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Information Handbook

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Foreword *by the Station Commander*

I am happy to have this chance of welcoming you to Royal Air Force Shawbury and I hope that your tour here will prove to be both enjoyable and rewarding.

This booklet seeks to answer some of the many questions that may occur to you in your early days here; it should help you in getting to know your way around the Station and familiarise you with the roles and organisation of the Unit. Furthermore, the booklet covers the many hobbies, sports and recreational activities which are available and which I hope you will take part in and enjoy.

The booklet has been compiled to help you and I trust that you will find it both interesting and instructive.

THE HISTORY AND ROLE OF ROYAL AIR FORCE SHAWBURY

The Royal Air Force began its association with Shawbury in June 1917 when No 29 (Flying Training) Wing and an Aeroplane Repair Section of the Royal Flying Corps were established on the site of the present aerodrome. The Station was closed in 1919 and there was no further Royal Air Force activity until 1935 when, as part of the expansion programme of the thirties, a start was made on re-building on the old site. The new Station was opened as a Flying Training School in May 1938. It remained so until 1944 when the Central Navigation School moved to Shawbury.

The history of the Central Navigation School can be traced back to 1918, when the first serious attempts were made by the Royal Air Force to study problems associated with the navigation of aircraft. Pioneering, and in some cases record-breaking flights by the 'Aries' series of aircraft round the world, across the Arctic wastes and over the Pole during and immediately following the last war, caught the public imagination and placed Shawbury 'on the map.'

In 1944, Shawbury became the Empire Air Navigation School and, as such, enjoyed the status of a sub-group for the next five years within No 25 Group. In 1949 the School of Air Traffic joined the Central Navigation School at Shawbury and the Station was then given the title of the Central Navigation and Control School known throughout the Royal Air Force as CNCS. In February 1963, however, the Navigation Wing was moved to Royal Air Force Manby and the close association between the Station and navigation training and development came to an end. The unit then gained the title of the Central Air Traffic Control School.

On 1 October 1976 the Rotary Wing of RAF Tern Hill was deployed to RAF Shawbury. The Station then became the home for No 2 Flying Training School and the Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron.

No 2 Flying Training School

No 2 Flying Training School comprises No 1 (Advanced Flying Training) Squadron equipped with Gazelles and No 2 (Advanced Flying Training) Squadron equipped with Wessex.

No 1 (AFT) Squadron

The main function of No 1 (AFT) Squadron is to provide rotary wing advanced flying training. Students may be ab initio graduates from RAF College Cranwell, Basic Flying Schools RAF Linton-on-Ouse and RAF Church Fenton, or experienced fixed-wing pilots converting to the helicopter. Courses last for 17 weeks during which time students fly 80 hours on the Gazelle. In addition No 1 (AFT) Squadron provides:

- a. Rotary wing pilot refresher training for qualified helicopter pilots returning to flying appointments following ground tours.



- b. Rotary wing training for pilots destined for conversion to Harriers. The aim of this 5 day course is to familiarise fixed-wing pilots with vertical take off and landing, low speed flight, hovering and other modes of helicopter flight applicable to the Harrier.
- c. Rotary wing training for fixed-wing test pilots.
- d. Helicopter familiarisation training for staff officers.

No 2 (AFT) Squadron

The main task of No 2 (AFT) Squadron is to introduce pilots and crewmen to twin engined helicopters, crew management and more advanced exercises before graduates move to their Operational Conversion Unit. Pilot courses last 12 weeks during which time the students fly 50 hours on the Wessex helicopter. Crewmen courses run concurrently with pilot courses and, in addition to flying on pilot training sorties, crewmen receive 8 hours of dedicated instructional flying.

The award of 'Wings', the most important event in the career of a pilot, takes place here at Shawbury at the end of the Wessex Course. The flying badge is awarded to all students who have successfully completed a course in pilot training, and the ceremony marks the graduation of those pilots who have completed their advanced flying training on helicopters. It reflects the culmination of their efforts in the air and on the ground and on achieving the high standards which the Royal Air Force demands of all its pilots.

