

[Signature # 3248] **Flying Officer Robert SMITH** (3509934).
Signed **8 August 1958**. No 92 (Fighter) Squadron, RAF Thornaby.

Y.B. OFF. B. SMITH

228

Royal Aero Club Aviators 'Certificates

SMITH Robert
 No. 2 Officers Mess, x 28018
 7 E.T.S. R.A.F. Cottesmore.

Born 7th September 1933 at Ashington Northumb.

Nationality British.

u/t Pilot R.A.F.

Cert. taken on
at R.A.F. Cottesmore.

Date 18.3.52



LG, 27 Nov 1951. Cadet Pilot to Acting Pilot Officer on Probation, short service (eight years on the active list and four years on the reserve). Robert SMITH (3509934). 11 Oct 1951. Period of service to count from 25 Apr 1951).

LG, 22 Jul 1952. Pilot Officer. 25 Jun 1952.

LG, 4 Aug 1953. Flying Officer. 25 Jul 1953.

LG, 24 Dec 1957. Flight Lieutenant. 13 Nov 1957.

LG, 4 Apr 1958. Transfer to a direct commission (scheme B). As Flying Officer (Supplementary List) (twelve years on the active list and four years on the reserve). Robert SMITH (3509934). 28 Nov 1957 (period of service to count from 25 Apr 1951).

LG, 13 Jun 1958. Transfer to a direct commission (scheme B). As Flight Lieutenant (Supplementary List) (twelve years on the active list and four years on the reserve). Robert SMITH (3509934). 28 Nov 1957. Period of service to count from 25 Apr 1951 (substituted for notification of 4 Apr 1958).

LG, 3 Apr 1959. Appointment to commission (permanent). Flight Lieutenant (General List). 1 Oct 1958.

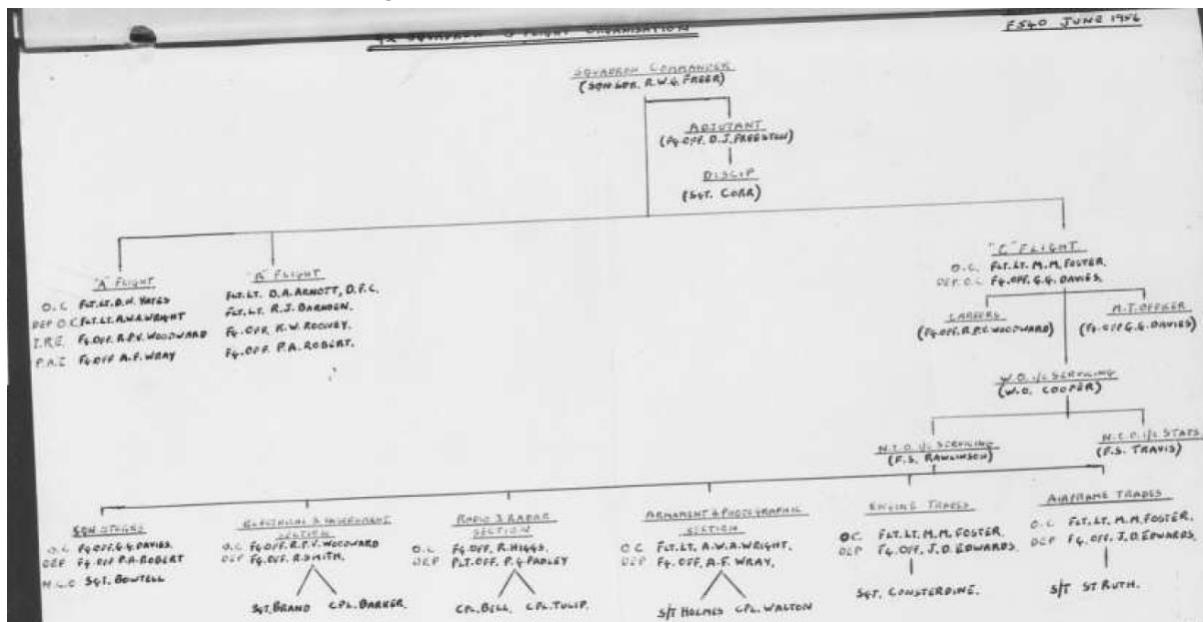
LG, 12 Oct 1971. Retired. 7 Sep 1971.

The Royal Air Force Retired List, 1977. Born 7 Sep 1933. First commission 11 Oct 1951. Flight Lieutenant 13 Nov 1957. Retired 7 Sep 1971.

No 92 Squadron's ORB Appendices 1956-1960 list Flying Officer R. Smith between Mar 1956 and Nov 1957 and Flight Lieutenant R. Smith in Oct 1958, when he was posted out:

Linton on Ouse. Mar 1956. C & R Course [Fighter Command Control & Reporting School]
Middle Wallop.

Linton on Ouse. Jun 1956. Organisation Chart.



Linton on Ouse. Aug 1956. Flying Officer R. Smith posted out.

Linton on Ouse. Jan 1957. Changes of Command and Duties during the month. Fire and Security Officer – Flying Officer R. Smith.

RAF Middleton St. George. Jul 1957. Cyprus and Near East Campaign Medals awarded to Flight Lieutenant M. R. Martin, Flying Officer R. Smith and S.A.C. Kernick.

