 1946 No 644 Squadron, flying Halifax transports at Qastina in Palestine, was re-numbered 47, and in its new guise flew these aircraft home to the United Kingdom later that month, being based at Fairford for the next two years during which No 47 participated in a number of exercises by the airborne forces on Salisbury Plain and elsewhere. In September 1948 the Squadron became the first in Transport Command to receive the new Hastings transports, and was heavily engaged during the Berlin Airlift, being principally employed in carrying coal to the German capital to feed its factories. In May 1953 No 47 moved to Abingdon, being once more the first to equip with a new aircraft, this time one that was coincidentally named after No 47's birthplace, the Beverley, which was delivered to the Squadron in March 1956 and retained until October 1967. During those eleven years the Squadron was principally employed in bringing home from the Middle East the British forces and their equipment after H.M. Government had decided to end Britain's military presence 'east of Suez'.

No 47 Squadron was disbanded at Abingdon on 31st October 1967, but on 25th February the following year re-formed at Fairford, Glos, with the American four-turboprop Lockheed Hercules transport, a veritable workhorse that has continued in service with the Lyneham Wing, of which No 47 remains a component Squadron.

Squadron formed at Beverley, Yorks, on 1st March 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in November 1938 while stationed at Khartoum, Sudan. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of a fountain a demoiselle crane's head erased proper. [The demoiselle crane is to be found both in the Caucasus and the Sudan, where the Squadron served between the World Wars; at one time No 47 Squadron flew floatplanes from the Nile and this is reflected both in the fountain barry wavy and the motto.]

Motto: (Latin) — '*Nili nomen roboris omen*' — The name of the Nile is an omen of our strength.

No 51 Squadron



Formed at Thetford in Norfolk on 15th May 1916 as a Home Defence unit, No 51 Squadron flew anti-Zeppelin patrols from a number of nearby rudimentary airfields for the remainder of the War, flying a mixed collection of B.E.s, F.E.s, Martinsydes and Avros. As little enemy action was encountered the Squadron also trained pilots in night flying before their posting to squadrons in France. In 1918 No 51 was equipped with Camels in case the German aeroplane bombing raids, then being experienced in the south-east should venture north into East Anglia. No such threat materialised and the Squadron was disbanded in June 1919.

No 51 was not re-formed until 1937 when, on 5th March that year, 'B' Flight of No 58 Squadron became the nucleus of a new Squadron, being designated No 51. It formed at Driffield in Yorkshire with aged Vickers Virginia bombers and Ansons on which new crews trained in readiness for Whitleys, which arrived in February 1938. And it was to be Nos 51 and 58 Squadrons' Whitleys which carried out the first of Bomber Command's operations over Germany during the Second World War, dropping propaganda leaflets over Hamburg and elsewhere on the night of 3rd/4th September 1939. Other notable 'firsts' undertaken by No 51 Squadron included the first bombing attack on a German land target (Hörnum, 19th/20th March 1940) and the first on Italy (11th/12th June 1940). In February 1942 the Whitleys carried paratroops in an attack on an aqueduct in Italy on 11th/12th February 1941; they also carried the raiding party that attacked the German coastal radar station at Bruneval on the French coast on 27th/28th February 1942.

A spell with Coastal Command in 1942, flying patrols over the Bay of Biscay, was followed by a return to Bomber Command and a change to Halifax four-engine heavy bombers in November that year, and for the remainder of the War the Squadron accompanied the Main Force in the Command's night bombing offensive.

On 8th May 1945, No 51 Squadron was transferred to Transport Command with a change to Stirling transports for trooping flights to the Far East in the continuing war against Japan. In February 1946 the Squadron converted to York transports, and flew these from Basingbourn during the Berlin Airlift before being disbanded in October 1950.

On 21st October 1958, the Squadron was again re-formed, this time in Signals Command, when No 192 Squadron was re-numbered 51 to fly to Canberras and Comets on long-range calibration and radar surveillance duties from Watton in Norfolk. No 51 returned to Bomber Command in March 1963, and moved to Wyton in September 1970, undertaking long-range electronic reconnaissance missions. The Comets were replaced by Nimrod R 1s in 1971, these aircraft still being employed two decades later.

Squadron formed at Thetford, Norfolk, on 15th May 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1937 while stationed at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. *Approved* by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A goose volant gules. [The Latin word for a goose is *anser*, and this bird is said to have been chosen for the Badge device in an oblique reference to the Avro Anson aircraft with which the Squadron was equipped when granted its Badge.]

Motto: 'Swift and sure'

No 54 Squadron



No 54 Squadron is yet another unit that has spent its entire operational life flying fighter and fighter-bomber aircraft, and flew Spitfires throughout the Second World War, many of its pilots becoming household names. The Squadron was formed at Castle Bromwich on 16th May 1916 as a fighting scout unit, moving to France in December with Sopwith Pups, aircraft which many regard as the RFC's first fighting scout and certainly highly manoeuvrable; it was also armed with a synchronised front gun. The Pups were replaced by Camels in December 1917 and, during the remainder of the War, much of the Squadron's flying effort was devoted to attacks on enemy troops immediately behind their lines. No 54 was disbanded in October 1919.

The Squadron was re-formed at Hornchurch, Essex, on 15th January 1930, flying Siskin trainers initially pending the arrival of Bulldogs later that year. These were replaced by Gauntlets in 1936, and Gladiators in 1937. Spitfire Is began delivery in March 1939 but, as Spitfires were strictly confined to home bases early in the War, the Squadron did not move to France, and its part in the Battle of France was confined to some spirited action over Dunkirk early in June 1940 while flying from Hornchurch and Rochford. No 54 Squadron fought with distinction in the Battle of Britain, among its

pilots being Fg Offs A C Deere and C F Gray, two famous New Zealanders who, by the end of the War, were credited with a total of 51 enemy aircraft destroyed between them, winning two DSOs and five DFCs.

Heavy casualties forced the Squadron to be withdrawn to the north to rest and re-equip early in September, returning to Hornchurch once more in February 1941 and taking part in the early offensive fighter sweeps over northern France. These continued until the following November when No 54 was again sent north, this time to prepare for a move overseas. This proved to be a transfer to north-west Australia to strengthen the defences against a possible invasion by the Japanese. In the event there was little enemy activity during the remainder of the War and 54 Squadron was disbanded on 31st October 1945.

A fortnight later No 183 Squadron was re-numbered 54 at Chilbolton, Hampshire, flying Tempest IIs. The Squadron moved to Odiham the following year where the first Vampires were entering service; No 54 re-equipped with these jet fighters in October 1946. They were replaced by Meteor 8s in April 1952 and by Hunters in 1955. In July 1959 the Squadron moved to Stradishall in Suffolk where it changed to ground-attack Hunter 9s, continuing to fly these aircraft until 1969 when No 54 received Phantoms at Coningsby in Air Support Command.

No 54 Squadron was disbanded at Coningsby on 23 April 1974 but re-formed simultaneously as a Jaguar GR 1 squadron, moving to Coltishall in August that year. The Squadron played a prominent part in the Gulf War of 1991 and, at the time of writing, is currently equipped with Jaguar GR 1As.

Squadron formed at Castle Bromwich on 16th May 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in November 1936 while stationed at RAF Hornchurch. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A lion rampant azure semé de lys or. [No 54 Squadron served in both France and Belgium between 1916 and 1919, this being reflected in the choice of the lion of Belgium and the fleur de lys of France.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Audax omnia perpeti' — Bold to endure anything.



