



LE CUMHACHO MO SGIATHAN

"By the power of my wings"

The Fulmar Story

"REDUCTION AND RE-ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT—FLEET AIR ARM"
(Statement on the Defence Estimates 1969)

"When our withdrawal from East of Suez is complete, fixed wing flying will come to an end and three Royal Navy Air Stations will no longer be needed from about 1971 to 1972. The Navy will retain the Stations at Culdrose, Portland, Yeovilton and Lee-on-Solent: The Royal Air Force expects to take over Lossiemouth".



“The Fulmar Story”

2022: The 50th Anniversary of the handing over of HMS Fulmar to the RAF.

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This article has been re-produced by the Fleet Air Arm Buccaneer Association.



Commanding Officers

Rank	Forenames / Initials	Surname	Decorations	From	To
Captain	Donald George Frederick Wyville	Macintyre	DSO (2 Bars), DSC, MiD, LoM(US), RN.	02/07/1946	29/01/1948
Captain	(Sir) John Caspar	John	GCB, RN.	30/01/1948	24/08/1948
Captain	Douglas McIver	Russell	RN	25/08/1948	21/08/1950
Captain	Henry John Fullerton	Lane	OBE, RN.	22/08/1950	01/12/1952
Captain	John Augustin	Levers	OBE, RN.	02/12/1952	13/07/1954
Captain	Philip David 'Percy'	Gick	OBE, DSC, RN.	14/07/1954	10/12/1956
Captain	Frederick Michael Alexander	Torrens-Spence	DSO, DSC, AFC, RN.	11/12/1956	11/03/1959
Captain	Michael Frampton	Fell	CB, DSO, DSC, RN.	12/03/1959	29/03/1961
Captain	George. C.	Baldwin	DSC, RN.	30/03/1961	19/12/1962
Captain	David. W.	Kirke	CBE, RN.	20/12/1962	11/10/1965
Captain	Douglas Granger	Parker	CB, DSO, DSC, AFC, RN.	12/10/1965	10/09/1967
Captain	Eric Melrose "Winkle"	Brown	CBE, DSC, AFC, Hon FRAeS, RN.	11/09/1967	(12/03/1970)
Captain	Joseph. D.	Honywill	(Temporary Appointment)	Feb 1970	March 1970
Captain	(William) Duncan	Lang	CB	13/03/1970	29/09/1972

And so after months of rumour and counter rumour, the Coup de Grace was finally delivered, and the demise of HMS FULMAR became just another stage in the implementation of the Government's Defence Policy towards the cessation of Naval fixed wing flying and manpower reductions in the Fleet Air Arm.

For a time, the whole future of the air station was in doubt, even though it was hard to imagine that a multimillion-pound complex of such strategic importance would be abandoned altogether. Fortunately for the many local people who rely on the air base for their living, subsequent announcements were made that the Royal Air Force would be taking over Lossiemouth on 29th September 1972.

The history of Lossiemouth as an airfield began just prior to the outbreak of World War 2 when there emerged a vital need to establish airfields in the North of Scotland to protect the northern approaches and to provide easier access to the Scandinavian countries. The southern low lying coastal strip of the Moray Firth was selected and Dalcross, Kinloss and Lossiemouth were established as air bases.

On the outbreak of war, No. 15 Flying Training School was in residence, but by May 1940, this unit was replaced by No. 20 (Bomber) Operational Training Unit which remained until the cessation of hostilities.

In pursuit of its role as a forward base for air operations against Axis shipping in northern waters, numbers 21 and 57 Squadrons equipped with Blenheim's and number 83 Squadron with Hampdens were detached to Lossiemouth and for the first year were actively engaged in mine laying and other anti-shipping operations. Undoubtedly the most famous attack mounted from Lossiemouth was on the 12th December 1944, when 31 Lancaster's of Bomber Command destroyed the German Battleship TIRPITZ in a massive bombing raid.

Less than a year later, on 28th July 1945, the Station became a satellite of Milltown and was transferred to Number 17 Group Coastal Command.

This was not to be for long for on Tuesday 2nd July 1946, the Royal Air Force Stations of Lossiemouth and Milltown were transferred to the Royal Navy. A short ceremony took place at Lossiemouth with music provided by the Royal Marine Band of HMS THESEUS. The Royal Air Force Ensign was lowered, and the White Ensign hoisted as Wing Commander



Top: Winter '61- and still the Hawks flew.

Bottom: 1963 – 738 Squadron line up.

E. A. Johnston formally handed over command to Captain D. MacIntyre, Royal Navy. The Royal Naval Air Station was commissioned as HMS FULMAR on the 7th July 1946, and the first Naval Squadron to set up residence was 766 equipped with Fireflies and Seafires. Their operational flying training task constituted the Station role in these formative years. Pilots were trained for the Strike and Fighter roles in the two aircraft types and subsequently moved on to the Deck Landing Training School at Milltown. Lieutenant L. D. Empson (now Vice-Admiral Empson, the Second Sea Lord) was a Squadron CO of the DLTS in those early days.