RAF Thornaby. Oct 1957. Flying Officer R. Smith is attending the I.R.E. Course at RAF West Raynham....On returning from Denmark, the Squadron was faced with settling down in its new quarters at Thornaby, and is still in the process of doing this. The removal of ground and barrack equipment had already been carried out by the rear-party left behind at Middleton St. George. Signed M. E. HOBSON, Squadron Leader, Officer Commanding No. 92 Squadron.

RAF Thornaby. Nov – Dec 1957.

RAF Nicosia. Jan – Mar 1958.

RAF Thornaby. Apr – Aug 1958. For the last four days of the month [August], the Squadron operated from Waterbeach, not only on the readiness commitment but also acting as spars for the Farnborough fly past (4 aircraft).

RAF Middleton St. George. Sep 1958. For the first ten days of the month, the Squadron was deployed at Waterbeach on Exercise "Halyard". This entailed four serviceable aircraft being held permanently on the ground at readiness....The move of equipment back to Middleton started just before the end of September in preparation for the aircraft flying out of Thornaby on 1st October, and at the time of writing this has been completed, all aircraft leaving Thornaby on the appointed day. For the last three days of the month, four pilots and aircrew, together with 26 groundcrew, were attached to Horsham St. Faith to represent No. 13 Group in the Dacre¹ Firing Competition.

¹ From <http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Dacre.htm>: In 1951, Air Commodore George Bentley Dacre CBE, DSO and his wife presented the Dacre Trophy to the RAF, in memory of their son, Kenneth Fraser, who was killed on operations over Germany in 1943, whilst serving with No 605 Squadron. The trophy is awarded annually to the most proficient fighter squadron in the RAF.

RAF Middleton St. George. Oct 1958. Flight Lieutenant R. Smith posted out.

According to <http://sirius1935.wix.com/92squadron#!squadron-members-n-s/c19pg>, the following Smiths were in No 92 Squadron:

Smith, H	1918
Smith, Al	1944
Smith, "Ginger	1945
Smith, Jake	1944
Smith, Mike	1971-73
Smith, Peter	1943-44
Smith, Pete	1981-84, 89-91
Smith, "Smudge"	1958

From <http://sirius1935.wix.com/92squadron#!chapter-thirteen/c13fd>:

In August 1957, the Squadron moved to RAF Waterbeach where they undertook the "Battle Flight" commitment and also provided reinforcements for the Fighter Command flypast at the SBAC (Society of British Aircraft Companies), show at Farnborough. Some pilots were also to take part in a twenty-two-aircraft loop with No. 111 Squadron so all the Hunter Squadrons Numbers 1, 19, 56, 65, 63 and 92 were in the Cambridge area, which gave the opportunity for a get together. This was achieved by holding a punt race on the River Cam. Somehow 92 managed to maintain six pilots on standby and to enter two complete crews plus Sam, the Squadron dog, for the races. They were unable to supply a judge as they knew (a) that they should win easily and (b) if they didn't win easily, a judge wouldn't make any difference anyway.

In the first race, 'B 'Flight provided the first team, consisting of Brian Cox, Al Durward, George Aylett and 'Smudge' **Smith**, which streaked into the lead but when only half a dozen punt lengths from the finish they took a great fancy for the river bank and ended up in second place.

'A 'Flight team, consisting of 'Tinkle 'Bell, Dave Ozanne, Jim Edwards and Tony Back, decided that paddling the punt wasn't getting them anywhere so they all got out and pushed. They finished third although one of the two teams which beat them was later disqualified by the judges because, although they started off with a crew of four, they somehow managed to acquire another member en route.

From <http://www.rafjever.org/sharecurrents.htm#Smith>:

Flying Officer Bob R Smith (Retd)



4 Squadron pilot. Arrived before May 1953. Departed Jun 1955 to 92 Squadron, Linton. Address: British Caledonian Airways Limited. Svc No 3509934 Fg Off 25 Jul 53. From Ron Gray's Notes (21 Mar 06): "Another North-East man, from Ashington, Northumberland if my memory serves well. After the Sylt missing wheel incident, over which I was feeling a trifle low, Bob took me to his room and showed me a plaque on his wall that said, "If you never make a mistake, you'll never make anything". So, we went to the bar! Bob, I heard from my meeting with Ian M., had been doing forward ground control in the Suez affair. Their Land Rover was hit by a Royal Navy missile but fortunately they escaped serious injury."



4 Sqn B Flight in front of Hangar 1 - Early 53. Left to right: Peter Phillips; **Bob Smith**; Ernie Lack; Tony Vasey; Roger Collins Flt Cdr; Dougie Bridson; Dave Clayton; Norman Giffin; W R Burrows. © Norman Giffin



4 Sqn B Flt Groundcrew and Aircrew - Early 1953. Left to right front row: W R Burrows; Norman Giffin; Peter Phillips; Tony Vasey; Roger Collins Flt Cdr; Ernie Lack; Dave Clayton; Dougie Bridson; **Bob Smith**. © Norman Giffin



Air Sea Rescue Launch "Fishing" Sylt May 1953. One of the roles of the ASR Launch was to clear away German Fishing Boats that ventured under the ranges when live firing was in progress. Norman and the boys were told by the ASR launch crew that they were going "fishing". This was strange as there was no fishing tackle on board. The launch pulled up alongside one of the German fishing boats and slung over a bucket with some bottles of gin and whisky. The bucket came back with some marvellous freshly caught fish. The launch crew said it was a hopeless job keeping the fishing boats off the range. The German fishermen would say that they had carried on fishing throughout the war when allied aircraft would

occasionally deliberately fire at them so they saw no need to stop just to avoid a few cannon cases and spent rounds from the live ranges above. Left to right: Roger Collins; Dougie Bridson; Norman Giffin; **Bob Smith**. ©Norman Giffin