No 55 Squadron

Formed as a training unit at Castle Bromwich on 27th April 1916, No 55 was the first RFC Squadron to be equipped with the excellent D.H.4 light bombers, taking them to France in March the following year and retaining them until after the Armistice. The Squadron was engaged in bombing and reconnaissance over and beyond the German lines in support of the ground forces, but in June 1918 it was attached to No 41 Wing (which later became the Independent Force) to commence strategic raids on German towns and cities. It was disbanded on 22 January 1920 in the United Kingdom, but re-formed in Egypt ten days later when No 142 Squadron at Suez was re-numbered 55.

Equipped initially with D.H.9s, No 55 soon received D.H.9As and, after a brief period with Q Force in Turkey, moved to Iraq to begin policing duties under the League of Nations mandate. The Squadron re-equipped with Wapitis in 1930, and Vincents in 1937 while stationed at Hinaidi. It began flying Blenheims in March 1939 and moved back to Egypt later that year. After Italy's entry into the War on 10th June 1940, the Squadron began a year-long series of raids against enemy targets in Libya, Blenheim IVs being received in December 1940. In May 1942, No 55 started converting on to the American Baltimore, flying successive versions during the next two years and accompanying the desert forces as they advanced towards Tunisia after their victory at El Alamein.

After supporting the invasion of Sicily in 1943 No 55 Squadron was based in Italy for the remainder of the War, flying numerous raids against rail and other targets in support of the Allied forces in their advance northwards. The Squadron moved to Greece in September 1945 and converted to Mosquitos before being disbanded in November the following year.

No 55 Squadron was not re-formed until 1st September 1960 at Honington where it joined the V-bomber force flying Victor B 1As initially. In 1967 the Squadron converted to Victor tankers, providing in-flight refuelling for all types of aircraft flown by RAF Strike Command. The Victor tankers were in constant demand by Squadrons flying to and from the Far East on routine reinforcement duties and, during the Falkland Islands campaign of 1982, refuelled Vulcan bombers on the Black Buck sorties. The veteran tankers also played a vital rôle during the Desert Shield and Desert Storm campaign in the Persian Gulf of 1990-91. The last Victors were withdrawn in 1994.

Squadron formed at Castle Bromwich on 27th April 1916

Squadron Badge granted in July 1936 while stationed at Hinaidi, Iraq. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A cubit arm, the hand grasping a spear, all azure. [The Squadron was known as the 'Spearpoints' during its period with Q Force in Turkey during 1920.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Nil nos tremefacit' — Nothing shakes us.



No 56 Squadron

Formed from a nucleus provided by No 28 Squadron at Gosport on 9 June 1916, No 56 Squadron was not ready to move to France until April the following year, being the first to receive S.E.5 fighters. From then until the end of the War it flew fighting and reconnaissance patrols over the Western Front (apart from a short period when it returned to England for home defence — which proved fruitless). When re-equipped with the improved S.E.5As the Squadron's toll of combat victories increased rapidly. Earlier, however, the famous pilot, Capt Albert Ball, DSO and 2 BARS, MC, had won a posthumous Victoria Cross and destroyed 44 enemy aircraft; he disliked the S.E.5 and had therefore been permitted to fly a 'personal' Nieuport. Another legendary pilot who was awarded the Victoria Cross while flying with No 56 Squadron was Maj J T B McCudden DSO and BAR, MC and BAR, MM, who amassed a total of 57 air victories.

No 56 Squadron was disbanded on 22 January 1920, but re-formed at Hawkinge in November 1922 with Snipes. These were followed by Grebes in 1924 and Siskins in 1927 at about the time the Squadron moved to North Weald. Bulldogs arrived in 1932 and were flown until 1936 when replaced by Gauntlets and shortly afterwards by Gladiators. The Squadron re-equipped with Hurricanes in 1938 while still at North Weald, but moved to Martlesham Heath soon after war had broken out.

The Squadron was heavily engaged throughout the Battle of Britain and losses were fairly high. It continued flying Hurricanes until January 1942, but had been the first Fighter Command squadron to receive the powerful Typhoon fighter in September 1941. Owing to abbreviated development, this aircraft gave much trouble early in its service life, and it was not until 30th May 1942 that No 56 Squadron re-started combat sorties. It soon became evident that the Typhoon was unsatisfactory as an interceptor fighter and the Squadron's rôle was changed to ground attack, the aircraft being equipped to carry bombs in addition to their four 20mm cannon. In February 1944 rockets were added to the Typhoon's arsenal.

A short spell with Spitfires in 1944 ended when No 56 Squadron was given Tempests, arguably the best British fighter of the War, and these were flown against the German flying bombs during the summer that year, but in September No 56 moved to the Low Countries to join the Second Tactical Air Force, flying armed reconnaissance sorties for the remainder of the War.

From 1946 until 1954 No 56 Squadron was equipped with Meteor jet fighters, and then received Swift transonic fighters. Once more the unit was unfortunate with its aircraft as the Swifts suffered a number of accidents resulting from technical failure; the remaining aircraft were withdrawn and replaced by the Hunter in May 1955, this most popular fighter remaining in service with the Squadron until January 1961 when Lightnings were taken on charge at Wattisham.

In 1976 the Lightnings were discarded in favour of Phantoms and these were in turn phased out of use at the end of the 1980s when No 56 was allocated Reserve status with Tornado F 3s.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hampshire, on 9th June 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in July 1936 while stationed at RAF North Weald, Essex. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A phoenix or, the flames proper. [The phoenix was used for some years as an unofficial badge by the Squadron as symbolising rebirth after any troubles which it might encounter; the device was officially sanctioned for the formal Badge in 1936.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Quid si cælum ruat' — What if heaven should fall.



No 57 Squadron

Formed at Copmanthorpe, Yorkshire, as a fighter unit on 8th June 1916, No 57 Squadron moved across to France with a complement of F.E.2ds in December that year. Following the heavy losses suffered by the RFC during April 1917, the Squadron's rôle was changed to light bombing with the delivery of D.H.4s, both the rôle and the aircraft being flown until the end of the War. After a short spell with D.H.9As flying a mail service during 1919, No 57 was disbanded at the end of that year.

It was re-formed at Netheravon in October 1931 as a light bomber squadron flying Hawker Harts, these being replaced by Hinds in 1936. Blenheim Is followed in 1938, and with these No 57 Squadron accompanied the Air Component of the BEF to France in 1939. In the opening stages of the Battle of France in May 1940 the Squadron was tasked with locating and bombing enemy road columns advancing in Belgium and France, but the very heavy casualties suffered in these operations resulted in No 57 being withdrawn to England after only ten days.

Re-equipped with Blenheim IVs, No 57 was sent north to Scotland whence it flew anti-shipping sorties until it converted to Wellington bombers in November 1940. It continued to fly these medium bombers until September 1942 when the Squadron converted to Lancasters, flying these with Bomber Command's Main Force for the remainder of the War. It was disbanded at East Kirby on 25th November 1945, but re-emerged the following day when No 103 Squadron's Lincoln Flight was re-numbered 57. The Lincolns were replaced on the Squadron while based at Waddington by Boeing Washington heavy bombers, but these were discarded after only two years, their place being taken by Canberra light bombers which remained with the Squadron until 1957 when it disbanded.

In March 1959, No 57 re-formed with Victor B 1s with Bomber Command's V-Force at Honington, becoming a tanker squadron in June 1966 with Victor K 1s and 2s, having moved to Marham in Norfolk the previous year. It continued in this rôle until the 1980s and more recently it assumed Reserve status with Hercules transport aircraft.

Squadron formed at Copmanthorpe, Yorkshire, on 8th June 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1936 while stationed at RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: Issuant from two logs fesswise in saltire a phoenix azure. [Choice of the phoenix rising refers to an occasion during the First World War when the Squadron's entire flying staff became casualties, but remained on operations with replacements drafted in, an allusion to this event being made in the motto.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Corpus non animum muto' — I change my body not my spirit.