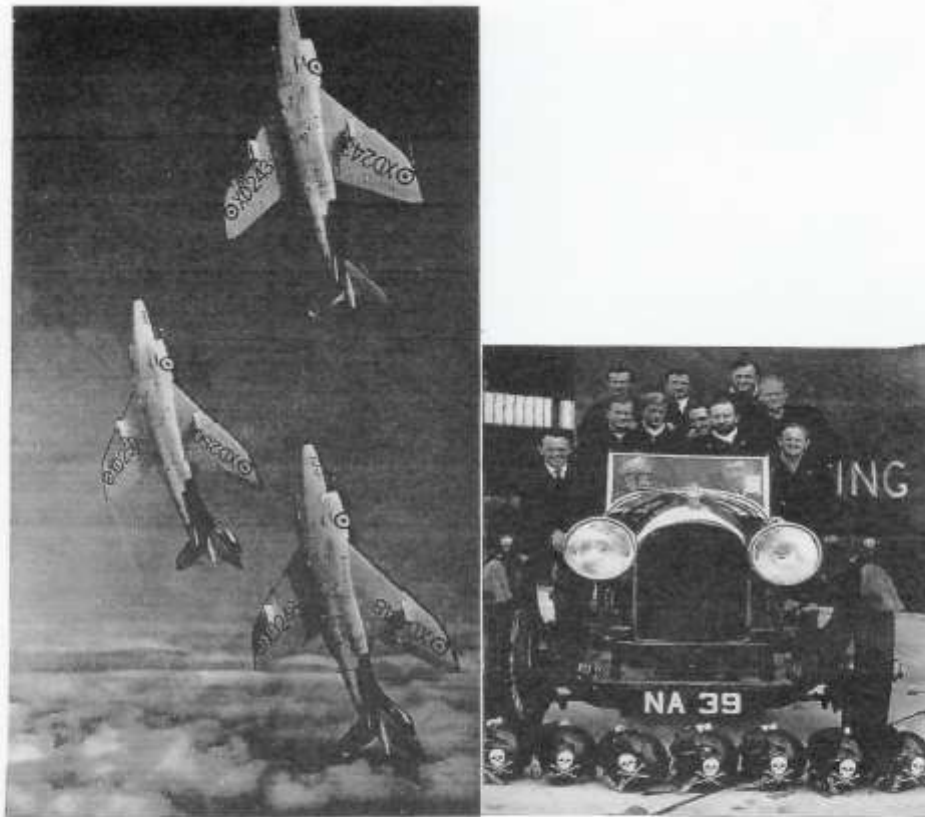
On a cold September day, the 28th in the year 1946, just over 5,000 people took advantage of an open invitation to attend the first Lossiemouth Air Day. As it turned out, that day was an unfortunate choice as thick banks of fog crept in from the Moray Firth and seriously curtailed the flying display by Fireflies, Seafires and Sea Furies. However, despite the fog, the planned rocket assisted launch of a Barracuda was highly successful, and an aerial attack on a dummy ship by a Sea Otter received wide acclaim!

The aircraft carrier HMS THESEUS was a regular visitor to Moray waters in the late 1940s and made her deck available for practice landings by Seafires and Fireflies piloted by the more advanced student pilots from Lossiemouth. In March 1949, after a cruise in the Arctic, HMS VENGEANCE disembarked her front-line squadrons, 814 Squadron Fireflies and 802 Squadron Sea Furies, which staged through Lossiemouth en route to RNAS Culdrose.

By this time the Navy had established their name in Morayshire sporting circles and further evidence of their prowess was shown in June 1949, when HMS FULMAR became Morayshire Junior League Football Champions and winners of the North of Scotland Cricket Championships in September of the same year. In March 1950, they retained the Elgin and District Table Tennis Championship for the third consecutive year.

Signs of the apparent permanency of RNAS Lossiemouth were beginning to emerge with the construction of the Naval Married Quarters estates.

The first ten of seven hundred houses were opened on 7th October 1949, by Rear Admiral Anstice and were sited at Grays Walk, Bishopmill, Elgin.



Left: 1963 – Scimitars of 800 Squadron perform.

Right: The Deaths Head Hussars of 809 Buccaneer Squadron (CO, Cdr. A. J. Leahy) in Mike Hornblowers' appropriately name car.

The Air Station itself, like most Service establishments of the time, remained an austere and uninspiring conglomeration of wooden buildings which provided only the minimum of essentials in its living and working accommodation. Consolidation had been achieved; now was the time for expansion. From the comparative tranquillity of the immediate post-war years, the 1950's mushroom with activity.

In 1952 the flying task was transferred to Milltown when the decision was taken to transfer the Naval Air Fighter School from RNAS Culdrose to RNAS Lossiemouth. To meet this new commitment, a works programme was initiated, which included the extension of two of the three runways (23/05 from 5720 feet to 9140 feet and 29/11 from 4050 feet to 6068 feet), the construction of new hardstanding's, taxiways, fuel installations and improved radio aids.

By May 1953, Squadrons were able to return from Milltown and in the autumn 766 Squadron split into two, 766 (Fireflies) and 764 (Seafires), before they moved south in preparation for operation "Solitaire" – the movement of 738 Squadron Sea Furies and 759 Squadron Meteors from RNAS Culdrose. In late 1954 759 Squadron was disbanded and by March 1955, 738 Squadron was completely equipped with Vampire T22s while 736 Squadron received Seahawks. The two Squadrons forming the Naval Air Fighter School for some time.

These were the years that were dominated by the rapid emergence of jet aircraft in the Fleet Air Arm. The Attacker had been pioneered into operational service by 800 Squadron and had provided valuable experience for the front-line squadrons in fighter techniques. The knowledge acquired was put to good use as the Attacker jets gradually gave way to the more popular Seahawks, and in a ten-month period during 1955 and 1956, no fewer than five front line Naval Squadrons of Seahawks, 801, 802, 804, 810 and 811, were commissioned into service at Lossiemouth. Their arrival signalled the gradual emergence of Lossiemouth as an increasingly important Naval Air Station.

The role of Naval Helicopters in times of local distress has long been a principal factor in cementing the foundations of Community Relations and Lossiemouth's SAR crews have contributed in no small way. During heavy blizzards in January 1955, they responded to the SOS call from the Convener of Caithness County with the now famous "Operation Snowdrop". Three helicopters were detached to Wick and for days on end, from dawn to dusk, they dropped fodder to herds of animals cut off by the snowdrifts. Phase 2 of "Snowdrop" commenced in February but was more commonly referred to as "Operation Shovel" as 400 sailors at any one time were employed keeping the runways clear.

However, it was not all work in those days and a lighter recollection is that of 7th March 1955, when a touching and colourful ceremony was held. This was to comply with the Admiralty Order, which removed the

distinctive coloured lace from the uniform sleeves of Supply, Engineering, Electrical and Instructor branches. Four small coffins were slow marched to the burial ground where a heartrending soliloquy was delivered by Commander Griffith (Cdr. 'L') on the passing of the Navy's years old colour bar.

A Royal day for Lossiemouth was the 18th May 1956, when the Ship's Company received HRH the Duke of Edinburgh on his first official visit during a tour of all Royal Naval Air Stations. The following month Lieutenant J. R. Palmer and Commissioned Pilot R. H. Williams were appointed Members of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire, in recognition of the parts they played in the helicopter rescue, when the Norwegian tanker DOVREFJEL grounded in the Pentland Skerries. They rescued 32 from a crew of 41 in what was known at the time as the largest ever air sea rescue. The two SAR helicopter crews were subsequently awarded the Boyd Trophy for their part in the dramatic rescue.

