

RAF Northolt Livery Companies Briefing

Many Livery Companies have connections with the Services and several with RAF Northolt. Water Conservators have an affiliation with No1 Aeronautical Information Documents Unit (No 1 AIDU) whose mission is *'to deliver all aeronautical information products and services to UK defence through production, partnering or acquisition to support the achievement of Defence objectives'*. No1 AIDU has been at the forefront of the Air Cartographic world, established in 1953 and relocated to RAF Northolt in 1957.

The Master, Ivor Richards, and Fleet Warden Peter Hall joined representatives from five Companies for a Livery Companies Briefing on 10 July 2013. The day started with a presentation from the Station Commander, Group Captain Andy Bacon, on the current role and future of RAF Northolt. The Station included many, diverse units, including the British Forces Post Office, the RAF Central Band, the Queen's Colour Squadron, the Service Prosecution Authority, the Military Aviation Authority and various other smaller units, as well as 32 (The Royal) Squadron.

A briefing was given on the current operational role of 32 Squadron and two of the three types of aircraft it flies today were inspected.



32 Squadron: The Master (centre), Fleet Warden and other Livery Company Members, with RAF crew and their HS125 CC3.

The party moved to the Listed Dining Room of the Officers' Mess, built around 1920, with a clear view of the airfield – a convenience for WWII operations, and then visited the Polish Air Force Exhibition of memorabilia. Almost all WWII

Polish squadrons within the RAF rotated through RAF Northolt and the Station has become a focal point for Polish airmen.

Leaving RAF Northolt, the party visited the Battle of Britain Bunker at RAF Uxbridge. This site, including the Operations Room for the RAF's 11 Group, was completed in August 1939. It was responsible for directing the interception of enemy planes in South-East England, thus being in the frontline for most of the war, and carrying on with air defence duties into the 1950s. It received many visits from the Royal Family and Winston Churchill during its operational years. The Operations Room in the Bunker is set up as at 15 September 1940, now commemorated as Battle of Britain Day.

Our thanks go to Group Captain Bacon and his staff, and especially to Squadron Leader Richard Willis, for organising a varied and informative day.

Peter Hall
13 July 2013