Queen's Coronation party at Sylt, livening up a bit with female company – 2 Jun 53. Left to right: Norman Giffin; Tony Vasey; Bob Smith; Unknown waving his arms; Alan Laycock; Snowy Ewens at back; Unknown Lady; Dave Clayton; Roger Collins; Dougie Bridson; Geoff Lee; Bob Molden. © Norman Giffin



Christmas Menu in the Airmen's Mess – Dec 53.
 The following signatures have been recognised:
 Down left-hand column: Unknown, Unknown,
 John Jack, Stn Cdr Gp Capt Powel-sheddon,
 Unknown, Wg Cdr Russell-Bell, OC Admin Wing,
 Unknown, Padre Stratford, Unknown. Right
 column: **Bob Smith.**



SYLT/RAF/2035G 16 MAY 55. CRASHED. SABRE A/C XB923. REST.

Charlie Boyack and myself had been left behind at JEVER. His Sabre radar caught fire and burned his small pack; my Sabre would not start. The briefed runway at Sylt by Sqn. Ldr Gilpin was the long one but by the time I got there the wind had veered somewhat. Struck bank of earth in undershoot of short runway in use (1200 yds I seem to remember) at Sylt. The German contractors who were putting in new airfield lighting had not advised ATC that they were working halfway across runway thresh-hold. J (Jig) (XB923) lost port wheel and tank. I jettisoned the starboard tank at the second attempt over the airfield. The electric circuits had obviously suffered and had to use the lavatory chain on the floor, behind the control column. The tank rolled outward along the wing and bent the pitot head outwards at

90°. This rather upset the instruments it served. I spent what seemed to be several hours mesmerised at the altimeter and VSI, which were flying up and down beyond anything possible. The ASI said I'd stalled ten minutes ago and did I want to restart the game?

A 93 member was airborne at the time, when I was explaining the wee problem to Tony Vasey who had replaced Boss Gilpin on the Tower frequency, and offered a formation landing. I thanked him but as the reaction of the aircraft was uncertain I flew a circuit, on their long runway this time, using the power indications (in percentages on the F86), popped it down and held the port wing up as long as possible. The guy in the caravan told me afterwards that the approach and landing were spot on.

The newly promoted CO of 93, Squadron Leader Browne, held the Court of Enquiry. The best support I had was from the Wing Commander Flying at Sylt. The aircraft was Cat. 4. The port wheel ended up in a garden in Westerland, thankfully not causing any injury. Obviously, I was a trifle upset and **Bob Smith** showed me a plaque which he had hanging on his accommodation wall which said, "If you never make a mistake, you will never make anything". Felt better after that and we went for a drink or three.



*"De Boys ob de Fourth Persoot Sabre Squadron". 4 Sqn Pilots Sylt May-June 1955. L to R on Wing: Ian 'Jan' Madelin, Ron 'Chub' Gray, Pete 'PSmiff' Smith, Tony 'Persil' Pearce, **Bob 'SMiffR' Smith**, Tony 'The Vase' Vasey, 'Chas' Boyack, Les 'Speed' Swart, Bill 'Bilake' Blake, Bob 'Danny' Daniels. Front row: Tex Williams, Pete Langstone, Brian 'Drag' Watson, Bill 'Silly' Simms, The Boss 'Snowy' Ewens, Fred 'Fraid' Maycock, Les 'Booters' Bradley, Alan 'Al Capone' Armitage.*

From <http://www.rafjever.org/sharepast.htm#BradleyL>:

Flying Officer Les L J Bradley (Retd)

Svc No 4073305 Fg Off 25 Oct 53. Sean Bradley, his son, (sean.bradley@saharaaviation.com) reports on 28 Mar 10: "Les L. J. Bradley was my father and as we grew up as a tightly knit expat family I have met many of dad's colleagues, especially **Bob Smith**. After some time at 511 sqn, my Dad did indeed go into civilian aviation, circa 1972 with Donaldson, Pakistan International, Cyprus Airways [during the 1974 conflict] and finished his flying career two years after being hijacked on the ground at Beirut international airport in 1982. He regularly commented on the differences between his R.A.F. and civilian flying days, words not to be printed here! Needless to say, he was a lot fonder of his R.A.F. days. He passed away in 1997, aged 63, through a series of complications that seem to have originated from his hijack and the loss of our mother 10 years before in 1987. [Not to mention the few cigarettes/ cigars and the odd drink along the way!] I am still in touch with Rex Boulton and Bruno Brown, ex-Navy pilot who flew with my Dad at Kuwait Airways and was on the ground at the same time of his hijack. **Bob Smith**, whom we knew very well in Kuwait as he was flying for a private flight for Moh'd Hassawi of Kuwait Real estate at the time, I have not heard of for some years, apparently last heard running a type of curiosity shop in the South of England somewhere. Dr William Larkworthy, not sure what sqn he was attached to and not sure if any connection with your group, is alive and well in the South of France. From Ron Gray's Notes (21 Mar 06): "Les joined 4 Sqn. just ahead of me, in time to go on exercise. He was my next room neighbour. Came from Seaton Deleval I believe, which is spitting distance from where I am typing this (during time working for a secret Government Department. Shhh.) I was surprised to see him and **Bob Smith** in tennis gear. Cannot recall playing with them."

