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

PRESENT DAY

The Fleet Air Arm numbers approximately 6200 people operating about 200 combat aircraft and over 50 training and support aircraft. Current ongoing operations include patrolling the Falkland Islands, patrolling the Antarctic, Iraq and Afghanistan. In October 2008, 40% of UK service personnel deployed on land based operations Afghanistan will be Royal Navy.

In 2008 the order was placed for 2 new aircraft carriers, which will be the biggest and most powerful ships ever constructed for the Royal Navy. These will give a massive capability boost for the Fleet Air Arm in the future.

AGUSTA WESTLAND MERLIN
HM Mk 1

Role
Anti-Submarine Warfare

Entered Service
2000

Weight
Empty: 10500kg
Loaded: 15600kg

Maximum Speed
192mph

Weapons
General Purpose Machine Gun
960kg Anti-Ship Missiles
Homing Torpedoes
Depth Charges
Rockets

KEY EVENTS

2003 March:
Start of the second war in Iraq.

2005:
Battle honour ‘Al Faw 2003’ awarded to 845 and 847 Naval Air Squadrons.

2007 January:
Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel constitute more than 50% of UK forces in southern Afghanistan.

2007 June:
HMS Seahawk, RNAS Culdrose celebrates the 60th anniversary of the air station.

2007 November:
845 Naval Air Squadron (Sea King Mk 4), the longest serving helicopter squadron on Operation Telic, returns to RNAS Yeovilton after 3 1/2 years of intense sustained operations.

2008 May:
Order placed for two new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

2009 May:
Centenary of Naval Aviation