

Prologue

The Squadron has now celebrated its 30th Anniversary and, as it moves into its 4th decade, the Squadron continues to evolve and grow; it is the largest RAuxAF unit with a Part Time Volunteer Reserves Establishment of 256 personnel. 4624 Squadron personnel account for 23% of the trained output of the Royal Air Force Logistic Movements Trade and continue to play a vital part in meeting the requirements of Defence. During this Anniversary year, the Squadron surpassed a milestone for mobilisations; between February 2003 and May 2012 the Squadron mobilised over 1000 Reservists in support of allied operations for periods of 6 months or more. In essence, the Squadron has been supporting Operations constantly since the mid 1990s; no small feat given that continuous support to the Defence Exercise Programme and associated activities is still being maintained.

The challenges of today are markedly different to those faced over the last 3 decades; the impact of the Regular force draw down now means much greater focus is being placed on the Squadron. Under the construct of Future Reserves 2020 (FR20), the Squadron will confront major changes but also continue to support operations with recruitment and retention remaining vital factors in the future. The Squadron will have to adapt, be more agile and move with the times. It is also important to recognise the sacrifices that personnel, families and employers make to be part of the largest, most utilised Squadron within the RAF Reserve Force in support of the RAF, and always:

“Ready To Move”



Warrant Officer
G E Searles
4624 Squadron Warrant Officer

Wing Commander R B Williams
Officer Commanding
4624 Squadron

“The Early Years”

Aug 1982 – Dec 1989

Following a review of the Logistics (Movements) requirements prior to the Falklands War, it became apparent that there was a shortfall in trained movements personnel to support the future requirements for Defence. The resultant Paper was endorsed by the Air Force Board and Number 4624 (County of Oxford) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) was born. The Squadron was formed at RAF Brize Norton on 08 Aug 1982, and achieved Full Operational Capability in 1987. The early years were spent in designing recruit and trade training programmes suitable for reservists and the provision of support equipment and facilities to allow the Squadron to grow.

Officer Commanding

- Sqn Ldr David Bernard Aug 1982- Apr 1986
- Sqn Ldr Ian Envis Apr 1986- Nov 1987
- Sqn Ldr Paul Voltzenogel Nov 1987- Feb 1990

Events

- Exercise Lion Heart 1984
- Robins Trophy 1985 ¹
- Queens Colour Party 12 June 1989

“The Coming of Age”

Jan 1990 – Dec 1999

During this second decade, the Squadron came of age; with the entire Squadron being mobilised in January 1991 for Operation GRANBY “The First Gulf War”. This saw members of the Squadron deployed to RAF Lyneham and RAF Brize Norton Air Movements Squadrons, United Kingdom Mobile Air Movements Squadron, RAF Akrotiri Air Movements Squadron in Cyprus and HQ RAF Germany. This decade also saw the end of Regular serving RAF commanding officers with the first Royal Auxiliary Air Force Officer Commanding, Wg Cdr Richard Mighall, followed by former Gp Capt Bob Dixon. In the mid 90’s the Squadron establishment was significantly increased and a Squadron HQ built from the former annex to the Sergeants Mess. Great emphasis was placed upon training volunteers to the same standards as their Regular counterparts and integrating with them on exercise and deployments. In this period the Squadron earned the confidence of the Regulars in their ability to do the job. Towards the end of the decade the Squadron was once again being called upon to support the Logistics force that was part of the NATO Forces in the Balkans.

Officer Commanding

- Sqn Ldr Pete King Feb 1990 - Feb 1991
- Sqn Ldr Mark Blackburn Feb 1991 - Apr 1993
- Wg Cdr Richard Mighall OBE Apr 1993 - Jul 1994
- Wg Cdr Bob Dixon OBE Jul 1994 - Jul 2000

¹ Robins Trophy presented to the RAuxAF by Gp Capt L E Robins CBE AE DL FBMI and is presented annually to the RAuxAF unit judged to have done the most to improve the good name and efficiency of the RAuxAF in the previous year.

Events

- 1991 Op GRANBY
- Op PROVIDE COMFORT
- Unit Citation from the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire for the Squadron's service on Op GRANBY.
- 1993-96 Op GRAPPLE
- 1995 Inspector of the RAuxAF Cup²
- 1996 Op LOADSTAR
- 1997 Dedication of Sqn Badge in the RAF Church St Clements Dane
- 1998 The Robins Trophy
- 1998 Op PALLATINE
- 1999 Op AGRICOLA
- 1999 Op ENGADINE

"A New Era"

Jan 2000– Dec 2010

The new millennium was marked by the appointment of the first true 'home grown' Reservist Officer Commanding, Wg Cdr Malcolm Symonds, who was one of the founder members of the Squadron and he was followed by Wg Cdr Rob Williams, also a former Squadron member who had, additionally, commanded No 501 Squadron RAuxAF. It was also a true turning point for the Squadron as it was fully accepted that the Squadron was now a recognised asset in future operations, whilst still maintaining its own identity. The start of this decade saw the Squadron undertaking Out of Area (OOA) support almost continuously for nearly 10 years and once again, in 2003, the entire Squadron was mobilised. Personnel were integrated and worked alongside their regular counterparts at all rank levels thereby meeting the original objectives set back in 1982! They were posted to RAF Brize Norton, RAF Lyneham, RAF Akrotiri and DCTA Bicester as well as being deployed to Basra and Um Qasr in Iraq. The Squadron was quickly moving towards the milestone of 1000 personnel being mobilised in support of the Regular RAF movements trade.