From <http://www.111sqn.com/the-loop-narrative.html>:

GOING FOR A LOOP – SEPTEMBER 1958 by Air Commodore Roger Leslie Topp AFC**

A few minutes ago, we took off from Odiham in Hampshire, formed our glossy-black Hunter fighters into a tight arrowhead formation and headed for Farnborough.

Weeks of training in the relative obscurity of the Suffolk skies had prepared us for this occasion. Today is the start of the Farnborough Air Display, a world class air show, a big event. Our formation is big too for we about to demonstrate something audaciously new in the realms of fighter aerobatics; a loop by a formation of no less than twenty-two aircraft.

Rapidly we approach Farnborough which lies dead ahead at four miles. Against the background of red-brick houses forming the small township, the airfield stands out clearly and we can see the many brightly polished parked, the blue and white striped awnings of the numerous marquees and the dark mass of the crowd.

Three miles to go. We enter a shallow dive, aimed to bring us about one hundred feet above the ground at the airfield boundary. Alter course slightly to adjust for wind and maintain our correct approach path. Gently does it; small movements of the lead aircraft require much greater movements of the extremities of this large formation.

Press the radio button and call our man in the tower, the squadron adjutant; soon now he will take over Oliver Stewart's task of commentator, a concession not easily extracted from this doyen of Farnborough. Our man tells us that John Cunningham , flying the Comet, is completing his display and we shall be clear to commence on time ; and

We are on time. To the second.

Down below the compelling voice of Oliver Stewart keeps the attention of the spectators riveted on the Comet on its final approach they have not spotted us yet skimming low over the heather of the Laffans plain even though we are less than a mile away.. Gracefully John Cunningham eases his magnificent aircraft on to the runway.Oliver Stewart reluctantly relinquishes the microphone to our commentator who invites everyone to look now to their left where they will see! This is it then. We are on stage. For the next few minutes the skies above Farnborough are ours; we must make good use of this.

We have about one hundred yards to go, we are low. The rear most aircraft are flying beneath the slipstream of those in front is the lowest, some fifty feet above the ground. But the pilot ignores the ground. He, like all the others, fixes his eyes on the aircraft on which he is formatting, concentrating to the exclusion of all else on maintaining his correct position. In every cockpit there is an atmosphere of tense but professional anticipation.

In the lead aircraft I make quick final checks; fuel, enough to complete the display and return to base; airspeed, about 420kts, food; engine power, 7200rpm, enough to give 85% power. Don't touch the throttle again now; the others will have enough to so without chasing my throttle movements. Down below the airfield boundary flashes by. Now, is the time!

Radio a soft warning of intention to the forming pilots and ease firmly, steadily, back on the control column. As one, twenty-two Hunters rise from among the background of heathered dunes and point skyward.

As we zoom upwards the airspeed falls. Resist the temptation to apply more throttle. We have sufficient speed and inertia to fly over the top of this loop provided we keep the radius correct. Do this by maintaining the right back pressure on the control column. Too much or too little and we shall stall; I dismiss from my mind and disturbing thoughts of what would result from twenty-two aircraft stalling in close formation.

A glance in the mirror confirms that all aircraft are still in perfect formation. So far, so good. All the Hunters are now standing vertically on their tails. For better or worse we are now virtually committed to completing this loop in some fashion or other. From this attitude there is little one can safely do with so many aircraft, other than loop them. It is the point of no return!

Looking forward along the nose of the aircraft all that can be seen is the clear blue of a cloudless sky; the earth's horizon has disappeared. It is difficult now to keep the path of the loop absolutely perpendicular to the ground, for the limitless sky provides nothing by which direction can be gauged. If the loop is not maintained in the vertical plane then the formation will turn and those aircraft on the inside of the turn must, to stay in position, fly more slowly than those on the outside; perhaps too slowly for comfort. Furthermore, if the loop turns then its position relative to the ground moves laterally, and although started in line with the runway will finish well displaced to one side; perhaps over the crowd; a position not renowned for its popularity with the show organisers, let alone the spectators.

But surely, by now we must be nearing the summit. Throw my head well back and look for the horizon. Ah yes! There is it, and level too; we have kept our flight path vertical and all is well.

As we come to the top of the loop, the half-way point, we encounter a further difficulty. An aircraft flying line astern of another must keep below the jet efflux and slipstream of the one ahead. Consequently, the flight path arcs for the aircraft at the rear of the formation are much greater than for those at the front and to maintain station, those at the rear require much more engine power. Unfortunately, at the top of the loop airspeed is low which results

in poor thrust response to throttle movements. To keep in formation is difficult; to regain position once it is lost is impossible.

But this is not all, as we reach the summit the aircraft in front begin to descend, the speed ceases to fall and we accelerate quite rapidly. This is only true however, for the leading aircraft because those behind have yet to reach the top so they are still decelerating. This result is a tendency for the spacing between aircraft to increase and the shape of the formation to be spoiled. We must prevent this happening.