No 60 Squadron



No 60 Squadron, formed at Gosport on 30th April 1916, moved to France after only one month's training with a mixed complement of Moranes. It became involved in the Battle of the Somme less than six weeks later, suffering heavy casualties which prompted re-equipping with Nieuport scouts in August. S.E.5s joined the Squadron in July 1917 and, with S.E.5As which arrived later, undertook reconnaissance and fighting patrols for the remainder of the War. It was disbanded early in 1920 but came into existence once more when No 97 Squadron at Lahore in India was re-numbered 60 on 1st April that year.

No 60 Squadron was one of only four to be equipped with D.H.10 twin-engine aircraft, flying them from Risalpur over the North West Frontier province until April 1923 when they were replaced by D.H.9As, workhorse aircraft that continued to serve until 1930 when Wapiti general purpose aircraft were delivered. Blenheim light bombers arrived at Ambala in 1939 where No 60 had recently moved, and the Squadron began coastal patrol work by flights detached to Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi and Madras. Early in 1941 the Squadron moved to Burma where, for a short time, it flew Buffalo fighters. At the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya, part of No 60 Squadron was at Singapore with Blenheims and, after flying a number of attacks against enemy shipping, the survivors were withdrawn to India.

Equipped with Blenheim IVs the Squadron was operational once more in March 1942 and started to fly attacks on the Japanese advancing northwards in Burma. These continued until May 1943 when No 60 was withdrawn from operations to convert to Hurricanes, and thereafter continued to support the 14th Army in Burma until May 1945. The Squadron received Thunderbolts which it flew until replaced by Spitfires in December 1946.

During the emergency in Malaya in the late 1940s, No 60 flew reconnaissance sorties and ground attacks against the guerillas in the jungle, receiving Vampires in 1950 and Venoms in 1955. It became a night fighter Squadron, converting to Meteor 14s at Singapore in 1959 and Javelin FAW 9s in 1961, being disbanded at Tengah in 1969.

On 3rd January 1969 the RAF Germany Communications Squadron was re-numbered 60, flying light transport aircraft at Wildenrath, a rôle still performed by the Squadron in the early 1990s with Pembroke and Andover aircraft.

Squadron formed at Gosport, Hampshire, on 30th April 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1937 while stationed at Kohat, India. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

*Blazon: A markhor's head affronté proper. [The head of a *Kubuli markhor* had been adopted as an unofficial Badge by the Squadron in 1923 as being characteristic of the fauna of the N W Frontier region.]*

Motto: (Latin) 'Per ardua ad aethera tendo' — I strive through difficulties to the sky.

No 70 Squadron



Despite serving during most of its life in the transport rôle, No 70 Squadron was formed as a fighter unit on 22nd April 1916 at Farnborough, taking with it to France a complement of Sopwith 1½-Strutter fighter and bombing-reconnaissance two-seaters, beginning in May that year. In July 1917 it became the first RFC Squadron to re-equip with Sopwith Camel fighting scouts, a popular but tricky little aeroplane to fly, but one that was armed with two forward-firing machine guns. Camels remained on No 70 Squadron for the remainder of the War, its highest-scoring pilot being the Canadian, Capt F G Quigley DSO, MC and BAR, who destroyed 34 enemy aircraft, all while flying with No 70 Squadron.

The Squadron disbanded in January 1920, but the following month No 58 at Heliopolis in Egypt was re-numbered 70 as a bomber-transport squadron flying Vimys. It moved to Iraq at the end of 1921 with Vimy bombers and Vernon transports, remaining in that country until after the beginning of the Second World War; the Vimys had disappeared from service in the early 1920s, and the Vernons had

been replaced by Victorias in 1926 and Valentias in 1935.

In September 1940, No 70 became a dedicated bomber squadron, being provided with Wellingtons, aircraft which, in various versions, continued to serve the Squadron until almost the end on the war in Europe, having moved to bases in Italy in September 1943. In January 1945 the Squadron converted to Liberator heavy bombers and with these flew numerous bombing raids, mining sorties over the Danube and supply-dropping missions over the Yugoslav partisans in the final months of the War. It was disbanded in March 1946.

Apart from a year flying Lancasters in 1946-47, all No 70 Squadron's post-War service has been as a transport unit, flying in succession the Dakota (1949-50), the Valetta (1950-55), the Hastings (1956-58), the Argosy (1967-72) and the Hercules (1970 to date).

Squadron formed at Farnborough on 22nd April 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at Hinaidi, Iraq. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A demi-winged lion erased azure. [Employed as a Squadron Badge before being officially approved in 1936, the lion referred to the Napier Lion engines in the Vickers Vernon transport aircraft on the Squadron in the early 1920s.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Usquam' — Anywhere.



No 72 Squadron

The Central Flying School at Upavon provided the nucleus of No 72 Squadron, RFC, which was formed at that station on 2nd July 1917; it sailed for Mesopotamia in December that year, being based at Basra from March 1918 and organised into detached flights, each allotted to an army formation to provide support which included both air cover and reconnaissance. After the War the Squadron assembled at Baghdad for return to the United Kingdom where it disbanded in September 1919.

It was re-formed at Tangmere in February 1937 when No 1 Squadron shed a flight which was re-numbered 72; Gladiators flew until May 1939 when Spitfires were delivered, by which time the Squadron had moved north to Yorkshire. During the Battle of Britain it was not brought south from Yorkshire until the end of August when it fought in No 11 Group until mid-October when it transferred to No 12 Group in Norfolk. The Squadron returned to the south to begin offensive sweeps over France in July 1941 and in November 1942, No 72 arrived in Algeria shortly after the Torch landings.

For the remainder of the War the Squadron flew Spitfires in support of the Allied invasion of Europe from the Mediterranean, first through Sicily and Italy, and later over the south of France until September 1944; thereafter it moved northwards on the Italian front and into Austria. It was disbanded on 30th December 1946.

No 72 Squadron was re-formed as a jet day fighter unit in Fighter Command based at Odiham in 1947 flying Vampires; these were replaced by Meteor 8s in 1952 which remained with the Squadron until February 1956, when No 72 became a night fighter squadron with Meteor NF 12s and 14s at Church Fenton; in 1959 they were discarded in favour of Javelin all-weather fighters. These were the last fixed-wing combat aircraft flown by the Squadron which disbanded at Leconfield on 30th June 1961. It was re-formed at Odiham in November that year as a transport helicopter Squadron at Odiham with Belvederes, which were replaced by Wessex helicopters in August 1964, and this type was still in service in the early 1990s.

Squadron formed at Upavon, Wiltshire, on 2nd July 1917

Squadron Badge granted in February 1938 while stationed at RAF Church Fenton. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A swift volant azure. [The swift was considered appropriate for a fighter squadron on account of its high-speed flight, also represented in the motto.]

Motto: 'Swift'



No 74 Squadron

It is a strange paradox that one of the best known of all RAF fighter squadrons fought for no more than eight months in the Kaiser's War and spent much of the Second World War away from the major fronts. In truth the origin of the Squadron's fame, and indeed the name by which it is best known — Tiger Squadron — stemmed from the ferocity with which it fought during those early months, and that reputation engendered a tradition which the Squadron has justifiably fostered.