On Wednesday 29th May 1957, a day of glorious sunshine as befitted the occasion, the Station was honoured by the presence of Her Majesty the Queen accompanied by His Royal Highness, Prince Philip. Her Majesty disembarked from the Royal Barge in Lossiemouth harbour, where the local dignitaries were presented. The Royal Party then drove through the streets lined with cheering crowds to the Air Station. At 1500 the Royal Standard was broken at the Masthead as Her Majesty's car entered the Main Gate. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness then drove through the lines of cheering sailors to the airfield. Here the Commanding Officer, Captain F. M. A. Torrens-Spence, DSO, DSC, AFC, the Commander, and Commander (Air) were presented, after which Her Majesty boarded a Heron aircraft of the Queen's Flight and departed for London.

Towards the middle of 1957, a third training squadron was added to the establishment. 764 Squadron arrived from the Royal Naval Air Station Ford with their Seahawks. The Air Station at this time was not only beginning to play an ever increasingly important role in the Naval Air Command, but the remoteness of the airfield from the busy commercial air lanes and its excellent flying weather conditions made it a very attractive base for major exercises. One of these, a large NATO exercise, took place in September 1957, and was called 'Strikeback'. During this period, the air station was bulging with the influx of 24 Neptunes and the 300 Americans in support, and with RAF Shackletons and Hunters, which combined with 764 Squadron Seahawks to present a force of considerable magnitude. It also highlighted the real problem of accommodation and the Americans had to be quartered in Lossiemouth's Stotfield and Marine Hotels.



Aircraft of 736 (Buccaneers) and 764 (Hunters) overfly Aberdeen on the occasion of the
Bon Accord Festival in 1966.

At last, in the following year hope was given by the Ministry of Defence that the old wartime accommodation would not have to be endured for much longer. An announcement was made that over the next eight years £3,000,000 was going to be spent in bringing the living accommodation of all ranks up to modern standards.

It was also in 1958 that just 13 years after the end of the war, RNAS Lossiemouth, the airfield built to combat the German threat, welcomed the first German Naval Air Squadron to be trained in this country. In May, Number 1 MZ Squadron formed with 12 Seahawks and was commissioned by Vice Admiral Ruge, Inspector General of the Federal German Navy, in the presence of the German Ambassador. This was to be the start of a very close and friendly relationship with the German Naval Air Force.

Another Squadron to receive Seahawks in 1958 was to be 738 which re-equipped during this period with Seahawks and Sea Venoms. In the second half of the year, the Station entered the age of the supersonic jet fighter, with Lossiemouth's 803 and 807 Squadrons becoming the first two of the four front line squadrons to be equipped with the new Supermarine Scimitars. They were commissioned in June and October respectively, by Rear Admiral D. R. F. Campbell, Flag Officer Flying Training. Despite the nickname of " Dragmaster", the pilots formed an attachment to these fast high-powered aircraft. Although not successful in their designed fighter role, they proved an effective and flexible addition to the strike/ ground attack armoury.

In 1959 Scimitars began to replace the training Seahawk aircraft held by 736 Squadron, while 738 Squadron, now involved exclusively with an all-weather syllabus, had phased out its Seahawks and possessed Sea Venoms and Vampires. 764 Squadron acquired the first of its Hunter T8s.

A bright revolutionary extension to the NAAFI amenities of Lossiemouth came into being when the Fulmar Club formally opened in November: the ceremony being carried out by Captain M. F. Fell, the Commanding Officer. The new club concept was run on the lines of a private club, governed by a committee and a complete contrast to the rather more austere bar and restaurant which was more familiar to Service personnel at that time.



Wooden Hut Junior Rates Accommodation 1950's.

The flying task for 1959 is worthy of mention. For during this year over 16,000 flying hours were achieved, making it the largest single effort in the Home Air Command. This then was the situation as the Air Station moved into the 60s.

The first half of 1960 saw FULMAR providing the necessary training for Indian officers of the future 300 Squadron Indian Navy. Prior to commissioning their Squadron of six Seahawks in June at RNAS Brawdy, their officers were put through the CO, SP and AWI Courses at Lossiemouth. Their eventual destination was to be the Indian Navy Carrier VIKRANT.

Meanwhile the resident squadrons had yet another change when 738 became the Advanced Flying School with Seahawks and Vampires, 736 Squadron an OFS with Scimitars, and 764 Squadron with their Hunter T8s ran courses for AWI training and for CO and SPs designate, together with swept wing conversions.

In March 1961, a new phase in the life of the air station was started when the Buccaneer was introduced to replace the Scimitar. Rear Admiral F. Hopkins, FOFT, commissioned 700Z Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Commander A. J. Leahy, to carry out the intensive flying trials on this highly complex aircraft. The first of its kind to be specially designed for operations in the low-level strike role.

The Lossiemouth Ladies stole the headlines on the 16th May when they formed up to welcome Her Royal Highness Princess Marina, the Duchess of Kent, Commandant of the WRNS. All 100 of the Fulmar Wrens were on parade to welcome this Royal visitor.

Scimitar aerobatics over Moray were a regular occurrence throughout the summer of 1961 as Lossiemouth's 800 Squadron had been selected as the Royal Naval Aerobatic Team '61 with displays at "24th Salon de L'Aeronautique" (Paris Air Show), four RNAS Air Days, one Navy Day and finally the SBAC Farnborough Air Show.

On to 1962 and another Royal visit, albeit a short one, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles arrived in a Heron aircraft of the Queen's Flight. The Prince was about to commence his first term at Gordonstoun and this visit presaged similar arrivals and departures over the next few years. Another important visitor was to follow a few months later in June when the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Caspar John, opened the new £650,000 accommodation

block. The Admiral had commanded HMS FULMAR 14 years previously: a time when the accommodation consisted entirely of wooden huts.

Lossiemouth was now the permanent home of the Buccaneer and the Strike role. The first front line Squadron to be equipped with the new aircraft was 801 Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Commander E. R. Anson, Royal Navy. During this year, the Seahawk and the Vampire were finally withdrawn from Squadron service when 738 re-equipped with Hunter T8s and GA11s.

At the same time as the Buccaneer was introduced, RNAS Lossiemouth found itself elevated to the status of a Master Diversion Airfield. This brought about a dramatic increase in the number of ATCOs, met men and fire crews to provide the required 24-hour service 365 days a year. It was not long before Lossiemouth began to become an aeroplane spotters' dream. The variety of aircraft using the facility were numerous: Civil aircraft complete with passengers, 'V' bombers, Americans from Iceland, Canadians on Atlantic patrol—all were provided for day or night. Our popularity spread and apart from our MDA facilities, our NATO friends were anxious to make use of the excellent ranges at Tain, Rosehearty and Garvie, and the two adjacent low flying areas.