In effect those of us in front must wait for those following to reach the top of the 'hill'; but if we in front reduce engine power we do not achieve the desired result because the effects of gravity on our acceleration more than compensate for the reduction in thrust. Moreover, the use of air breaks would cause too much air turbulence for precision flying. Fortunately, there is another method. We in front delay our downward plunge by holding our aircraft, inverted, nearly level with the horizon by relaxing the back pressure on the control column.

Glance again in the mirror. It reveals an impressive sight. As each aircraft in turn tops the 'hill' the sky appears to fill with Hunters each poised, floating, inverted, on the horizon. There is a capriciousness in their attitude. As though they themselves anticipate the exhilarating dive to come as much as the pilots.

Very well then. Here we go. Ease back again on the control column and we swoop rapidly downwards, diving for the runway beneath. The speed builds up giving a renewed crispness to the feel of the controls. If anything, the formation packs closer together than before. Mere feet separate wing-tip from wing-tip. The airfield grows rapidly larger as we hurtle downwards and as the runway becomes near life-size, our impressive formation ceases its downward plunge and sweeps above the airfield no more than a few feet above the ground.

One can sense the lightness of spirit and the pride in every cockpit. Perhaps the loop was not immaculate but we know that it was pretty good. One day perhaps another Squadron might perform a loop with twenty-two fighter aircraft in close formation and close to the ground and in public but, - - well, we were the first!!

We swing swiftly through the completion of our demonstration, including a barrel roll with sixteen black Hunters and then in a matter of moments we are clear of Farnborough and streaking for Odiham.

We land and quickly de-brief. We are nonchalant. Everything went as planned and practiced, so what is there to talk about? Come on. Pile into our cars and hare over to Farnborough. Rumour has it that there is, somewhere among those marquees with the blue and white striped awnings, some free beer.

Twenty-two to one we shall find it!

2 June 92

From <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rinkratz/5235260186>:

Pilots who flew the loop

XG194 SqnLdr Roger Topp

XG170 FltLT "Oakie" Oakford

XG200 FIGOff "Oscar" Wild

XF515 FltLt Alan Brindle

XG201 FltLt Paddy Hine

XG171 FITLT Brian Mercer

XG592 FLLT George Ord

XE563 FITLT Matthew Kemp
XJ715 Fg Off Ron Smith
XG189 FltLt Bob Smith
XF416 FltLt Bob Barcilon
XF424 FlgOff Roger Hymans 43 Sqn
XE616 FlgOff Peter Jennings 263 Sqn
XG190 FltLt Les Swart
XE656 FlgOff Norman Lamb 1 Sqn
XE584 FltLt "Will" Scarlett 1 Sqn
XG193 FlgOff "CJ" Clayton-Jones
XJ687 FltLt "Chas" Boyer 66 Sqn
XG266 FltLt Frank Travers-Smith 66 Sqn
XG160 FltLt Mike Thurley
XF506 FlgOff Tony Aldridge
XG191 FltLt David Edmondston 19 Sqn

Airborne Spares

FltLt "Chan" Biss 1 Sqn
FlgOff Barry Vaughan 56 Sqn

Extra pilots

FltLT Les Elgey
FltLt Fred Hartley

Flight, 5 Sep 1958:

THE FLYING-DISPLAY PILOTS...

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

F/L. N. H. Giffin



F/L. D. McClen



F/L. F. W. J. Packer



F/L. P. Millington



SERVICE participation in the S.B.A.C. Display at Farnborough has increased over the past few years and this week has reached a new height with the appearance of four formation aerobatic teams—two from the R.A.F. and two from the F.A.A.—as well as a spectacular contribution from R.A.F. Fighter and Bomber Commands.

No. 111 Squadron, equipped with Hunter F.6s, and the four-man Jet Provost team from the Central Flying School at Little Rissington, provide the R.A.F. aerobatic element. The nine pilots of "Treble One" who do formation manœuvres (after the scheduled massed take-off and loops by 22 aircraft) are seen in the top two rows on this page, headed by their C.O., S/L. R. L. Topp (at left, above). The four C.F.S. pilots are seen to the right, with their leader, F/L. N. H. Giffin, on the left.



TREBLE ONE'S TWENTY-TWO

Pulling out an impressive new trick even for so skilful a squadron, 22 Hunters of No. 111 Sqn.—forming the biggest formation aerobatic display team ever to represent the R.A.F.—are seen here in rehearsal for the current S.B.A.C. Show. This manœuvre, a wing-over (not part of the squadron's Farnborough routine), has been brilliantly caught by Air Ministry photographer "Mick" Chase in an accompanying Meteor 14.