In addition, No 2 (AFT) Squadron provides rotary wing refresher courses for pilots returning to flying duties after a ground tour and some Wessex helicopter familiarisation courses for senior officers. In 1982 the Squadron was tasked with the Wessex OCU task to train pilots for operational support helicopter duties on the Wessex.

The Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron

As part of the Central Flying School, CFS(H) Sqn trains experienced pilots to become flying instructors (QHIs).

The Squadron is commanded by a Squadron Leader and the flying instructional staff includes exchange officers from the Royal Navy and the Army Air Corps.

The student QHIs come from the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy, the Army and some commonwealth and foreign air forces. They complete a 13 week course, flying 74 hours on the Gazelle HT Mk 3. The course covers most aspects of helicopter flying including basic

Gazelle





Jet Provost

exercises, navigation, night, instrument, mountain and formation flying. Since re-equipping with the Gazelle, CFS(H) Sqn has provided a helicopter solo display aircraft at most air shows throughout the United Kingdom.

The Ground Training Squadron

The function of the Ground Training Squadron is to provide academic support to the 2 FTS and CFS(H) training effort. Ground studies include courses in Principles of Flight, Navigation and Airmanship, as well as aircraft technical knowledge. The Squadron employs the latest aids to instruction including TV cameras and video recorders for analysing student instructors' lecture techniques.

The Central Air Traffic Control School

The Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS) is responsible for the training of all Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Air Traffic Controllers and Assistant Air Traffic Controllers. Additionally, CATCS trains controllers from various Commonwealth and foreign countries.

The school is one of the finest of its kind in the world and is equipped with excellent modern synthetic training aids. Uniquely, live flying for controller training is provided by Jet Provost aircraft based at the Station, whilst the Shawbury based helicopters and visiting aircraft of many types provide experience for students in controlling a variety of air traffic.

CATCS is commanded by a Wing Commander, OC CATCS and consists of 2 Squadrons and 2 Flights:

- a. The Air Traffic Control Training Squadron (ATCTS) which is responsible for training students in all aspects of terminal air traffic control. The courses range from those of short duration on certain types of equipment to the main Joint Air Traffic Control Course of 19 weeks – after classroom, simulator and live control training, successful officers and SNCOs attend a Graduation Ceremony which acknowledges that these students have reached the required standard of the School and can be expected to subsequently obtain controlling endorsements at airfields.
- b. The Area Radar Training Squadron (ARTS) is responsible for the post graduate training of experienced terminal air traffic controllers in the techniques of Area Radar Control. This course is mainly of practical training in an advanced area radar simulator.

Chipmunk



- c. The Trade Training Flight (TTF) is responsible for the basic trade training of Assistant Air Traffic Controllers.
- d. The Software Programming Flight which provides the specialist support for the computer systems of the area and terminal control simulators.

The Air Traffic Control Examining and Evaluation Board

The Air Traffic Control Examining and Evaluation Board (ATCEEB) was formed in 1979 as a result of an amalgamation of the Air Traffic Control Examining Board (ATCEB), which had existed at Shawbury since 1955, and the newly formed Air Traffic Control Training Evaluation Team (ATCTET). The Board is commanded by a Wing Commander and its policies and functions are controlled directly by HQ National Air Traffic Services. The ATCEEB, through its ATCEB element, is responsible for examining all RAF Air traffic controllers and for the provision of an inspectorate of air traffic control services throughout the Royal Air Force while through its ATCTET element it is responsible for the training evaluation of the Air Traffic specialisation and Trade Group 9.

No 8 Air Experience Flight

The Flight is commanded by a Flight Lieutenant RAF and the pilots are all members of the RAFVR(T). Chipmunk aircraft are established for the task of providing air experience for cadets of the Air Training Corps, Combined Cadet Forces, the Girls Venture Corps and Air Scouts.

Engineering Wing

Engineering Wing, commanded by a Wing Commander, has as its primary task the provision of sufficient serviceable helicopter aircraft to meet the Station's flying training task.

