

GLIDING REPORT OC's CONFERENCE 2009

Please find below a listing of successful GS candidates for 2008:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Squadron</u>	<u>VGS</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Cdt S.A.K. Sands	198 (Hinckley)	643	Completed 19 Jan Silver Wings
Cpl S Nand	194 (BSA)	637	Completed 9 Feb Blue Wings
Cpl S. Dhanda	194 (BSA)	637	Completed 9 Feb Silver Wings
Sgt NMA Ellis	8F (1 st City of Coventry)	633	Completed 9 Feb Silver Wings
Cdt J.R.P. Wood	479 (Rubery)	633	Completed 10 Feb Silver Wings
Cdt J. Spain	496 (Balsall Common)	637	Completed 17 Feb Blue Wings
Cdt H. Payne	496 (Balsall Common)	637	Completed 24 Feb Blue Wings
Cpl J. Hawkes	495 (Sutton Coldfield)	633	Completed 30 Mar Silver Wings
Sgt J.K. Hart	1459 (Heart of England)	633	Completed 30 Mar Silver Wings
Cpl L. Carter	2438 (Bishop Ullathorne)	633	Completed 30 Mar Silver Wings
Flt Sgt A Hussain	194 (BSA)	637	Completed 3 May Blue Wings
Cdt A.E.C. Robinson	198 (Hinckley)	643	Completed 5 May Blue Wings
Cpl E.J. Griffiths-Hall	198 (Hinckley)	643	Completed 5 May Blue Wings
Sgt S.R. Pelchat	2286 (Arden)	633	Completed 17 May Blue Wings
Cdt R.L. Perry (F)	495 (Sutton Coldfield)	633	Completed 17 May Silver Wings
Cdt A. Ladwa	194 (BSA)	637	Completed 17 May Blue Wings
Cdt A. Dickenson	1289 (Stratford upon Avon)	637	Completed 18 May Blue Wings
Sgt J.S. Roy	480 (Studley)	637	Completed 18 May Silver Wings
Cdt J. Mann	479 (Rubery)	637	Completed 31 May Silver Wings
Cdt S.P. Law	8F (1 st City of Coventry)	637	Completed 31 May Blue Wings
Cdt Cpl N Johnson	165 (Castle Bromwich)	637	Completed 31 May Blue Wings
Sgt D. McCarthy	492 (Solihull)	637	Completed 31 May Blue Wings
Cpl J.S. Bett	487 (Erdington) DF	637	Completed 31 May Blue Wings
Cdt C. Marsh	495 (Sutton Coldfield)	637	Completed 31 May Blue Wings
Cdt E. Donnelly	495 (Sutton Coldfield)	633	Completed 26 Jul Silver Wings
Cdt M. Griffiths	1289 (Stratford upon Avon)	637	Completed 10 Aug Blue Wings
Cpl C. Yorke	1289 (Stratford upon Avon)	637	Completed 24 Aug Blue Wings
Cpl R. Freestone (F)	2286 (Arden)	633	Completed 31 Aug Blue Wings
Flt Sgt D.J. Sturdy	29F (Rugby)	ACCGS	Completed 19 Sep Gold Wings
Cdt Cpl JSG Jones	495 (Sutton Coldfield)	ACCGS	Completed 19 Sep Gold Wings

2008 was a particularly difficult year for gliding as three events played their part to interfere with the gliding programme. The first was the atrocious weather last summer which meant cadets and their escorting adults had many fruitless journeys to and from the VGS. I would like to thank those who made the effort to give our cadets the opportunity to go flying, without their dedication the cadets would miss so much.

The second event was the contractorisation of the Mobile Glider Servicing Parties (MGSP.) Delays in the award of the contract meant that the RAF "Blue Suiters" had to leave before the civilian staff were in place or fully trained. This caused severe engineering difficulties during the critical summer course period.

The final blow came when Grob, the manufacturer of our glider fleet went into administration, an early casualty of the credit crunch. Although no new gliders are in production, Grob had sub-contracted the supply of spare parts to Soaring Oxford Ltd. (SOL.) SOL negotiated with the various sub-contractors to obtain the spare parts but the original contract for payment of these items was with Grob, so some

quick footwork was required to re-let the contract to SOL so they could be paid for the parts they were sourcing and supplying. While the bean counters were working on this a shortage of spare parts was created that again caused engineering delays.

Having said all that we still achieved 30 gliding awards which is greater than we used to achieve a few years ago. It is thanks to all of you and the staff at the VGS that we were able to do this. I would therefore judge 2008 to be a very successful gliding year, we achieved a great result against all the odds.

As to 2009 I have a concern, we have never gone into a year with such a low number of candidates on the waiting list. I have written to you all on this subject, 637 VGS in particular has just one person on the list and we are very low on numbers for 633 VGS as well. It is pointless the VGS busting a gut to improve their performance if we cannot supply the students for them. You should all have copies of Horizons Unlimited, please use it to promote gliding at your squadrons and let us give the VGS the support they deserve. You can also help by chasing cadets to get their medicals completed once I have sent them the blank form. I have a stack of paperwork here for cadets who have filled in an application form, I have then supplied a blank medical form and that is the last I hear of it. I forward you a copy of the letter I send to the cadet, once you receive that, please ensure the cadet gets the medical completed without undue delay, it would be a real help.

2008 saw us being able to offer more opportunities for cadets to fly in the Viking conventional glider at 643 VGS, RAF Syerston. This is being expanded this year with an activity weekend being offered. Flt Lt Elliot Hemes has kindly taken on the organising of this event which will involve flying in the Viking combined with AT activities and an overnight camp at Syerston. The CCF did this last year and by all accounts it was very successful.

The Regional Activity Centre (RAC) is now open at RAF College Cranwell and I have been writing exercises for cadets to carry out on the flight simulator. These exercises take cadets through the GIC & GS syllabus initially in a Vigilant. However conventional gliding exercises will follow and I have already written a CASEVAC exercise to be flown in the Tutor which involves a short cross-country mercy flight to another airfield. These exercises will be expanded as time goes on. The Regional Training Officer will be looking for people to be trained as RAC Supervisors who will then be able to open and operate the equipment at the RAC. A weekend at the RAC will be what you make it but there should be some interesting and different activities available for the cadets.

It only remains to thank you again for your efforts and to ask again that you support your VGS and encourage cadets to take up the gliding challenge, they will never forget their first solo flight!

Sqn Ldr B. Tisley RAF VR(T), WGLO

11 Feb 09