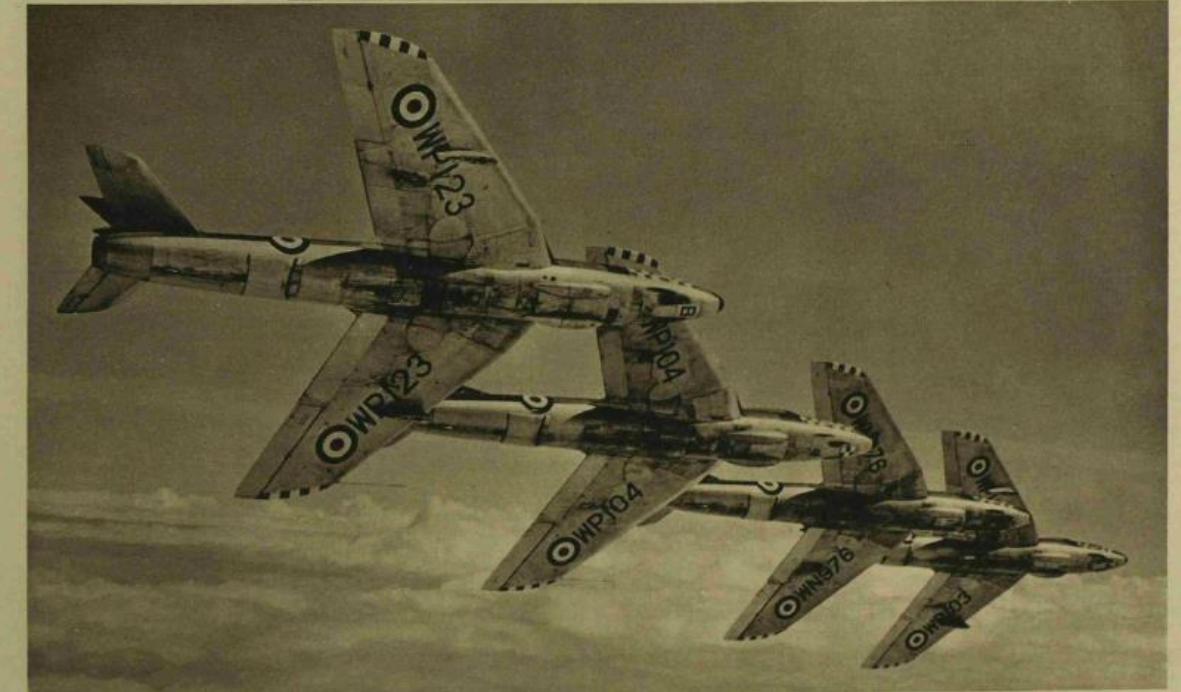
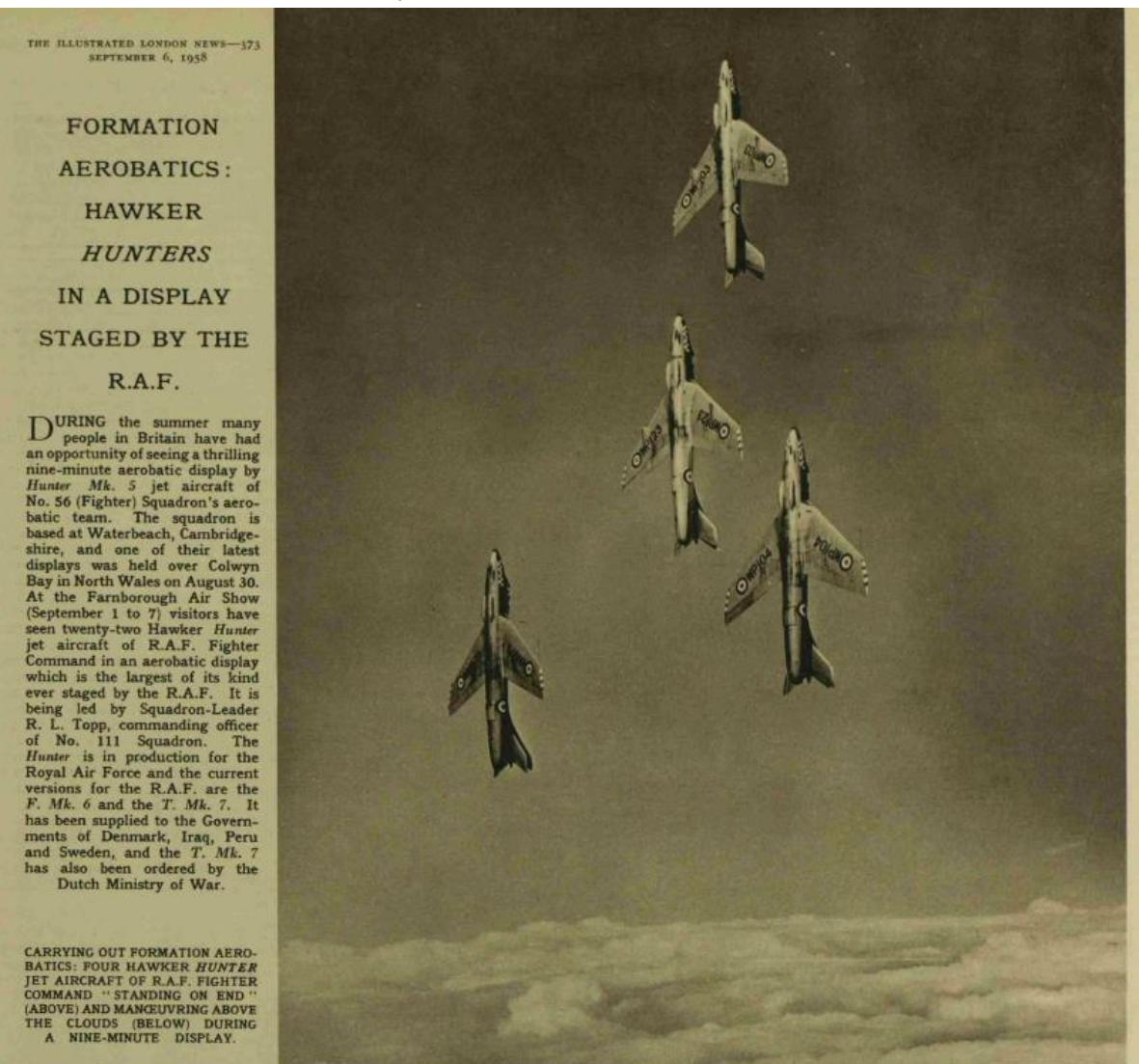
Illustrated London News, Saturday 6 September 1958:

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS—573.
SEPTEMBER 6, 1958

FORMATION
AEROBATICS:
HAWKER
HUNTERS
IN A DISPLAY
STAGED BY THE
R.A.F.

