



**17<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

## **The Jewel In Our Crown**

23 cadets from 134 (Bedford) Squadron had an evening to remember at the Tower of London on Saturday 15th September. The cadets held an evening parade to mark Battle of Britain Day. The parade was held in the courtyard between the infamous White Tower and the Jewel House, which houses the Crown Jewels.

The Battle of Britain, is remembered each year on 15th September, this allows 'the few' to be remembered. The Battle of Britain continued from 10th July - 31st October 1940. It was the first major battle fought entirely by air forces and was fought to retain air superiority over Britain. Sir Winston Churchill summarised the battle when he said "Never in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few"

Squadron Leader Alan Wiggins performed the important role of reviewing officer. Sqn Ldr Wiggins, who was a Commanding Officer of Bedford Squadron from 1981 to 1996, now holds the position of Regional Media & Communications Officer for Central and Eastern Region.

The parade concluded with a Yeoman Warder playing 'Sunset' on a bugle before the cadets performed a march-past with Sqn Ldr Wiggins taking the salute.

As soon as the parade was over, the cadets were treated to a personal tour of the Tower of London by Yeoman Warder Bob Loughlan. The cadets learned of the many previous roles of the tower, and the many historical figures that had come to the tower - many to never leave alive. Bob Loughlan, who himself was a former Air Cadet from Suffolk, had served with the RAF Regiment in the Queen's Colour Squadron and had also acted as the Chief of Air Staff's Warrant Officer. Although he claimed to still be learning the history of the Tower, he demonstrated an impressive recall of names, facts and figures as he guided the cadets around.

On concluding the tour, Bob said "I was very impressed with your standard of drill, I wish you well with your future careers, you're a great bunch, well done".

The final treat for the cadets was to witness the 'Ceremony of the keys'. This 700 year old tradition is the oldest, still practised, military tradition in the world, and dates back to a time when soldiers were needed each day, to clear the Tower of the numerous street traders and beggars that had set up temporary residence. It is held every single night of the year at 23:00. The cadets were amazed to see that the key of the Tower is afforded the same respect as Queen Elizabeth.

Sqn Ldr Wiggins said of the evening "I was pleased and delighted to be invited to be the reviewing officer at such a prestigious occasion. Again, Bedford squadron have excelled by holding the first known Air Cadet Squadron parade at the Tower of London. They are to be congratulated on their initiative as well as their continued flare for helping, yet again, to publicise the Air Cadet Organisation.

Bedford Squadron is currently recruiting new cadets and staff members, if you are interested please contact [www.134.org.uk](http://www.134.org.uk) and get in touch with us.