Formed on 1st July 1917 at Northolt, No 74 moved to France in March 1918 with S.E.5As as a fighter squadron, one of its flight commanders being Captain E Mannock (later to command No 85 Squadron, be awarded the Victoria Cross and become the highest-scoring pilot in the RAF). From the outset a fierce determination gripped No 74 Squadron, its pilots gaining the reputation of always being where the fighting was hardest. This spirit unquestionably emanated from the example set by Mannock, widely regarded as the best fighter patrol leader of any air force during the War. When he came to

No 74 his score stood at 23, and during the three months he fought with the Tigers he added 36 before going on to No 85, ending the War with a total of 73 victories. At least eight other members of No 74 Squadron destroyed ten or more German aircraft, of whom that fiery little Welshman, Capt J I T Jones DSO, MC, DFC and BAR, MM, headed the list with 40 (and later commanded the Squadron). Another pilot on No 74 was Capt S Carlin, MC, DFC DCM, a one-legged ex-infantryman who achieved a score of eleven during those few months and who, twenty years later, volunteered to re-join the RAF and fought in the Battle of Britain as a Defiant gunner. By the date of the Armistice, the Squadron had destroyed at least 140 enemy aircraft, but was to suffer disbandment in July 1919.

No 74 was re-formed while *en route* by sea to Malta in September 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis, although the Squadron number was not notified until November for security reasons. Equipped with Demons, it returned to England and a new base at Hornchurch in September 1936. It was still there when the Second World War broke out in 1939, having been re-equipped with Spitfires earlier that year. It was heavily involved in the fighting over Dunkirk and in the early stages of the Battle of Britain, the famous South African, 'Sailor' Malan, assuming command of the Squadron in August 1940.

In 1942 the Squadron sailed to the Middle East but, owing to a shortage of aircraft, it served in Palestine and Iran as a maintenance unit until provided with Hurricanes. Re-equipped with Spitfires in August 1943, the Squadron served in the Aegean during the abortive campaign by the Allies to seize the islands, but returned to the United Kingdom in April 1944 in time for operations over the Normandy landings, moving to France in August to support the 21st Army Group in its advance through northern Europe.

Shortly after the end of the War, No 74 converted to Meteor jet fighters which were flown until, in 1957, these were superseded by Hunters at Horsham St Faith in Norfolk. It became a Lightning squadron in June 1960, retaining these aircraft until disbanded at Singapore in August 1971. It was resurrected in 1984, tasked with the air defence of the Falkland Islands with American F-4J(UK) Phantom 3s. Most recently the Squadron has been accorded Reserve status with Tornado F.3s in the training rôle.

Squadron formed at Northolt on 1st July 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1937 while stationed at RAF Hornchurch. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A tiger's face affronté proper. [Use by the Squadron of the tiger motif dates back to 1918 and is generally ascribed to a recommendation by Capt Mannock.]

Motto: 'I fear no man'



No 78 Squadron

No 78 Squadron was formed at Harrietsham in Kent on 1st November 1916 as a home defence unit, a rôle it performed for the remainder of the War, equipped in turn with B.E.2s, Sopwith 1½-Strutters, Camels and, for a short time, Snipes. A move to France was frustrated by the Armistice and the Squadron was disbanded at Suttons Farm on 31st December 1919 having only seen sporadic action against German raiders over south-east England.

It was re-formed as a night bomber unit on 1st November 1936 at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire, flying Heyfords. The following year it converted to Whitleys and flew these until March 1942, having been a reserve training squadron during the first year of the Second World War. No 78 then converted to Halifax heavy bombers, these aircraft being flown for the remainder of the War with Bomber Command's main force in the great bomber offensive against Germany. It is on record that during the War No 78 Squadron accompanied 302 bombing raids and dropped some 17,000 tons of bombs.

In May 1945 the Squadron was transferred to Transport Command, converting to Dakotas in the Middle East, and to Valettas in 1950 which it flew until disbanded in Egypt in 1954. It was re-formed at Aden in June 1956 with Pioneer light transports, to which were added Twin Pioneers in 1958.

In June 1965 it became a helicopter squadron for army support operations, moving to Sharjah in 1967 until disbanded once more in 1971. It was reformed in 1986 in the Falkland Islands with Chinook and Sea King helicopters.

Squadron formed at Harrietsham, Kent, on 1st November 1916.

Squadron Badge granted in November 1939 while stationed at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, Yorkshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An heraldic tiger rampant double queued or. [The choice of a double-queued tiger is a reference to the Tiger engines in the Whitley bombers (with twin tail surfaces) which the Squadron was flying when granted its Badge.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Nemo non paratus' — Nobody unprepared.



No 84 Squadron

Since formation during the First World War, No 84 Squadron has served in northern Europe and the Near, Middle and Far East in the fighter, bomber, general purpose, dive bomber, transport and air-sea rescue rôles, as wide a range of duties as any in the RFC and RAF. It was formed in January 1917 at Beaulieu in Hampshire before moving to the Western Front as a fighter squadron, flying S.E.5As. While in France it was credited with the destruction of 129 enemy aircraft while one of its South African pilots, Capt A W Beauchamp-Proctor DSO, MC and BAR, DFC, was awarded the Victoria Cross, shooting down a total of 54 German aircraft — the highest score achieved by any RAF pilot while serving on only one squadron.

It was disbanded at Kenley in January 1920 but the following August it was re-formed at Baghdad to undertake policing duties in Iraq, moving to Sharjah in September. It continued in this rôle, flying D.H.9As, Wapitis and Vincents, until re-equipped with Blenheims in February 1939 when it began training for bombing operations. It was sent to Greece during the Balkan campaign in November 1940 but was forced to withdraw when the Germans entered Greece; it returned to Iraq in 1941 before resuming bombing operations over the Western desert.

In January 1942 it was transferred to south-east Asia and for a short time flew Blenheims against the Japanese from airfields in Sumatra and Java. The survivors were dispersed and eventually arrived in India where the Squadron re-assembled at Karachi. In December it received Vengeance dive bombers which, despite deficiencies, remained in use over Burma until disposed of in October 1944. Further trouble was experienced with the wooden Mosquito which served on the Squadron between February 1945 and November 1946 when No 84 converted to Beaufighter Xs at Singapore. It was disbanded on 20th February 1953 at Tengah, but was re-formed as a transport unit the same day when No 204 Squadron was re-numbered 84 at Fayid in Egypt. The Valettas, with which it was then equipped, were joined by Beverley heavy transports in June 1958 having moved to Aden the previous year. After giving up these big aircraft in August 1967, it flew Andovers until October 1971. In January 1972 it became an air-sea rescue helicopter squadron, based in Cyprus with Whirlwind HAR 10s, later being re-equipped by Wessex HU 5Cs.

Squadron formed at Beaulieu, Hampshire, in January 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1936 while stationed at Shaibah, Iraq. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A scorpion or. [Displayed for some years before official approval, the scorpion was a reference to Greek mythology's assertion that the scorpion possessed celestial status.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Scorpiones pungunt' — Scorpions sting.

No 92 Squadron



No 92 Squadron was formed at London Colney, Hertfordshire, on 1st September 1917, and moved to France in July the following year with S.E.5A fighters. Roughly half its pilots were either Canadians or Americans. During the final four months the Squadron was credited with the destruction of 37 enemy aircraft, and was disbanded at Eil in Germany on 7 August 1919.

It was re-formed shortly after the beginning of the Second World War, flying Blenheim fighters at Tangmere. These were disposed of in favour of Spitfires which were delivered in March 1940 when the Squadron was operating from Croydon. It flew patrols over France during May and June before being sent to South Wales for the defence of Bristol and other ports in the west but returned to No 11 Group in south-east England during the final stages of the Battle of Britain when it acquitted itself with great distinction; among its pilots at this time were Flt Lt J A Kent DFC and BAR, AFC, Flt Lt R Stanford Tuck DSO, DFC and 2 BARS, Fg Off C B F Kingcombe DSO, DFC, Plt Off T S Wade, DFC, AFC and Sgt D E Kingaby, DSO, DFM and 2 BARS — all men whose names became synonymous with the great Battle.