DURING the summer many people in Britain have had an opportunity of seeing a thrilling nine-minute aerobatic display by Hunter Mk. 5 jet aircraft of No. 56 (Fighter) Squadron's aerobatic team. The squadron is based at Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, and one of their latest displays was held over Colwyn Bay in North Wales on August 30. At the Farnborough Air Show (September 1 to 7) visitors have seen twenty-two Hawker Hunter jet aircraft of R.A.F. Fighter Command in an aerobatic display which is the largest of its kind ever staged by the R.A.F. It is being led by Squadron-Leader R. L. Topp, commanding officer of No. 111 Squadron. The Hunter is in production for the Royal Air Force and the current versions for the R.A.F. are the F. Mk. 6 and the T. Mk. 7. It has been supplied to the Governments of Denmark, Iraq, Peru and Sweden, and the T. Mk. 7 has also been ordered by the Dutch Ministry of War.

CARRYING OUT FORMATION AEROBATICS: FOUR HAWKER HUNTER JET AIRCRAFT OF R.A.F. FIGHTER COMMAND "STANDING ON END" (ABOVE) AND MANOEUVRING ABOVE THE CLOUDS (BELOW) DURING A NINE-MINUTE DISPLAY.



Near East, Middle East

THIRTEEN Hunters, a total that included the repaired, though still unpopular, T Mk 7, provided the expected low-level farewell beat-up before heading off to Nicosia via Nice, Malta, and El Adem. The industrious groundcrew, whose sweat had provided this 100 per cent serviceability, and surplus pilots went non-stop by Britannia. Arriving twenty-four hours earlier than expected they found no accommodation available.

On reaching Nicosia, the Hunters went immediately into 'Battle Flight', a chore that kept everybody busy for the remainder of the month. Complaints from the Squadron that Command Operations had little knowledge of the requirements of Hunters were not wholly unfounded but in spite of 'being on ten minutes, stand-by, two minutes readiness, airborne patrol, armed and sterile, all in half a day' it was reported that 'morale remains high.'

It was still high when the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief visited the newest arrivals in his Near East Command. That worthy arrived by Canberra. As other VIPs had done before, he departed with his aeroplane carrying on its fuselage, the black and white chequerboard of 43. In September the Squadron, in fair combat against all Akrotiri and Nicosia Squadrons, captured the MacDonald Swimming Trophy. Meanwhile, the *Scottish Daily Mail*, unaware of their prowess in eastern pools, was lauding their praises in an eve of Battle of Britain Day write-up. Three months out of date they proclaimed: '43 Squadron welcome you to meet them at Leuchars tomorrow' . . . 'televised for the first time on STV No 43 will be taking a prominent part in the display' . . . However, the sub-editor did manage to hit the jackpot of factual correctness with his last words, 'When 43 talk about formation aerobatics they know what they are talking about.'

Encouraged by such praise 43 pressed on with renewed vigour. So much in the case of Flt Lt Hay that he managed to overstress two aircraft during

consecutive sorties. Less brutal, but officially described as 'impressive' was an aerobatic display laid on for a large party of visitors.

Early December brought promotion exams for the erudite and not so clever alike but once they were over life could be looked at in lighter vein. On the 14th six Hunters prepared to exercise the Olympus radar station, thereafter, 'four went u/s on start-up but undeterred the few got airborne - just then Olympus went u/s too. Apart from that it was a valuable exercise and we are glad we were asked to help.'

Pantomime, traditionally beginning on Boxing Day, got an earlier start this year. On the last working day before Christmas a 'fluid six' led by Flt Lt Chris Golds got airborne and their subsequent antics drew forth from the helicopter aces of 103 Squadron to 'The Officer in Command Entertainment, No 43 Squadron' the following letter:

*Sir,
Pantomime.*

I have the honour to have witnessed an excellent pantomime this morning, over Nicosia, at 0900 hours. I thought that the display of the six dwarfs was in keeping with the season, and I feel that the loss of Snow White was more than adequately made up for by the presence of Goldilocks whose instructions on the radio rounded off the whole show. I am sure a great deal of practice was put into the display which was well appreciated by the audience!

Yours faithfully . . . etc.

Having thus demonstrated their (inadvertent?) ability to behave like clowns the Squadron now proceeded to demonstrate that they were pretty good at other things too, and during an air-ground cannon and rocketing phase, (with Sqn Ldr Peacock struck by the lurgi

and no less a person than Goldilocks taking over the whip), the dwarfs and their associates, in the course of flying their highest number of monthly hours since arriving in



The Hunters at Nicosia - July 1961

Nicosia, thumped up to a 42 per cent average on air-ground, which fact as they did not fail to mention 'BEAT ANY PREVIOUS RECORD BY ANY HUNTER SQUADRON'. In between times they 'intercepted and duly hacked' the Javelins of 23 Squadron when they arrived on detachment. The Javelin pilots denied this achievement, saying that they had seen no Hunters. 'This,' said the Squadron diarist, 'we are quite prepared to believe.'

