



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 10 February 2016

609 (West Riding) Squadron celebrate their 80th anniversary at Leeds Bradford[®] Airport

(Leeds - February 10th 2016) Leeds Bradford[®] Airport celebrated the 80th anniversary of 609 (West Riding) squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force at the airport today with local dignitaries from across the Leeds City region.

609 (West Riding) Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force was formed on the Leeds Bradford[®] Airport site on 10th February 1936 as a bomber squadron and saw active service in the Second World War as a fighter squadron. Today the squadron provides personnel to augment and support the operations of the Royal Air Force. Currently based at RAF Leeming, North Yorkshire, the squadron is no longer a flying unit, but instead has the role of Force Protection.

To celebrate, Leeds Bradford[®] Airport provided a vintage style afternoon tea held in the Yorkshire Premier Lounge[®] at the airport with distinguished and honoured guests, including squadron members past and present. The Lord Mayor of Leeds, The Lord Mayor of Bradford, Deputy Lieutenant David Dinmore MBE and Greg Mulholland MP were present leading the tributes and they had the opportunity to meet serving and retired members of the squadron.

The highlight of the 80th celebration at Leeds Bradford[®] Airport was a low level fly past of 4 Hawk Aircraft from 100 Squadron who are also based at RAF Leeming.

John Parkin, Leeds Bradford[®] Airport's Chief Executive commented:

"The airport is proud to recognise and was pleased to celebrate this key milestone in 609 squadron's history. Leeds Bradford[®] Airport will continue to honour those who served this country and we look forward to maintaining a close relationship with the squadron."

Greg Mulholland MP Member of Parliament for Leeds North West said:

"The 80th anniversary of the famous 609 Squadron is a very special occasion. I was delighted to support the celebrations at Leeds Bradford[®] Airport, where the Squadron formed exactly 80 years ago. Local people are rightly hugely proud of the role 609 Squadron and RAF Yeadon played in the Second World War and it was an honour to meet past and present serving members of the Squadron today. Thank you also to Leeds Bradford[®] Airport for laying on this very special celebration."

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Squadron Leader Jeffrey Metcalfe, Commanding Officer of 609 (West Riding) Squadron said:

“RAF Yeadon was the birthplace of 609 (West Riding) Squadron and its home base for the best part of 20 years during the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s. It is an absolute honour for the current-day Squadron to return to its roots to commemorate the 80th Anniversary, a most important milestone in our history.”

Photograph shows: Deputy Lieutenant David Dinmore MBE, Lord Mayor of Bradford Cllr Joanne Dodds and Lord Mayor of Leeds Cllr Judith Chapman, Greg Mulholland MP, LBA Chief Executive John Parkin, current and retired Squadron Members and LBA staff



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