After being shipped to the Middle East in February 1942 the Squadron was relegated to maintenance work owing to a shortage of aircraft but were back on combat flying in time to provide cover during the Battle of Alamein, accompanying the Allied forces during the subsequent advance to Tunisia. It became a fighter-bomber squadron during the advance northwards in Italy, and was disbanded in Austria in December 1946.

When No 91 Squadron was re-numbered 92 at Acklington early in 1947, it flew Meteor jet fighters with Fighter Command until 1954 when it received Sabres. These were followed by Hunters in 1956, Lightnings in 1963 and Phantoms in 1977. More recently it has been accorded Reserve status, flying Hawk T 1s in the training rôle.

Squadron formed at London Colney, Hertfordshire, on 1st September 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in January 1942 while stationed at RAF Digby, Lincolnshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A cobra or entwining a sprig of maple gules. [The cobra signifies links with East India, the Squadron's official courtesy title, and the maple leaf recalls the Canadian pilots who served on the Squadron in the last months of the First World War.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Aut pugna aut morere' — Either fight or die.

No 100 Squadron



First to be formed as a dedicated night bomber unit, No 100 Squadron came into being at Hingham, Norfolk, on 23rd February 1917, and moved to France the following month to equip with F.E.2bs, flying night attacks on targets behind the German lines until May the following year. It then moved to the Nancy area to begin the assembly of a new strategic bombing force, later to become the Independent Force, commanded by Maj Gen Sir Hugh Trenchard. In August, No 100 Squadron re-equipped with Handley Page O/400 heavy bombers and began raids on German industrial centres.

After the War the Squadron operated in Ireland in the army co-operation rôle but, after the creation of the Irish Free State, No 100 returned to England to become a day bomber Squadron, flying D.H.9As at Spittlegate, changing to Fawns in 1924 and Horsleys two years later. In 1930 it moved to Scotland to become a coastal torpedo-bomber squadron, being deployed to Singapore in December 1933, equipped with Vildebeests. It was still equipped with these venerable biplanes when Japanese forces invaded Malaya in 1941 (a plan to re-equip with Beauforts having failed to be accomplished in time). After vain and costly attempts to halt the enemy advance towards Singapore, No 100's survivors merged with those of No 36 Squadron.

No 100 re-formed in the United Kingdom at Grimsby on 15th December 1942 as a heavy bomber Squadron in No 1 Group, Bomber Command, flying Lancasters in the great bombing offensive against Germany until the end of the War, in the course of which it dropped over 17,500 tons of bombs. After the War the Squadron converted to Lincolns which it flew until 1954 when it changed to Canberra light bombers. The Squadron was disbanded in 1959, but re-formed with Victor B 2s in the V-force in 1962, being disbanded once more in 1968. In 1972 No 100 became a target facilities Squadron with various types of Canberra; it continued to provide target-towing, and other target services until the early 1990s when the Canberra was being phased out of service. Most recently the Squadron has been accorded Reserve status, with Hawk T 1s in the pilot training rôle.

Squadron formed at Hingham, Norfolk, on 23rd February 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in November 1937 while stationed at Seletar, Singapore. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of two human bones in saltire a skull all proper. [The use of a skull is said to have featured in an unofficial badge during the First World War.]

Motto: (Malay) 'Sarang tebuhan jangan dijolok' — Never stir up a hornet's nest.

No 101 Squadron



No 101 Squadron was formed at Farnborough, Hampshire, as a night bomber squadron on 12th July 1917, arriving in France before the end of that month. It was equipped with F.E.2bs and ds with which it flew raids on German forces behind the front lines for the remainder of the War. It was disbanded on 31st December 1919.

The Squadron was re-formed on 21st March 1928 to fly D.H.9A light bombers at Bircham Newton in Norfolk, but Sidestrand twin-engine day bomber biplanes began arriving the following year, being joined and later replaced by Overstrands (of similar configuration) in 1935. Blenheim bombers began equipping No 101 in June 1938. The Squadron flew its first wartime operations in July 1940 while based at West Raynham and, after flying attacks against the enemy-held Channel ports, converted to Wellingtons in April 1941, becoming engaged in radio, and later radar countermeasures. These operations continued when the Squadron converted to Lancasters in October 1942, having moved to Holme-on-Spalding Moor in Yorkshire the previous month. No 101 Squadron played a vital rôle during the Normandy landings when its aircraft jammed enemy communications to prevent interference by German night fighters with the airborne assault.

After the War No 101 Squadron continued in being as a bomber unit, and was re-equipped in turn with Lincolns in August 1946 at Binbrook, Canberras in May 1951, and Vulcans in January 1958 at Finningley. The Squadron was disbanded in 1982 when the phasing out of Vulcans started, but was re-formed in May 1984 at Brize Norton as an in-flight refuelling squadron equipped with VC-10 tankers, which it continued to fly during the 1990s, being fully involved during the Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations over the Persian Gulf.

Squadron formed at Farnborough, Hampshire, on 12th July 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1938 while stationed at RAF Bicester, Oxfordshire. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: Issuant from an embattled tower proper a demi-lion rampant guardant or. [The embattled tower was symbolic of the power-operated gun turrets on the Squadron's aircraft, claimed to have been the first in service; the lion represented the Squadron's fighting spirit.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Mens agitat molem' — Mind over matter.

No 111 Squadron



No 111 Squadron, or 'Treble-One' as it is known universally throughout the Service today, won fame when in 1937 it became the RAF's first fully-equipped monoplane fighter Squadron and the first with a fighter capable of exceeding 300 mph in level flight. The Squadron was originally formed in Palestine on 1st August 1917 as a fighter unit, flying a miscellany of aircraft (which, notwithstanding the opening remarks above, included a few Bristol M.1C monoplane fighting scouts). Its task was to support the ground forces against the Turks in Palestine and Syria and, early in 1918, it standardised on Nieuports and S.E.5As. In October, as the campaign ended, the Squadron was withdrawn to Egypt and re-numbered 14.

No 111 Squadron was re-formed at Duxford in October 1923 with Grebes, these being joined by Snipes in 1924, and Siskins in 1925. In due course the Siskin was adopted as standard equipment and remained in service until 1931 when replaced by Bulldogs. These in turn were discarded in favour of Gauntlets in 1936, but shortly before Christmas 1937, while at Northolt, the Squadron received the Hurricane 8-gun fighter. No 111 remained in England during the first nine months of the War, but during the Allied retreat towards Dunkirk it occasionally used French airfields between patrols to provide cover against the Luftwaffe.

The Squadron was heavily engaged in air combat during the first half of the Battle of Britain, many of its pilots being Poles and Czechs who had escaped from their homelands to join the RAF. The Squadron, together with No 32, first employed the formation head-on attack against enemy bomber formations.

Withdrawn to the north in September 1940 to rest and to train new pilots, it later joined the offensive sweeps over France, being re-equipped with Spitfires in 1941. With these it accompanied the Allied Torch landings in North Africa in November 1942 and stayed in the Mediterranean theatre for the remainder of the War; after fighting northwards through Italy, it was disbanded at Treviso on 12th May 1947 while still equipped with Spitfires.

It was reformed with Meteors at North Weald in December 1953, receiving Hunters two years later. And it was in the mid-1950s that the Squadron gained great public acclaim for its polished large-formation aerobatics as its glossy black Hunters — the 'Black Arrows' — performed before the crowds at the annual displays at Farnborough, culminating in a 22-aircraft formation aerobatic sequence. The Hunters were replaced by Lightnings in 1961, and by Phantoms in July 1974. Most recently 'Treble-One' has been re-equipped with the Tornado F 3.

