

Braves and Apaches take Kinloss by storm!!

What a way for our 2018 Bader Braves Young Aviators programme to kick off!! Glorious weather, Braves, Apaches, ideal flying conditions, fire engines and loads of fun!!!!

It has become the custom to start our Young Aviators season with The Moray Flying Club at their Kinloss Barracks home (formerly RAF Kinloss) on the bank of the beautiful Moray Firth in the North of Scotland. This year was no exception but the weather was in that right from dawn the sky was blue and the sun shone and there were absolutely no concerns about getting all the flights in during the day.

Once again our good friend and chief whipper-in, George Mackenzie, had all the Braves, their families and a good number of volunteers lined up at the main guardroom at 08.30 ready for the security formalities to be completed before the substantial convoy snaked its way around the perimeter road on its 1.5 mile journey to the Clubhouse, our home for the day. Club members were waiting to welcome their guests with the usual teas, coffees and rather scrummy biscuits and made sure everyone was comfortable before introductions, briefings and explanations. The first wave of flights were scheduled for 09.15 so there was no time to waste before the



first three Young Aviators were filling in authority documents whilst pilots completed flying logs and Operations Chief, Mick Dye, ushered everyone along ensuring that things flowed smoothly.

The three club Cessna Aircraft were impressively lined up awaiting their first passengers who were quickly each aircraft taxied out to the far end of the runway, a journey of some distance and probably equivalent of something like two quid single on a London bus, before lining up ready for take-off.

After final checks, throttles were opened and one by one the aeroplanes picked up speed along the runway before lifting off and climbing away into the bright blue sky, the sun occasionally glinting from the Perspex canopy before they banked to starboard and disappeared from view heading in the direction of the City of Elgin.

The flights were now in full swing with departures and arrivals taking place at roughly 45 minute intervals. The



Moray Firth is a most wonderful area and on a day as beautiful as that we experienced the sea was reminiscent of the Mediterranean taking on a wonderful azure blue as the clear waters reflected the blue sky. Flight routing from take-off headed out over Elgin and beyond before banking to port before crossing the coast, turning to port again and following the superb beach all the way along passing over Lossiemouth, Burghead until they reached Findhorn Bay where an almost 180 degree turn brought the aircraft back on line with the runway again for final approach, touchdown and the end of a truly memorable flight.





We were more than lucky that our Young Aviators Day coincided with a visit by a flight of five Army Apache helicopters, on station for a week long night flying exercise and immediately following the short lunch break all of the Braves were treated to an in depth look at one of these frontline attack machines – Gunship One. The CO of the flight gave everyone a comprehensive outline of the amazing £40m machine and its capabilities followed by the opportunity of sitting in the pilot’s seat and getting a feel of just what it was really like.

Flights were still coming and going as the Fire Section crash tender sirens reached an ear shattering crescendo; the crew invited the Braves aboard to see how things worked and explained what the umpteen controls and hoses for before letting them have a go with the massive water cannon on top of machine and only accessible by a set of steps inside the cab great fun!!!!

And whilst all this was going on the volunteers from the club were busying themselves making sure that everyone was well fed and watered, flights were continuing to schedule and everyone was enjoying themselves.



Later in the afternoon Gunship One came to life, the twin jet engines reaching a scream before the spinning rotor lifted the huge helicopter off the ground for it to give us a quick buzz before disappearing into the distance. Some fifteen or so minutes later No’s three and four followed suit and it was explained that they were off on a “chase and find” exercise in the mountains.

The day was now drawing to a close; it had been marvellous. Everyone had been treated to a great flight experience (some even had two!!) as well as enjoying everything else that had been provided for them. Just before 18.00 the last flight of the day landed and taxied round to the hanger where the last of our Braves clambered out beaming with joy. It was time for home and in the now stark silence of non-activity there was much shaking of hands and waving as the fantastic team of volunteers at The Moray Flying Club bade the Braves farewell, their job more than well done judging from the enormous smiles of each Brave as they left for home.



It is difficult to judge just how well the day compared to the brilliant days we have had here over the last eight year but in my humble opinion I think it was, without doubt, the best yet and all due to that wonderful band of volunteers!! Thankyou MFC, another resounding success.