'Winged Phoenix' took four aircraft and eight pilots to Kenya for an Army co-operation exercise. The ground forces were duly appreciative of the Squadron's efforts, particular admiration being shown for one Hunter 'approaching the floor of the Rift Valley with much vertical velocity', a manoeuvre less favoured by a wrathful Station Commander, an irate Squadron Commander, or even perhaps by the recipient of an extra week-end Battle Flight duty.

Cyprus weather being what it is, with each passing month the weather went from hot via very hot to too hot, and as the temperature went up so did the consumption of beer. Two cockerels and four hens, long delayed by a fowl pest outbreak in England, at last reached the Island, and another visitor was Air Vice-Marshal F E Rosier CB OBE DSO, 'A' Flight Commander in the years immediately prior to September 1939, and by then Air Officer Commanding Air Forces Middle East.

Flying had variety in abundance. Ciné, air to air, spring exercise 'Adex', exercises with the Army at El Adem and again to Kenya. Firepower demonstrations, formation on behalf of *Flight* photographers, interception of strikes by F-100 Super Sabres of the Turkish Air Force, a visit to Greece, a fly-past for Battle of Britain Day, and a detachment to Bahrain all fell to the Squadron's lot before the year was out. The last month of all brought another visit to Libya for 30 mm air gunnery and 3 inch rocket firing, during which course Fg Off Tim Robertson accidentally dropped a pair of 230-gallon overload tanks and obtained one of the few direct hits of the week. And so much less embarrassing than an earlier case (by another pilot) at Nicosia when the accidental depositing of four 100-gallon tanks on the tarmac produced no less than seven fire engines and one ambulance!

January 1963 was a time of 'all change'. After less than two years' residence in Cyprus the Squadron was ordered to prepare to move to Aden, there to form with two other long established Squadrons 8 and 208, the latter

originally the famous 8 Squadron of the Royal Naval Air Service that had flown Camels with 43 in 1918 at La Gorgue, a tactical support and Ground Attack Wing. The farewell parade to march off the Squadron Standard on 22 February had to be held in a hangar because of heavy rain. The Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Dennis Barnett was present. A flypast during the parade by Flt Lt **Bob Smith**, one of several pilots scheduled to go to the UK instead of Aden, was low enough to give those inside the hangar the impression that the roof was meant to fly past as well. 'However', it was recorded, 'after long months of practice he just missed it'. The same pilot, the previous month had received the thanks of the AOC-in-C for 'a very polished display of low flying' for some high ranking visitors.

The parade on the 22nd was followed by a farewell party. After Flt Lt King had left as advance guard in the long lasting T7, there was another party on the 23rd continued on the 24th. When 29 Squadron arrived, as replacements for 43, on the 28th the Squadron had still not left. It was 2 March before they did. They arrived at Aden to be met by Air Vice-Marshal Rosier, their new C-in-C and the TV cameras of the BBC – 'seen by thirty-six million viewers on Eurovision – a genuine hero's welcome' the Squadron diary proclaimed.

Nor was it all quite idle boast and foolish word. A letter which followed to Aden, from Wing Commander Flying at Nicosia, Philip Thomas, showed that it was not themselves alone who had a good opinion of 43.

"Any station that has 43 resident should consider itself fortunate, for a more dedicated and professionally able assembly would be difficult to find. It was a delight to know and work with you all and any wistfulness I may experience at saying good-bye to you now is modified by the thought that I shall have the privilege to see you from time to time at Squadron reunions." Within weeks of its arrival 43 had improved the Wing averages for air-ground firing and on The Queen's Birthday fly-past provided five out of the nine aircraft after 8 Squadron, detailed for the job, had failed to supply enough. In May they led the fly-past to bid farewell to Air Vice-Marshal Rosier. After a dinner in June to celebrate their second year away from Leuchars, and a spate of nose-wheel trouble, they spent July and most of August at Bahrain, with detachments to Sharjah for weapons work. After that spell in those most blistering and unlovely places a two week detachment to Nairobi was doubly welcomed.



Camel Squadron 1963 style with Aden Levy Scouts
(MoD (RAF) Crown Copyright)

The main purpose of the visit was a display by eight aircraft at the Kenya Royal Show. This, the last show before that country was given its independence will no doubt be the last for all time. Following massed bands, grand parades of horses and cattle, the Molo hounds and more massed bands, the Squadron arrived, on cue at 1645 hrs. For the benefit of those who can understand the jargon the routine will be described in detail. It is the last occasion in this history, though surely not in all history, that 43 Squadron aerobatted in sizeable formation

before a large and appreciative audience.

Sqn Ldr Peacock, Fg Off Law, Flt Lt Doggett, and Flt Lt Edwards made up a box of four. Stunt men Flt Lts Golds and Stoker initially formed with this box. Flt Lts Osborne and Chapman flew low and slow. The box plus two arrived, stuntmen turning and splitting off leaving the box doing dumb-bells. Halfway through this, two aircraft flew across low and slow with undercarriage down. The box then split in two and shortly afterwards returned at high speed from opposite directions. As the box reformed



The four man Aerobatic Team
Fg Off Derek Law (2), Sqn Ldr Peter Peacock (1), Flt Lt Jim Edwards (4) and Flt Lt Chris Doggett (3)