Squadron formed at Deir-el-Belah, Palestine, on 1st August 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1936 while stationed at Northolt, Middlesex. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: In front of two swords saltirewise gules a cross potent quadrate or charged with three seaxes fesswise in pale sable. [The cross potent has for centuries been associated with the Crusader Kings of Jerusalem and is used to commemorate the Squadron's Palestinian origin; the three seaxes are repeated from the Arms of the County of Middlesex, in which the Squadron was stationed when granted its Badge.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Adstantes' — Standing by. [The most advanced state of readiness of a fighter squadron awaiting orders to take off is 'Stand-by'.]

No 115 Squadron



Formed on 1st December 1917 at Catterick from a nucleus provided by No 52 Training Squadron, No 115 Squadron moved to France in September 1918 after training and joined the Independent Force with O/400 heavy bombers. After taking part in fifteen raids on targets in Germany before the Armistice, the Squadron returned to the United Kingdom and disbanded at Ford, Sussex, on 18th October 1919.

It re-formed once more in June 1937 as a bomber squadron flying Harrows at Marham, Norfolk, being re-equipped with Wellingtons in April 1939. It began bombing operations over Europe in April 1940, and converted to Lancasters in March 1943 (being first equipped with the radial Hercules-powered version, the Mark II, before receiving the Merlin-powered versions a year later). With Bomber Command's main force, the Squadron flew more than 5,000 operational sorties in the course of which its aircraft delivered well over 22,000 tons of bombs.

No 115 Squadron was selected to become a permanent peacetime unit after the War, and was re-equipped with Lincolns in 1946; four years later it flew American Boeing Washington heavy bombers, but discarded these in favour of Canberras in 1954. The Squadron was disbanded in June 1957 but the following year re-formed in Signals Command at Watton, Norfolk, with Varsitys for development of electronic countermeasures; in 1968 these aircraft were joined by a number of Argosies, and the following year No 115 moved to Cottesmore, and to Brize Norton in 1976 where it re-equipped with Andover C 1s and E 3s, being engaged in two entirely different rôles, those of casualty evacuation and radar calibration. In 1983 the Squadron moved to Benson in Oxfordshire and, at the time of writing, is still flying the Andovers.

Squadron formed at Catterick, Yorkshire, on 1st December 1917.

Squadron Badge granted in January 1938 while stationed at RAF Marham, Norfolk. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A dexter hand proper erased at the wrist holding a ship's tiller azure. [The ship's tiller is symbolic of navigation, a science essential to the accuracy of bombing operations.]

Motto: 'Despite the elements'

No 120 Squadron



This Squadron was formed at Lympne in Kent on 1st January 1918, being equipped with D.H.9s for training in anticipation of joining the Independent Force in France. The Armistice, however, frustrated this plan and, after operating a cross-Channel mail service between Hawkinge and France in 1919, No 120 was disbanded in October that year.

It re-formed in June 1941 at Nutts Corner in Co Antrim as a maritime reconnaissance Squadron with American Liberator aircraft to fly long-range anti-submarine patrols over the Atlantic, and moved to Iceland in April 1943; the Squadron was responsible for the destruction of nineteen enemy submarines. No 120 was disbanded in October 1945.

Re-formed once more in October 1946 when 160 Squadron was re-numbered, No 120 flew Lancaster GR 3s and ASR 3s at Leuchars, the latter version being modified to carry an airborne lifeboat under the fuselage for air-sea rescue duties. The Squadron converted to Shackletons in April 1951 and, during the next two decades, flew the Marks 1, 2 and 3 versions, moving to Aldergrove in 1952 and to Kinloss in 1959. Nimrod MR 1s replaced the Shackletons in 1971, and was still flying the MR 2P version twenty years later.

Squadron formed at Lympne, Kent, on 1st January 1918.

Squadron Badge granted in August 1944 while stationed at RAF Ballykelly, Co Londonderry. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: Standing on a demi-terrestrial globe azure a falcon close argent. [The white falcon is the national symbol of Iceland whence the Squadron had just returned when granted its Badge.]

Motto: 'Endurance' [Long endurance is a prerequisite of both aircraft and crews flying maritime reconnaissance sorties.]

No 201 Squadron



No 201 Squadron came into being with the creation of the Royal Air Force on 1st April 1918 having previously served as No 1 Squadron of the Royal Naval Air Service. At the time of this change the Squadron was flying Sopwith Camel fighters in France, and continued doing so until the end of the War, being disbanded on 31st December 1919.

It was resurrected once more on New Year's Day, 1929, when No 480 (Coastal Reconnaissance) Flight was accorded full squadron status as No 201 Squadron, flying Southampton flying boats from Calshot, Hampshire. These were replaced by Londons, beginning in April 1936, the changeover occupying the rest of that year. The biplane boats remained in service until April 1940 when Sunderland monoplanes took over at Invergordon, north of Inverness, for maritime reconnaissance work over the North Sea. A move to Northern Ireland followed in October 1941 for patrols over the Western Approaches, and in 1944 No 201 Squadron moved to South Wales to begin blockade patrols to prevent enemy submarines from entering the English Channel during the Normandy landings.

The Squadron continued flying Sunderlands after the War and became involved in the Berlin Airlift in 1948, carrying supplies to the German capital and landing on the Havel Lake. It bade farewell to its flying boats and was disbanded in 1957, but the following year resumed its maritime reconnaissance rôle with Shackleton landplanes based at St Mawgan in Cornwall.

No 201 Squadron moved to Kinloss in March 1965, and in October 1970 re-equipped with Nimrod MR 1s, and were still flying the MR 1P version more than two decades later, calling on aircraft from the Central Servicing Wing as required.

Squadron formed from No 1 Squadron, RNAS, on 1st April 1918 at Fienvillers, France.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while stationed at Calshot, Hampshire. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: A seagull wings elevated and addorsed azure. [This bird was considered appropriate for the Badge of a maritime reconnaissance squadron.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Hic et ubique' — Here and everywhere. [The motto referred to the Squadron's wide-ranging patrol areas.]

No 202 Squadron



Like No 201, No 202 Squadron was created by re-numbering a former naval unit, No 2 Squadron, RNAS, when the Royal Air Force came into being by the amalgamation of the RFC and RNAS on 1st April 1918. On that date the Squadron was equipped with D.H.4s at Bergues in France, but received D.H.9As in May that year (while retaining the earlier type), and returned to the United Kingdom in 1919 to be disbanded in January the following year. It was re-formed for a year on 9th April 1920 as a naval co-operation squadron at Alexandria, flying Short 184 seaplanes.

On 1st January 1929, No 202 Squadron was re-formed at Kalafrana, Malta, when No 481 Flight, with Fairey IIID seaplanes, gained full squadron status; a year later these aircraft were replaced by Fairey IIIFs. Maritime reconnaissance duties were undertaken when Scapa flying boats arrived in May 1935, and two years later began anti-submarine patrols to protect shipping from Italian interference during the Spanish Civil War. London flying boats were received in September 1937, these continuing in service until June 1941, the Squadron having moved to Gibraltar on the outbreak of the Second World War.

Catalina flying boats began replacing the Londons in April 1941, and a number of Sunderlands were flown as well, until there were sufficient numbers of the American aircraft to equip the Squadron exclusively. In September 1944, No 202 moved to Northern Ireland for operations against German submarines in the Western Approaches, and a few weeks after the end of the European war the Squadron disbanded.

Re-formed once more on 1st October 1946 at Aldergrove when No 512 Squadron was re-numbered 202, it flew Halifax Met Mk 6s on weather flights over the Atlantic, these aircraft being replaced by Hastings in October 1950. No 202 Squadron continued as a weather reporting unit until it was disbanded on 31st July 1964. Later the same year it became a search and rescue squadron when it re-formed at Leconfield in Yorkshire with Whirlwind HAR 10 helicopters, detached elements being located at a number of airfields in the north of the United Kingdom. Sea King HAR 2s re-equipped the Squadron in 1978.