Perhaps one of the strangest stories arising from our MDA status was that which occurred on the 30th June 1963. At approximately 1830, Air Traffic were informed by Scottish Centre that a light aircraft was having difficulty getting into Kirkwall (Orkneys) due to low cloud and sea fog. An immediate diversion was advised. Some 50 minutes later a brand new single-engine Beechcraft Musketeer appeared over the hedge out of the murk. Nothing abnormal so far, except that the Swedish Ferry Pilot, Mr. S. Englund, had taken off 25 hours previously from St. Piene Island, a small French possession just south of Newfoundland heading for Hamburg on a non-stop delivery flight. Far from being a unique experience, this was the sixth crossing of a series in a similar aircraft by this intrepid aviator whose landfalls for these flights had stretched from the Faroes to the French coast.

The Queen's Colour of the Fleet Air Arm was transferred from HMS ARIEL, RNAS Lee-on-Solent to HMS FULMAR, on 9th October 1962, and was received with full honours. The Colour was presented to the Fleet Air Arm by Her Majesty the Queen on the 30th July 1956, at Lee-on-Solent, where it had remained until this time. It was transferred to enable the Royal Naval Guard from Lossiemouth to parade it in Edinburgh on the occasion of the State visit of His Majesty King Olaf of

Norway on 16th October. The Royal Guard was not Lossiemouth's only contribution as six Scimitars of 736 Squadron provided a flypast in the King's honour over the Royal Yacht NORGE as she entered Leith Harbour.

A last nostalgic event occurred in 1962 when on the 18th December HMS FULMAR's Fulmar aircraft made its last flight. Piloted by Commander Nethersole and with Lieutenant Beagley in the back, the historic aircraft staggered back after a 45-minute breath-taking flight (mainly due to the Avgas fumes) and an extremely reluctant Merlin coughed to a protesting stop in Station Flight Dispersal. From that day, the aircraft, which was built in 1939, was not to fly again but it is hoped that its 1972 owners, Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, will coax it back into life.

January 15th 1963, saw 700Z achieve its front-line status when it was commissioned as 809 Squadron by Rear Admiral P. D. Gick, FOFT. Still under the command of Lieutenant Commander A. J. Leahy, 809 Squadron became the Buccaneer Headquarters Squadron and began the training of No. 1 Conversion Course.

A Royal honeymooning couple, Princess Alexandra and the Honourable Angus Ogilvy made a surprise visit to Lossiemouth on the 24th April when their aircraft was diverted from Dyce airport. The newlyweds enjoyed the hospitality of Captain and Mrs. Kirke, while they watched the evening television presentation of their wedding before leaving by car for Birkhall.

FULMAR had Royal visitors again on 30th June when Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh arrived by air on a private visit to see Prince Charles at Gordonstoun. The Royal Party returned to Edinburgh from Milltown later in the day. The following month we were to see Prince Charles again when he visited the Air Day with a party of his school friends.

An old wartime hangar on the Air Station was converted by means of a £3,500 grant from the Nuffield Trust into a sports complex, which at the time was one of the largest indoor recreational centres in the country. It was opened by Vice Admiral J. G. Hamilton, KBE, CB, the FOA (H), in 1963, and the following year was inspected by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.

A black and white photograph of seven young men, likely a sports team, posing in a room. Four are standing in the back row, and three are sitting in the front row. They are all wearing suits and ties. A dartboard is visible on the wall behind them.

The Million and One up darts team Guinness Record 1967.



Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown CBE, DSC, AFC, FRAeS RN. Fulmars most famous aviator.



Top: The Rescue Launch, Lossiemouth Harbour.

Bottom: The many welcome visits made to Scotland by members of the Royal Family are recalled by this 1967 picture of Her Majesty the Queen's departure from Milltown.

The Air Day for 1964 was up to that date a record, when 17,000 people streamed through the gates; undoubtedly the now established Buccaneer was a main attraction.

By 1965 the improved Buccaneer, the Mk. 2, with its Spey engines, was beginning to come on the scene. The task of assessing the capabilities of this more powerful aircraft was given to 700B Flight, which was commissioned under the command of Commander N. J. P. Mills, on 9th April 1965, by Rear Admiral A. F. Turner, Director General of Aircraft.

July 1965 will be remembered for the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra for the formal opening of the new Wardroom, which soon became known as the Lossiemouth Hilton. Although it certainly was a very spacious building it was possibly the contrast with the previous wooden Wardroom that earned it this name. However, the old huts and their open fronted stoves will be remembered with affection by all who lived in them and there is undoubtedly a school of thought that the new Wardroom would never see the likes of some of the parties that were staged between its cramped walls.

In October 1965, the Public Relations Officer had a field day when a FULMAR Buccaneer Mk. 2 flew nonstop from Goose Bay, Newfoundland, to RNAS Lossiemouth. The flight was originally scheduled for 30th September but had to be delayed until the 4th October. Piloted by Commander G. Higgs with Lieutenant Commander J. A. Tayler as the Observer, this four-hour flight was practical proof of the Buccaneer Mk. 2's confirmed range of over 2,000 miles.

Later in the month, on 14th October, 801 Squadron was recommissioned by Vice Admiral Sir Richard Smeeton, Flag Officer Naval Air Command, with Buccaneer Mk. 2s, under the command of Lieutenant Commander J. de Winton. 801 Squadron subsequently embarked in HMS VICTORIOUS. It was during this commissioning ceremony that the first hint of impending problems was given when Vice Admiral Smeeton said that " a question mark hung over the future of the strike carrier."

Three months later, 809 Squadron commanded by Lieutenant Commander L. Middleton, had re-equipped and on 27th January was recommissioned by Rear Admiral D. W. Kirke. The timing was a happy coincidence as it was the 25th anniversary of the commissioning of the first 809, which had been equipped with Fairey Fulmars.



The social life for which Lottie was so famous, Guy Fawkes Night, right and the Christmas Pantomime left.



One of our numerous overseas visitors represented here by this dramatic picture of an
F102 of the USAF.

