PRESS RELEASE

Naval Air Squadrons
Receive Top Aviation Awards

The Royal Navy Search and Rescue Flight at HMS Gannet, Prestwick in Scotland and 815 Naval Air Squadron based at RNAS Yeovilton were both Navigators at the Guild annual trophies and awards ceremony in London on 23 October 2008.

HMS Gannet Search and Rescue Flight was awarded the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award for exemplary courage and tenacity in a particularly complex, hazardous and protracted rescue of three climbers on Ben Nevis in May 2007 and 815 Naval Air Squadron was presented with the Johnston Memorial Trophy for an outstanding performance in the development of navigation techniques for the maritime Lynx helicopter in preparation for a four month tour of duty providing aviation support to Headquarters Northern Ireland in 2007.

HMS Gannet Search and Rescue Flight routinely responds to more than 250 Search and Rescue missions every year and is the busiest Search and Rescue unit in the UK. Speaking after the awards ceremony, Admiral Simon Charlier, Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm, praised the mettle and moral fortitude of the crew of Rescue 177. 'It was a rescue that pushed them to their absolute limits. Their airmanship, grit and sheer determination was exceptional.'

ENDS

22 October 2008

SQUADRON HISTORY

702 Flight formed on 15 July 1936 to operate aircraft from the ships of the 2nd Battle Squadron. Initially operating the Walrus and Seal from its base at Mount Batten, these aircraft were later replaced by the Swordfish floatplane. Squadron status was granted in 1939, and after briefly being disbanded in 1940, 702 reformed as a Long Range catapult squadron with Seafoxes for duty in Armed Merchant Cruisers for much of World War 2.

On 4 April 1949, 702 reformed at Culdrose as the Naval Jet and Evaluation Training Unit, initially equipped with four Sea Vampires. Two months later it became the first unit to fly the Meteor.

In 1978, 702 was again re-formed, this time as a rotary wing Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset equipped with the Westland Lynx helicopter with 2 roles. The first was the responsibility for training all Lynx aircrew and maintainers; the second was parenting the Royal Navy’s Frigate and Destroyer fleet with Lynx Flights. In 1981, the parenting duty became the charge of 815 Naval Air Squadron. In 1982, both Squadrons moved to RNAS Portland where they operated successfully before returning to RNAS Yeovilton in 1999.

PREVIOUS AIRCRAFT TYPES

BATTLE HONOURS
None

WESTLAND LYNX HAS Mk 3

Primary Role
Maritime Attack
Max Speed
150 Knots
Crew
1x Pilot, 1x Observer, 1x Crewman
Max Takeoff Weight
5,330 kg
Endurance
2 Hours 20 Minutes
Weapons
M3M 12.7mm Heavy Machine Gun
2x Mod.1 Stingray Torpedo or
4x Sea Skua Anti-Ship Missile or
2x MK11 Depth Charge