Squadron formed from No 2 Squadron, RNAS, on 1st April 1918 at Bergues, France.

Squadron Badge granted in December 1937 while stationed at Kalafrana, Malta. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A mallard alighting proper. [This water bird was considered appropriate for the Badge of a flying boat Squadron.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Semper vigilate' — Be vigilant always.

No 206 Squadron



No 206 Squadron, previously No 6 (Naval) Squadron, RNAS, came into being with the creation of the Royal Air Force on 1st April 1918 while serving as a bomber-reconnaissance unit with D.H.9s in France. It continued in this rôle on the Western Front until the end of the War, and was disbanded on 1st February 1920 having been moved to Egypt in June the previous year.

It was re-formed with Ansons from 'C' Flight, No 48 Squadron, at Manston, Kent, beginning anti-submarine patrols on the outbreak of war in 1939, having moved to Bircham Newton in Norfolk. The American Lockheed Hudson started to re-equip the Squadron in March 1940. During the next two years it was based in Cornwall, Northern Ireland and the Hebrides in turn until, during August 1942, the Squadron began re-equipping with Boeing Fortress IIs while at Benbecula. No 206 Squadron took these aircraft to the Azores to fly anti-submarine patrols between October 1943 and March 1944, but then returned to the United Kingdom, taking delivery of Liberators in April and flying maritime patrols off the Danish and Norwegian coasts for the remainder of the War, and was disbanded in April 1946.

It was re-formed in Transport Command at Lyneham on 17th November 1947 with Yorks, and flew these aircraft during the Berlin Airlift before being disbanded again in February 1950. It returned once more to maritime duties on being re-formed in September 1952 at St Eval, Cornwall, flying Shackletons in the maritime reconnaissance rôle, the Mark 1, 2 and 3 versions being flown in turn before being replaced by Nimrod MR 1s in November 1970 at Kinloss, remaining thus equipped and based for the next two decades.

Squadron formed from No 6 Squadron, RNAS, on 1st April 1918 at St. Marie Cappel, France.

Squadron Badge granted in March 1938 while stationed at Bircham Newton, Norfolk. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: An octopus proper. [The octopus' tentacles were symbolic of the maritime patrols which were flown in all directions over the sea from the Squadron's single base, and this theme is also reflected in the motto.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Nihil nos effugit' — Nothing escapes us.



No 208 Squadron

Possessing as fine a tradition of outstanding service as that of any in the Royal Air Force, No 208 Squadron inherited a fine reputation from its progenitor, No 8 (Naval) Squadron, RNAS — 'Naval Eight' — when the RAF was created on 1st April 1918. Its prowess as a fighter squadron on the Western Front with Sopwith Pups and Triplanes was already legendary by the time the Squadron received Camels and it was with the latter that it became an RAF Squadron. It continued to fly patrols and trench strafing sorties for the remainder of the War, and was re-equipping with Snipes when it ended.

The Squadron was disbanded in the United Kingdom on 7th November 1919 but only three months later, on 7th February 1920, No 113 Squadron at Ismailia in Egypt was re-numbered 208, and thus began an association with the Near and Middle East that was to continue with little interruption for half a century. Its initial equipment, R.E.8s inherited from No 113, were quickly discarded and replaced by Bristol Fighters which were flown on army co-operation duties, and accompanied the Squadron to Turkey during the Chanak crisis of 1922. The Bristol Fighters soldiered on in service until replaced by Atlases in 1930, and these in turn gave place to Audaxes in 1935.

In January 1939 Lysanders arrived on the Squadron and with these No 208 began army support operations in the Western Desert when Italy entered the War the following year. The Squadron was sent to Greece during that ill-fated campaign, returning to Egypt as the Allied forces were forced into evacuation. With disenchantment of the traditional 'army co-operation' tactics came a subtle change in No 208's rôle, and henceforth tactical reconnaissance involved increasing use of Hurricanes in close support of the ground forces as the Lysander's value diminished.

In March 1944, after converting to Spitfires, No 208 moved to Italy where it provided fighter cover over the 8th Army and flew ground attack sorties over the front line, although the Spitfire was not an ideal aircraft for the latter tactics. The Squadron returned to Egypt and Palestine after the War, being re-equipped with Spitfire XVIII reconnaissance fighters in August 1946, and Meteor FR 9s in 1951.

In January 1958 the Squadron pilots returned to the United Kingdom to convert to Hunter 6s which they then flew in Kenya in 1959. In 1961, with Hunter 9 ground attack fighters, it moved to Khormaksar (Aden) to protect British interests in the area as Britain made preparations to remove its military presence 'east of Suez'; No 208 Squadron transferred to Muharraq, Bahrain, in 1964 and was disbanded there in September 1971.

The Squadron next re-formed on 1st March 1974 at Honington, Suffolk, as a low-level strike unit equipped with Buccaneers, remaining there until it moved to Lossiemouth in 1983, still its base in the 1990s alongside the other similarly-equipped Squadron, No 12.

Squadron formed from No 8 Squadron, RNAS, on 1st April 1918 at Teteghem, France.

Squadron Badge granted in October 1937 while stationed at Mersa Matruh, Egypt. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A sphinx affronté proper. [The Giza sphinx is symbolic of the Squadron's service in Egypt at the time it was granted its Badge and visually epitomises the motto.]

Motto: 'Vigilant'.

No 216 Squadron



One of the longest serving Squadrons in the Royal Air Force today, much of that service being in the transport rôle, No 216 Squadron was originally No 16 Squadron of the RNAS, formed at Manston in 1917 to fly Handley Page bombers. When the RNAS merged with the RFC on 1st April 1918 it was equipped with O/400 night heavy bombers at Villeseneux. It joined the Independent Force in May that year and in 1919 took these aircraft to the Middle East to become a bomber-transport Squadron. It continued in this rôle throughout the inter-War years, flying Vimys (from 1922), Victorias (from 1926) and Valentias (from 1935), all this time being spent based at Heliopolis in Egypt.

In October it re-equipped with Bombays which, though primarily transports, were flown on bombing raids in the Western desert when Italy entered the War in June 1940, remaining in service in North Africa until June 1943. During the last year of this period Hudsons were also flown by the Squadron for casualty evacuation.

Dakotas began re-equipping No 216 Squadron in March 1943, these famous transports remaining in service until 1949. The Squadron itself continued to provide trooping services throughout North Africa for the remainder of the War; afterwards, in November 1955 it came home to the United Kingdom with Valettas, setting up its base at Lyneham where it received Comets in June 1956, thus becoming the first jet transport squadron in the world. With these it operated Air Support Command's worldwide transport routes, Comet 4s joining the Squadron in 1962. It was disbanded in June 1975 for the first time in its history.

It was re-formed briefly in 1979 to fly Buccaneers in the low-level strike rôle, but when this aircraft suffered temporary grounding owing to fatigue problems, the Squadron was again disbanded. In the mid-1980s it re-formed to equip with Lockheed TriStar transport and tanker aircraft, based at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. These aircraft were in much demand before and during the Gulf War in 1990-91, particularly to enable home-based combat aircraft to reach the war zone from home bases.

Squadron formed from No 16 Squadron, RNAS, on 1st April 1918 at Manston, Kent.

Squadron Badge granted in May 1936 while based at Heliopolis, Egypt. Approved by H.M. King Edward VIII.

Blazon: An eagle wings elevated or holding in its claws a bomb or. [The Badge and motto both symbolised the dual bombing and transport rôles of the Squadron, being required to deliver either bombs or troop reinforcements as the occasion demanded.]

Motto: (Latin) 'CCXVI dona ferens' — 216 bearing gifts.