Publication of the Government's White Paper on Defence brought Vice Admiral D. Gibson to Lossiemouth on the 23rd February, 1966. The aim of his visit was to discuss its implication to the Fleet Air Arm in general and to Lossiemouth in particular. The Air Station personnel at this time stood at a record figure in excess of 2,500 plus 500 civilians. Although £3,000,000 had been spent on modernisation schemes, it was recognised that a decision to scale down the role of the Fleet Air Arm by the mid-1970s would be bound to bring changes. How far reaching and vast those changes were to be, was still a matter for conjecture. And so, 1966 continued with the "Sword of Damocles" poised above but this was of no concern to the record crowd of 23,000 who poured through the gates for the 1966 Air Day which was held on 27th August.

Five days later, Franklin Engelmann came "Down Our Way" and helped still further to spread the name of FULMAR abroad.

It is so often the case that in peace time one is never able to demonstrate the full potential of one's weapons, but the Fleet Air Arm were on the 28th March 1967, given the golden opportunity to show the world their low level bombing techniques. The Torrey Canyon had broken her back on the Seven Stones Reef, near Lands' End and her oil threatened widespread pollution for coastal beaches. The following signals passed between C in C Plymouth and RNAS Lossiemouth:

28 0900 March. From C in C Plymouth to NAS Lossiemouth.

" Let me have your suggestions on how you would rupture oil compartments and ignite contents of TORREY CANYON."

28 0945 March. From Lossiemouth to C in C Plymouth.

" DSL bombing with 1,000 lb. medium capacity high explosive bombs attacking from side to which ship is listing to achieve penetration without ricochets."

28 1200 March. From C in C.

" Come to 15 minutes notice to launch from 1300."

28 1412 March.

From C in C.

" Execute." 1550. First two Buccaneers on target.

1600. The TORREY CANYON oil on fire.

The aircraft used were Buccaneers from 800 and 736 Squadrons and after the first sorties 23 direct hits were reported from 36 bombs released.

On the 8th July 1967, the Burgh of Lossiemouth and Branderburgh conferred the Freedom of the Burgh upon the Ship's Company of HMS FULMAR "In recognition of 21 years of cordial and fruitful relationship". Captain D. G. Parker, the Commanding Officer, replied, "We are deeply honoured. I accept on behalf of all members of the Ship's Company, past and present, endorsing as it does, the good and friendly relations which have always existed between the Station and people of Lossiemouth". Few people in the crowd could possibly have thought that in five short years RNAS Lossiemouth would be returning the Freedom Plaque to the Burgh of Lossiemouth for safe keeping, prior to handing the Air Station over to the Royal Air Force.

The building programme continued unabated and the new accommodation block which cost £1,000,000 were officially opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret. The new buildings, once again in complete contrast to the wooden huts, included a Chief Petty Officers Mess, Petty Officers Mess, Wrens Quarters, and a Junior Ratings block. At last, Lossiemouth was beginning to look like a modern Air Station as well as having the modern aircraft. Her Royal Highness was conducted on her tour by Vice Admiral D. Gibson, Flag Officer Air Command, and Captain D. G. Parker.

In August 1968, a significant exercise was carried out by four Buccaneers of 803 Squadron who flew from RNAS Lossiemouth to join HMS HERMES in the Indian Ocean. This was to prove the feasibility of providing fast air reinforcement to the Far East Fleet without the need for large Air Stations in the area. The Lossiemouth Strike force staged through Nicosia, Masirah and Gan and was supported by in-flight refuelling from Victor Tankers. Their mission accomplished, the Buccaneers returned the way they had come. It was a convincing demonstration of the flexibility of these aircraft in supporting the Carriers important role as a powerful striking force in remote and distant areas.

The "Fly Navy" campaign started in 1968 at 809 Squadron's instigation. It first appeared in public at Farnborough and other aviation shows when as a finale, the Buccaneers made their last run and simultaneously revolved their bomb-bays to display "FLY NAVY" to the crowds. The slogan caught the imagination of everyone connected with naval aviation and became a morale boosting motto.



Those were the days, a 1970 show of strength.



NAAFI Club 1950's.



Top: Tribal Dancing and its devotees.

Bottom: The Main Gate at Yuletide.

Right: Formation flying at which Lossie Squadrons excelled – here inverted Buccaneers of 736 Squadron in 1967.

At this time the only apparent Royal Air Force presence at Lossiemouth was within 736 Squadron. This Squadron had for several years been training RAF aircrew in preparation for the RAF receiving their own Buccaneers. In January of 1969, the 'colour' of 736 Squadron became even paler blue with the arrival of the first batch of RAF maintainers.

By now, in the early months of 1969, it was known that RNAS Lossiemouth was to be handed over to the Royal Air Force in the middle of 1972. Originally the date was to be the 1st August but this was later amended to 28th September. The first Squadron to go was 801, which had disembarked from HMS HERMES on 17th June and was disbanded at Lossiemouth on 21st July after 38 years in commission.

Ironically our numbers were swelled in November 1970, when 849 Squadron was evicted from RNAS BRAWDY prior to their demise and arrived at Lossiemouth to set up home.

Another disbandment came on 31st May 1971, when the Buccaneer Mk. 1 Simulator was officially axed having been in operation since 20th November 1963 and having 'flown' a grand total of 3,503 hours. Never have so many 'flying' hours contained so many emergencies.

Our last Air Day was a sad occasion and finally brought home to the public that our days at Lossiemouth were fast running out. The excellent weather and the advertised fact that this would be the last made the Air Day '71 one of the most successful with over 20,000 people attending.

The following month, September, Lossiemouth played host base to 16 Federal German Navy Starfighters (F104), who deployed here for six weeks while their own airfield at Eggebeck was being resurfaced. The Squadron, under the command of Commander R. Kiermayr, had a highly successful detachment and were able to return to their home country with many hours on the range to their credit and a thorough understanding of how Whiskey is made— after a few distillery visits.

1972 dawned with the knowledge that the sands of time were well and truly running out for Lossiemouth. The first casualty of the year was 800 Squadron which, having disembarked from HMS EAGLE, disbanded on arrival on 27th January. Their final curtain call was to have been a fly past over EAGLE, but this fond farewell was denied to them due to bad weather in the Solent. One month later, 736 Squadron, under the



Freedom of the Borough with colours flying, drums beating, bayonets fixed, the parade leaves
Fulmars Main Gate, July 1969.

Bottom: Final Mess Dinner attended by past Commanding Officers headed by
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Casper John.

command of Lieutenant Commander L. Wilkinson, also disbanded after years of training the men for the front-line squadrons.