The wing consists of 3 Squadrons, Helicopter Engineering Squadron, Electrical Engineering Squadron and Mechanical Engineering Squadron, plus 2 Flights, Engineering Wing HQ Flight and Aircraft Storage Flight. The functions and responsibilities of these squadrons and flights are as follows:

- a. **Helicopter Engineering Squadron (HES).** The HES is responsible for the maintenance of the Unit's Gazelle and Wessex aircraft. To fulfil this responsibility, the HES has two 1st line servicing flights, Gazelle Servicing Flight (GSF) and Wessex Servicing Flight (WSF) and one 2nd line servicing flight, Base Engineering Flight (BEF). The BEF includes Gazelle and Wessex scheduled servicing teams, and Aircraft Mechanical Engineering Centre (AMEC) and the Early Failure Detection Centre (EFDC).
- b. **Electrical Engineering Squadron (EES).** The EES is responsible for the avionics, electrical and air radio support to the HES and also for ground communications (telecomms and PABX).
- c. **Mechanical Engineering Squadron (MES).** The MES is responsible for the support functions of Mechanical Transport, Armament, Photographic and Painting/Finishing services.
- d. **Engineering Wing HQ Flight (EWHQ).** The EWHQF includes a Pre-employment Training (PET) School for tradesmen destined for RAF helicopter units and provides the services of registry, statistics, manning control and engineering records. An Engineering Control



Air Traffic Control

co-ordinates routine daily activities and provides a centre for snow and ice clearance operations and emergency actions.

- e. **Aircraft Storage Flight (ASF).** The ASF is responsible for the maintenance of various types of RN, Army and RAF fixed wing aircraft held in long term storage and short term reserve.

Other support functions, both mechanical and electrical, are provided under contract by Marshall of Cambridge (Engineering) Limited.

Marshall of Cambridge (Engineering) Limited

Support for the Station tasks is provided by Marshall of Cambridge (Engineering) Limited under contract to the Ministry of Defence (Air Force Department). This includes the servicing and operation of the Jet Provost aircraft used by the Central Air Traffic Control School and the servicing of the Bulldog and Chipmunk aircraft of a large number of University Air Squadrons and Air Experience Flights. Among these are the University of Birmingham Air Squadron based at Cosford and No 8 AEF at Shawbury.

The company is also responsible for the maintenance of the synthetic trainers, the airfield radio and radar aids, and for the general engineering facilities in the Station and MT Workshops.

STATION ORDERS

Station Standing Orders

Station Standing Orders contain the regulations regarding the various aspects of Station life. They are the permanent orders and every section has a copy. Make yourself familiar with these orders, for many of them concern you personally. In them you will find the current regulations about the Station routine, meal times, working hours, dress, discipline and so on. They also contain such matters as the duties of the Duty NCO, fire precautions etc. It is your DUTY to become familiar with these orders – remember that ignorance of orders is never acceptable as an excuse for non-compliance.

Station Routine Orders

Station Routine Orders are published on Tuesday and Thursday and are displayed throughout the Station. You will find information in these orders about careers, parades, forthcoming events, inspections, sports fixtures, entertainments and many other items of common interest. Make a habit of reading them regularly; there will frequently be something in them which affects you personally.

YOUR OFFICER

Remember that the Officer in Charge of your Flight takes a personal interest in you, and he is the man to whom you should look for advice when you have problems. He is interested in your barrack accommodation, your food, your sport and recreation and your welfare. Do not hesitate to speak to him immediately if you have a problem. If he cannot sort it out, he will see that you are put in contact with the right person to help you.

YOUR CAREER

Your own officer is anxious that you should have the best possible career in the Service. He is always looking for the man who deserves promotion. If you feel you are a square peg in a round hole, discuss it with him. He will see that you get the best advice. If you want advice about your career, pay a visit to the Careers Officers – OC Personnel Management Squadron. You may find a visit very rewarding.

STATION COMMITTEES

Remember that you have representatives on Station Committees like the Service Institute Committee and the Messing Committee. These committees exist for your benefit; make sure you know who your representative is and that he knows your views. Don't just grumble and do nothing about it.