

## Val McArthy

We regret to announce the passing of Val McArthy of 81 Entry (B then D Sqn) on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024.



As well as basic pilot training on the Jet Provost, Val also passed an external degree with London University. With London Irish rugby experience, he went straight into RAF College 1st XV and was subsequently Captain for 61/62 season. Val graduated in July 1962 having been awarded the Philip Sassoon Memorial prize.

Val's postings (and of course Rugby milestones!) were:

- Sep 62 – Mar 63. RAF Oakington. Advanced Flying Training Varsity.
- Mar 63 – Oct 63. Posted to 242 Air Transport OCU Thorney Island (Hastings then Beverley).
- Late 1963. 47 Beverley Squadron at RAF Abingdon. RAF Rugby against RN and Army 65/66.
- 1966. 34 Beverley Squadron at RAF Seletar. Captain Far East Air Force Rugby team.
- 1968. QFI at RAF Manby and RAF Strubby delivering refresher training on Varsities (for a range of pilots from those awaiting transfer to OCUs to senior officers who had been away from flying) In the RAF Rugby team 68/69.

Val retired from RAF in 1971 to fly executive jets in the Middle East before joining Cyprus Airways as first officer on HS Tridents, moving to Kyrenia in North Cyprus. During the 1974 Turkish Invasion of North Cyprus and after several days lying flat in his kitchen, he was airlifted by a Royal Naval helicopter from a Kyrenia beach to HMS Hermes. A fellow pilot recalls talking to Val on the phone with their conversation interrupted by explosions around his home, and then the line went dead. He then joined Cathay Pacific and moved to Hong Kong during which he got married and had two children. After First Officer on the B707 he progressed quickly on to Captaincy, in which role he flew the Tristar and B747.

During his service with Cathay, Val became President of the Hong Kong Aircrew Officers' Association representing the interests of all professional pilots in Hong Kong. He was widely respected among the aircrew community for being an astute and cultured Airline Captain with a great sense of

humour and a true gentleman. As he had done throughout his RAF training and service, he excelled in so many ways, being engaging and a witty observer of humanity who was never short of memorable observations.

In 1994, he retired to Sunningdale, Berks doing volunteer work mainly centred around charitable work and the Roman Catholic Church, of which he was a strong member. His faith was a big part of his life and he walked the long pilgrimage from France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in Spain. Val was a devoted family man who also was very proud of his Irish inheritance and his extended family in Ireland.