On 1st April the Royal Naval School of Photography and Aerial Reconnaissance shut shop and moved to RAF Cosford, where it will become part of the Joint Services School of Photography. The School has been at Lossiemouth since 1964 and during that time has provided the Basic and Advanced Training for Naval and Army Photographers.

The last major casualty occurred on 27th July when 764 Squadron after years of training COs, SPs and AWIs, completed their last AWI course, dispersed their aircraft and disbanded. 809 Squadron, our only link left with our 12 years of Buccaneer history, flew off for the last time on 4th September to embark in HMS ARK ROYAL, and to subsequently make a new home at RAF Honington. 750 Squadron Sea Princes will remain at Lossiemouth almost to the very last day, when, on 25th September, they depart to RNAS Culdrose with the Observer School.

This then leaves 849 Squadron and 849 "B" Flight to be based at RAF Lossiemouth for the foreseeable future as the only Royal Naval contingent.

In time the RAF will operate Jaguars from the airfield which has played such a great part in the last war and the development of the Fleet Air Arm in the post-war years. With the airfield we must sadly hand over some of the finest ranges in the United Kingdom and the control of an unsurpassed low flying area.

At HMS FULMAR'S commissioning ceremony in 1946, a passage from the prayer read *"they are embarking on a road paved with hard work and tests of endurance in the path of duty to provide the defence of this realm"*. HMS FULMAR has now come to the end of this road but will always be held in high esteem by the many officers and men who have had the good fortune to serve at the Royal Naval Air Station Lossiemouth.

ANON

Glossary of Terms

AFC – Air Force Cross.

AFS – Advanced Flying School.

ATCO's – Air Traffic Controller Officers.

AVGAS – High octane petrol for aircraft internal combustion engines.

AWI – Air Warfare Instructor.

BUCCANEER SIMULATOR – Ground based flight simulator.

C in C – Commander in Chief.

CB – Companion of the Order of the Bath.

CBE – Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Cdr.'L' – Commander 'Electrical'.

CO – Commanding Officer.

Conversion Course – Training required to learn how to fly a different aircraft.

DLTS – Deck Landing Training School.

DSC – Distinguished Service Cross.

DSL – Depressed Sight Line. A semi-automatic dive-bombing technique.

DSO – Distinguished Service Order.

F104 STARFIGHTER – Very fast jet fighter aircraft.

FAA – Fleet Air Arm.

FOA (H) Flag Officer Air (Home).

FOFT – Flag Officer Flying Training. (Admiral rank).

FONAC – Flag Officer Naval Air Command.

FRAeS – Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

FRANKLIN ENGELMANN – 1950's/60's Radio presenter.

GAN – Southernmost Island of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean.

GCB – Knight Grand Cross. (Order of the Bath).

HMS – His or Her Majesty's ship or submarine.

KBE – Knight Commander of the British Empire.

LoM (US) – Legion of Merit. USA.

Glossary of Terms cont.

MASIRAH – Island off Oman in the Arabian Sea.

MDA – Master Diversion Airfield.

MERLIN – Commonly used internal combustion engine used on WW2 aircraft.

MET – Meteorological.

MiD – Mentioned in Despatches.

NAAFI – Navy Army and Air Force Institutes.

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

NICOSIA – City in the country of Cyprus.

OBE – Order of the British Empire.

OBSERVER – Navigation Officer.

OFS – Operational Flying School.

RANGES – Areas where aircraft weapons were fired or released.

RNAS – Royal Naval Air Station.

SAR – Search and Rescue.

SBAC – Society of British Aircraft Constructors.

SOS – Save Our Souls.

SP– Senior Pilot.

“SWORD of DAMOCLES” – Extremely precarious situation.

TORREY CANYON – Oil Tanker.

V’ BOMBERS – British heavy bombers.

VICTOR TANKER – Converted ‘V’ Bomber to in-flight refueller.

VIKRANT – Indian Navy Aircraft Carrier.

WRNS – Women’s Royal Naval Service.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS MESS.

PETTY OFFICERS MESS.

WRNS QUARTERS.

JUNIOR RATES BLOCK.

Accommodation Quarters.

WARDROOM – Officers Accommodation.

Royal Navy Aircraft Carriers Mentioned in this Article.

HMS Ark Royal

HMS Eagle

HMS Hermes

HMS Theseus

HMS Vengeance

HMS Victorious

Royal Naval Air Stations Mentioned in this Article.

HMS Ariel – RNAS Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire.

HMS Fulmar – RNAS Lossiemouth, Morayshire, Scotland.

HMS Goldcrest – RNAS Brawdy, nr. Haverfordwest, South West Wales.

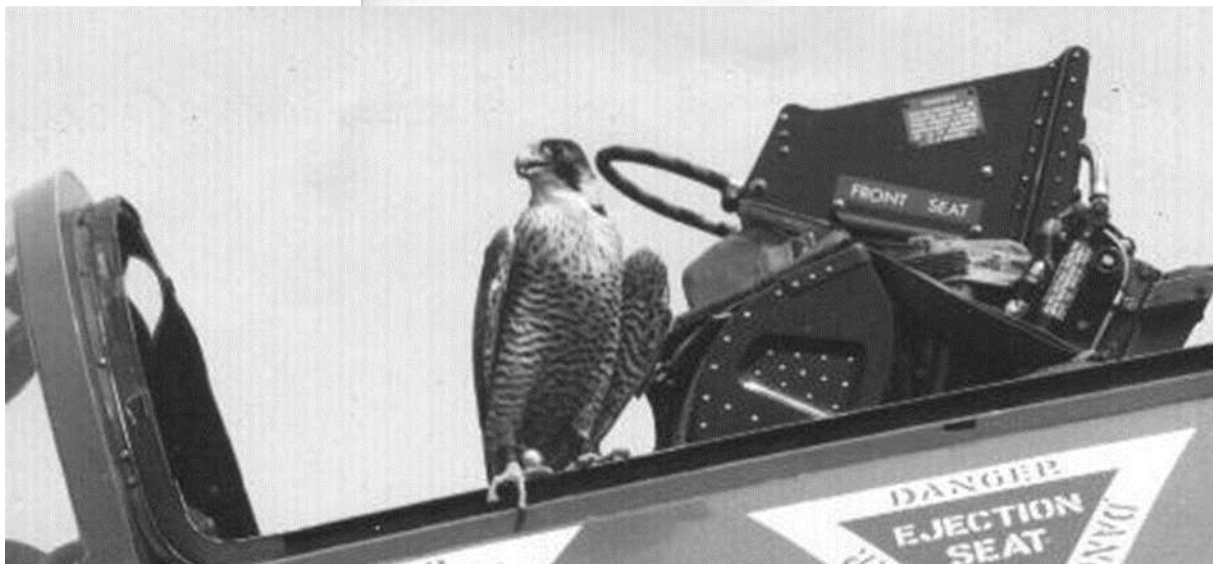
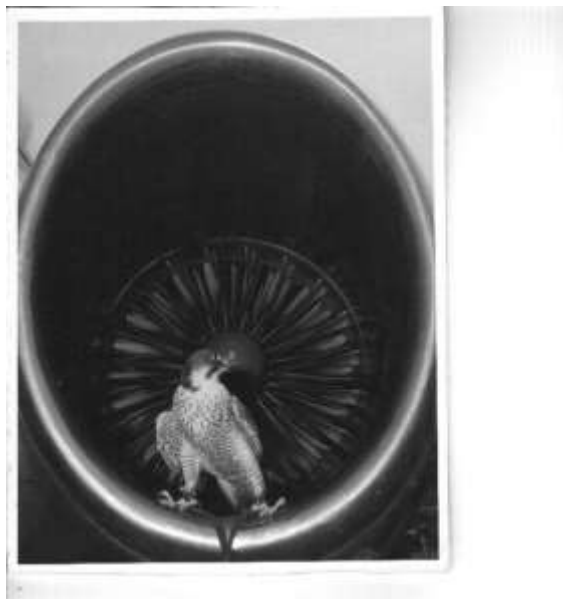
HMS Heron – RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset.