Officer Commanding

- Wg Cdr Malcolm Symonds OBE Jul 2000 - Sep 2009
- Wg Cdr Rob Williams Sep 2009 - Present

Events

- 2000 Op PALLISER
- 2001 Op VERITAS
- 2002 Op FINGAL
- 2002+ Op HERRICK
- 2003 Op TELIC
- 2011 Op ELLAMY

² The Inspectors Cup presented by Gp Capt M F J Tinley CBE AE FIMgt ADC is awarded annually to the unit, which has made the most notable achievements in the previous year.

Other Notable activities & Events

Aug 1982 - 2013

The Squadron has routinely undertaken many trade and non-trade activities, some of which are listed below:

Defence Exercise Programme (DXP)

4624 Squadron personnel meet the DXP by delivering one-third of the programme requirement on a monthly basis. Tasks range from 1 day to up to 2 weeks working in Canada, Africa, The United States, Europe and, closer to home, Edinburgh, Stansted and Blackpool.

Military Skills

Although not an infantry unit, the Squadron has demonstrated over the last 3 decades that, with a robust training package, they are able hold their own and have many notable achievements. In addition, the Squadron has supported the United Kingdom Reserve Forces Association (UKRFA) in organising the Annual Altcar Competition, held at Altcar Training Area, Hightown, near Liverpool. The success of this Tri-Service Competition, Chaired by Warrant Officer I M Dillon of 4624 Squadron, greatly contributed to his being awarded The Queens' Volunteer Reserve Medal (QVRM) in the New Year's Honours List 2010.

Competitions

- Bakkers Bluff
- International Moenchengladbach Military Competition (IMM) in Germany.
- Altcar
- Wangeltoch
- Air Raid (France)

Military Driving Competition

The Squadron competes in British Armed Forces Motor (BAFMA) Sports events and, as with the Military skills successes, 4624 Squadron personnel excel, often being placed higher than the Royal Logistics Corps in the competition. Over the last 3 years, the Squadron has succeeded in holding onto the 1st Military Team position at the annual invitational event Ex MUDMASTER hosted by the Scottish Transport Regiment.

- Ex Rickshaw Ramble
- Ex Mudmaster
- Ex Scottish Rover
- Ex Roadmaster

Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT)

The Squadron has supported RIAT, now part of the RAF Charitable Trust Enterprises, since 1982. Squadron personnel have undertaken Movements support before and after the weekend of the air display ensuring that all inbound and outbound freight and passengers were handled in accordance with current international regulations at a time when the operating airfield at Fairford became one of the busiest in the UK. In 1999 the Squadron was presented with the Reserves and Cadets 'Poignard' and was specially recognised with the award of the "Spirit of Fairford", a mounted silver model of a Hercules (C-130) by the Chief Executive Officer of RIAT. This trophy is now awarded annually by the Commanding Officer 4624 Squadron to the individual who in that particular year has demonstrably presented a 'can do spirit and attitude' irrespective of trade and rank.

Ceremonial

The Squadron endeavours to be represented at many important ceremonial events despite the high operational demands over the last two decades. The main events are shown below:

- 12 June 1989 – Presentation of the Sovereigns' Colour to the RAuxAF – 4624 Squadron provided the Escort to the Colour.
- Sep 1990 – The Squadron provided the entire colour party for the Parade commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.
- 4624 Squadron provided a full Sovereigns' Colour Party for over 4 years, including Parades at Westminster Abbey, The Guildhall, RAF Bentley Priory and for the Air Force Board.
- 5 Apr 1997 - Amalgamation of the RAF Volunteer Reserve with the Royal Auxiliary Air force Parade at RAF Cranwell, where the Squadron provided both the Colour Party and Escort Flight.
- Jul 2011 – Presentation of a 'new' Sovereigns' Colour to the RAuxAF.

Remembrance Parades:

- Annual Remembrance Parade – Oxford
- Albert Hall
- Cenotaph
- Lord Mayors Parade - London
- Battle of Britain Parade - Swindon
- 1997 - Dedication of the Sqn Badge in the RAF Church St Clements Dane London.
- 1998 – The Squadron assisted its former Squadron 'numberplate,' No 624 (SOE) Squadron, by forming their Association and inviting them to an annual reunion at RAF Brize Norton thereby bringing them together for the first time since World War II.
- 2012 - Re dedication of the Squadron Badge in the 30th anniversary year at The RAF Church.
- Jul 2004 – The Squadron was presented the Key to and Freedom of the town of Lannemezan, France in recognition of the Squadron support of No 624 (SOE) Squadron who had lost a crew in a crash whilst supporting the French Resistance in the region.
- 2012 – Supported the formal dedication of a permanent Memorial for No 624 (SOE) Squadron at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.

Charities

The Sqn has supported a number of local charities along with several service-focused charities, which include:

- SiBS – An organisation giving respite care and support for the families and siblings who have autistic children within their family unit.
- Huntington's – A Charity close to the heart of the Squadron based on the experiences of known sufferers.
- H4H – In support of Help for Heroes the Squadron undertook a cycle ride and also run/walked/rowed the equivalent distant in Kilometres from RAF Brize Norton to Camp Bastion, raising hundreds of pounds in the event.
- Royal Air Forces Association
- RAF Benevolent Fund

January 2013.