No 230 Squadron

No 230 came into existence on 1st April 1918 when the various RNAS units at and around Felixstowe, Suffolk, were merged into a single entity with the new RAF. Equipped initially with F.2A flying boats, No 230 eventually became a coastal patrol Squadron with Fairey IIIB and IIIC seaplanes as well as F.2A and F.5 flying boats. In May 1922 it was re-numbered 480 Flight at Calshot.

It regained Squadron status when re-formed at Pembroke Dock in South Wales on 1st December 1934, being equipped with Singapore III biplane flying boats in April the following year. It took these aircraft to the Middle East later in 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis but, instead of returning home afterwards, was re-deployed to the Far East, making its new base at Singapore early in 1937 where it received Sunderlands, flying boats which it continued to fly for twenty years. Periodic detachments to Ceylon during the next three years ended in May 1940 when the Squadron returned to the Middle East to fly maritime reconnaissance patrols for the Mediterranean Fleet, based at Alexandria. Again it sent detachments elsewhere, including Dar-es-Salaam, Aboukir, Kasfareet and Bizerta, but returned to Ceylon early in 1944, and moved to Burma in 1945 for operations against Japanese coastal shipping.

After four months at Singapore following the Japanese surrender, No 230 Squadron flew its Sunderlands home to Britain where it was stationed at Calshot until, moving to Pembroke Dock once more in 1949, it was disbanded on 28th February 1955.

The Squadron was re-formed as a light transport unit, equipped with Pioneers at Dishforth in Yorkshire in September 1958, being transferred to Odiham in May 1960, having also acquired some Twin Pioneers. The fixed-wing aircraft started to leave the Squadron in June 1962 as Whirlwind HC 10 helicopters were taken on charge, and by the end of that year No 230 Squadron was an all-helicopter army tactical support squadron. In January 1963 it moved to Germany, returning to Odiham to prepare for deployment to the Far East. It arrived in Borneo in March for operations during the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, returning home during the winter of 1966-67. In January 1971 it converted to Puma HC 1 helicopters, later being based at Gutersloh in Germany.

Squadron formed from RNAS units at Felixstowe, Suffolk, on 1st April 1918.

Squadron Badge granted in February 1937 while stationed at Seletar, Singapore. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: In front of a Travellers palm tree a tiger passant regardant all proper. [The choice of the tiger symbolised the Squadron's location at Singapore while the Travellers palm was an oblique reference to the wide-ranging patrols flown by the Squadron's crews.]

Motto: (Malay) 'Kita chari jauh' — We seek far.

No 234 Squadron

This unit is unique among RAF Squadrons in existence today (albeit in Reserve status) in having originated as a former RNAS station, namely the seaplane station at Tresco in the Isles of Scilly. The unit did not achieve formal squadron status until August 1918, but its F.3 aircraft continued to fly anti-submarine patrols until the end of the War three months later. It was disbanded in May 1919.

No 234 Squadron was re-formed at Leconfield in Yorkshire as a fighter squadron on 30th October 1939 but for six months trained on Battles, Blenheims and Gauntlets before its operational equipment — Spitfires — arrived the following May. Although it was not involved in the Battle of France, nor at Dunkirk, it was sent south to St Eval in June and was to fight throughout the Battle of Britain based either at this Cornish station or at Middle Wallop. Nor was the Squadron sent north to rest after the Battle, rather being moved to the Dorset coast in February 1941 to fly offensive sweeps over France, operations it continued to mount in Spitfires until after the Normandy landings.

In September 1944 it converted to the excellent Mustang long-range fighter and commenced flying long-distance escort missions for Allied daylight bombers over Europe.

After VE-day No 234 Squadron converted back to Spitfires, being equipped with Mark IXs until becoming a jet fighter squadron with Meteors in February 1946. In September that year it was re-numbered 266, but re-formed at Oldenburg in August 1952 with Vampire fighter-bombers, these being replaced by Sabres in 1953 and Hunters in 1956. It disbanded at Geilenkirchen the following year. Since the late 1970s No 234 Squadron has been accorded Reserve status, flying Hawk trainers as part of No 1 Tactical Weapons Unit at Brawdy.

Squadron formed from RNAS Tresco, Isles of Scilly, in August 1918.

Squadron Badge granted in August 1940 while stationed at St Eval, Cornwall. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: A dragon rampant gules winged and legged or flames issuant from the mouth proper. [The dragon breathing fire was a reference to the Spitfire fighters with which the Squadron was equipped at the time its Badge was granted, as was the Squadron's motto.]

Motto: (Latin) 'Ignem mortemque despuimus' — We spit fire and death.

No 360 Squadron



No 360 Squadron (with its subordinate No 361) bear the distinction of being the last RAF flying squadrons to be formed in the post-Second World War period. Formed at Watton in Norfolk on 1st April 1966, No 360 assumed the rôles of electronic counter-measures trials and training for RAF and RN personnel. Equipped initially with Canberra T.4s, No 360 soon absorbed No 361 Squadron, taking delivery of Canberra T.17s and T.17As. It moved to RAF Wyton late in 1975.

In 1994 it was scheduled to dispose of its Canberras, the rôle of counter-measures support for the RAF being taken over by a civilian organisation.

Squadron formed at Watton on 1st April 1966.

Squadron Badge granted in September 1973. Approved by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

*Blazon: In front of a trident erect azure a moth *Melese laodamia druce* wings displayed proper. [The trident acknowledges the inclusion of Royal Navy personnel among the unit's staff. The species of moth portrayed employs ultrasonic countermeasures to confuse predatory bats, and it is therefore analogous to the ECM rôle of the Squadron.]*

Motto: (Latin) 'Confundemus' — We throw into confusion.

No 617 Squadron



The famous 'Dambuster' Squadron, No 617, came into being when the Royal Air Force was already a quarter-century old, and owes its renown to the extraordinary and desperately hazardous attack by just nineteen Lancaster bombers on the great German dams on the night of 16/17 May 1943. Led by Wg Cdr Guy Gibson (who won the Victoria Cross), those nineteen crews flew out at night at very low altitude, breaching the Mohne and Eder dams, using special 'bouncing' mines, the brainchild of Dr Barnes Wallis. Eight Lancasters failed to return.

During the remainder of the War, commanded successively by such famous bomber pilots as Gp Capt Leonard Cheshire VC, OM, DSO and 2 BARS, DFC, and Wg Cdr J B Tait DSO and 3 BARS, DFC and BAR, No 617 continued to attack special targets in enemy-occupied Europe, carrying progressively heavier bombs, culminating in the awesome 22,000lb Grand Slam deep penetration weapon. Among the famous attacks flown were those on the battleship *Tirpitz* and the Bielefeld viaduct.

After the War No 617 flew Lincolns, Canberras, Vulcans and Tornados. It was disbanded between 1955 and 1958 but, shortly after re-forming at Scampton, it was to be awarded its first Squadron standard, the 'youngest' squadron to be so honoured. And, as if to demonstrate the Squadron's continuing superiority and accuracy in the bombing rôle, No 617 Squadron was to win the 1984 international bombing contest, staged annually by the United States Air Force, flying the Tornado aircraft with which it is still equipped in Strike Command at its base at RAF Lossiemouth.

Squadron formed at Scampton, Lincolnshire, on 21st March 1943.

Squadron Badge granted in March 1944 at Woodhall Spa, Lincs. Approved by H.M. King George VI.

Blazon: On a roundel argent a wall in fess or fractured by three flashes of lightning in pale gules and issuant from the breach water proper. [The Badge and motto recall the original dams raid.]

Motto: (French) 'Après moi le deluge' — After me the flood.



Danbury Mint

THE SQUADRONS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE



Order in which the Badges
should be displayed in your Frame