HMS Peregrine – RNAS Ford, Littlehampton, Hampshire.

HMS Seahawk – RNAS Culdrose, Helston, Cornwall.

HMS Fulmar II - RNAS Milltown – Satellite airfield close to RNAS Lossiemouth.




Losses of military aircraft have been numerous and costly and, in some cases, lives have been lost. With this in mind in 1965 the Royal Navy implemented a bird control programme at the then RNAS Lossiemouth in Morayshire Scotland. This is now based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.







Peregrine Falcons from the Bird Control Unit.

FAA Squadrons that operated from RNAS Lossiemouth



<u>Squadron Crest</u>	<u>Squadron / Unit</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
	<u>Aircraft Holding Unit (AHU) later NASU (Naval Aircraft Support Unit)</u>	<u>Anson, Oxford, Mosquito, Sea Hawk, Scimitar, Buccaneer.</u>	<u>1946.</u>	<u>1972.</u>
	<u>700 IFTU Flight</u>	<u>Short Seamew</u>	<u>Nov 1956.</u>	<u>Mar 1957.</u>
	<u>700B Flight</u> 	<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>9 Apr 1965.</u>	<u>30 Sep 1965.</u>
	<u>700S Flight</u>	<u>Sea King</u>	<u>3 May 1966.</u>	<u>6 May 1966.</u>
	<u>700Z Flight</u>	<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>7 Mar 1961.</u>	<u>15 Jan 1963.</u>
	<u>736 Squadron</u>	<u>Attacker, Meteor, Sea Hawk, Sea Vampire</u>	<u>9 Nov 1953.</u>	<u>Jun 1959.</u>
		<u>Scimitar</u>	<u>Jun 1959.</u>	<u>26 Mar 1965.</u>
		<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>26 Mar 1965.</u>	<u>25 Feb 1972.</u>

	<u>738 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Fury, Sea Hawk, Sea Vampire, Sea Venom, Hawker Hunter</u>	<u>Nov 1953.</u>	<u>6 Jan 1964 (Moved to Brawdy).</u>
	<u>750 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Prince, Sea Venom</u>	<u>1965.</u>	<u>26 Sept 1972. Moved to Culdrose.</u>
	<u>759 Squadron</u>	<u>Meteor, Sea Vampire</u>	<u>Nov 1953.</u>	<u>12 Oct 1954. Disbanded</u>



	764 Squadron	<u>Seafire</u>	<u>18 May 1953.</u>	<u>23 Sept 1953.</u>
		<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>21 Jun 1957.</u>	<u>Jul 1959.</u>
		<u>Hawker Hunter</u>	<u>Nov 1958.</u>	<u>27 Jul 1972. Disbanded</u>
	764B Squadron	<u>Scimitar</u>	<u>26 Mar 1965.</u>	<u>Nov 1965. Disbanded</u>
	<u>766 Squadron (Operational Flying School)</u>	<u>Seafire, Firefly, Sea Fury, Harvard, Oxford</u>	<u>4 Aug 1946.</u>	<u>3 Oct 1953.</u>
	800 Squadron	<u>Scimitar</u>	<u>1 Jul 1959.</u>	<u>25 Feb 1964.</u>
		<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>18 Mar 1964.</u>	<u>23 Feb 1972.</u>

	800B Flight	<u>Scimitar</u>	<u>9 Sep 1964.</u>	<u>25 May 1965.</u> <u>Disbanded Aug 1966.</u> <u>at Yeovilton.</u>
	801 Squadron	<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>1954.</u>	<u>1959.</u>
		<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>17 July 1962.</u>	<u>27 July 1965.</u>
			<u>14 Oct 1965.</u>	<u>21 Jul 1970.</u>
	802 Squadron	<u>Sea Fury</u>	<u>23 Nov 1953.</u>	<u>17 Nov 1955.</u>
		<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>Feb 1954.</u>	<u>10 Apr 1959.</u>
	803 Squadron	<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>14 Jan 1957.</u>	<u>31 Mar 1958.</u>
		<u>Scimitar</u>	<u>3 Jun 1958.</u>	<u>1 Oct 1966.</u>
		<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>3 Jul 1967.</u>	<u>18 Dec 1969.</u>

	<u>804 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Hawk (Lt Cdr Eric 'Winkle' Brown). Reformed (CO Lt Cdr R von T B Kettle RN), January 1956.</u>	<u>28 Nov 1953.</u>	<u>30 Sept 1959.</u>
		<u>Scimitar. Lt Cdr T.V. G. Binney CO</u>	<u>1 Mar 1960.</u>	<u>15 Sept 1961.</u>
	<u>806 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>14 Jan 1957.</u>	<u>13 Apr 1959.</u>
	<u>807 Squadron</u>	<u>Scimitar. Lt Cdr Keith Leppard CO.</u>	<u>1 Oct 1958.</u>	<u>17 May 1962.</u>

	<u>809 Squadron</u>	<u>Buccaneer</u>	<u>15 Jan 1963.</u>	<u>26 Mar 1965.</u>
			<u>27 Jan 1966.</u>	<u>4 Sept 1972.</u>
	<u>810 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>4 Jul 1955.</u>	<u>6 Aug 1956.</u>
	<u>811 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Hawk</u>	<u>14 Mar 1955.</u>	<u>10 Jan 1956.</u>

	<u>824 Squadron</u>	<u>Gannet AS1, AS4, T2.</u>	<u>25 Sept 1956.</u>	<u>12 Oct 1956.</u>
	<u>831 Squadron</u>	<u>Wyvern S4</u>	<u>18 Jun 1956.</u> <u>6 Oct 1956.</u> <u>25 Nov 1956.</u>	<u>8 Jul 1956.</u> <u>26 Oct 1956.</u> <u>10 Dec 1957.</u> <u>Disbanded</u>
	<u>831 Squadron B Flight</u>	<u>Sea Venom ECM22</u>	<u>13 Oct 1961.</u>	<u>27 Oct 1961.</u>
	<u>849 Squadron HQ</u>	<u>Gannet AEW3 & T5</u>	<u>Jun 1970.</u>	<u>15 Dec 1978.</u>
	<u>849 Squadron B Flight</u>	<u>Gannet AEW3</u>	<u>12 Jun 1970.</u>	<u>15 Dec 1978.</u> <u>Disbanded</u>
	<u>849 Squadron D Flight</u>	<u>Gannet AEW3</u>	<u>9 Dec 1970.</u>	<u>26 Jan 1972.</u> <u>Disbanded</u>
	<u>890 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Venom FAW21</u>	<u>23 Apr 1956.</u>	<u>11 May 1956.</u>

	<u>891 Squadron</u>	<u>Sea Venom</u> <u>FAW21</u>	<u>19 Nov</u> <u>1956.</u> <u>21 May</u> <u>1957.</u>	<u>30 Nov</u> <u>1956.</u> <u>28 May</u> <u>1957.</u>
	<u>892 Squadron</u>	<u>Phantom FG1</u>	<u>09 June</u> <u>1975.</u>	<u>24 July</u> <u>1975.</u>
	<u>RN Phantom</u> <u>Training Flight</u>	<u>Phantom FG1</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1975.</u>	<u>24 July</u> <u>1975.</u>
	<u>SAR Flight</u>	<u>Dragonfly</u>	<u>1952.</u>	<u>1957.</u>
		<u>Whirlwind</u> <u>Mk's 7 & 9</u>	<u>1957.</u>	<u>1972.</u>
	<u>Station Flight</u>	<u>Sea Devon,</u> <u>Vampire,</u> <u>Chipmunk,</u> <u>Tiger Moth,</u> <u>Hawker</u> <u>Hunter, Sea</u> <u>Prince</u>	<u>1948.</u>	<u>1972.</u>

Note: Flights had around 6 aircraft and were called Squadrons if more than that number.



Fairey Fulmar.

This aircraft was in storage at HMS Fulmar, RNAS Lossiemouth until 1972. It was then moved to HMS Heron and then to its final resting place, the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

The Fulmar was retired from FAA service in 1945.

Aircraft that operated from RNAS Lossiemouth



Buccaneer Mk2



Buccaneer Mk1



Gannet T2/5



Gannet AEW3



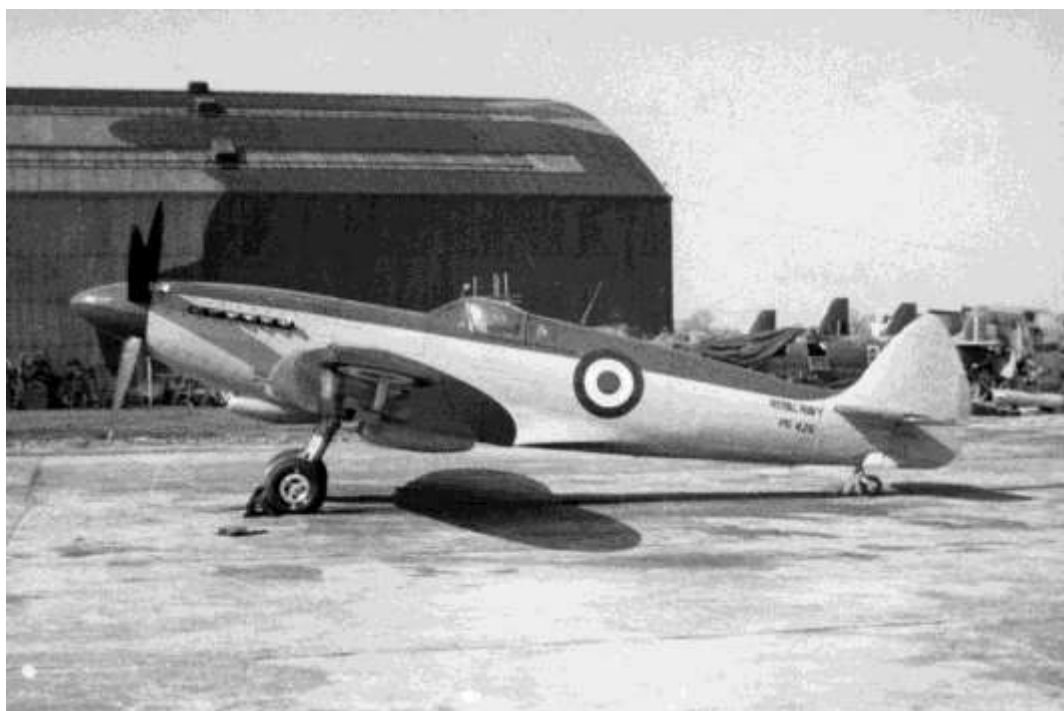
Gannet AS 1-4



Wyvern S4



Sea Fury



Seafire



Sea Hawk



Firefly



Phantom FG1



Sea Vampire



Dragonfly



Whirlwind Mk7



Whirlwind Mk9



Sea Devon



Chipmunk



Tiger Moth



Hunter GA11



Hunter T8



Sea Prince



Sea Venom



Meteor



Attacker



Seamew



Scimitar



Anson



Oxford



Sea Mosquito



Harvard

PROPERTY
OF THE
COVESEA
HERITAGE
CENTRE