

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL

## CHOM Celebrities



Short Biographies of VIPs Displayed in CHOM

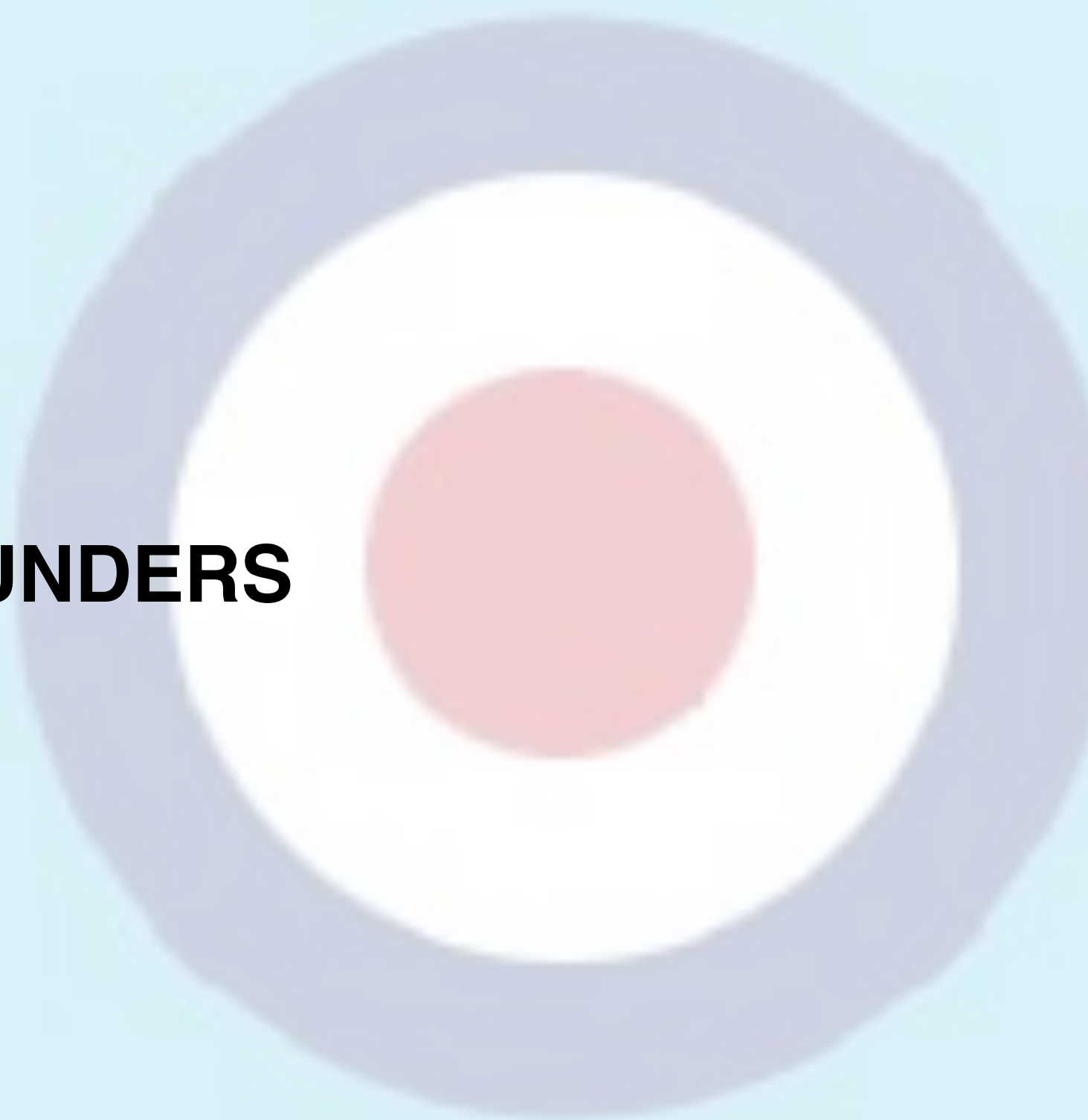
# Introduction

**There are many portraits of distinguished Cranwellians displayed in the corridor and rooms of College Hall Officers' Mess at RAF Cranwell. Within the suite of albums we have prepared to mark the centennial of the RAF College - College 100 - there are two that give biographies of our VIPs.**

**The first album chronicles all the Commandants of the College throughout its 100 year history. This album, however, provides short biographies of other distinguished people who have contributed to the RAF and the College, warranting the display of their portraits.**

**Some portraits are of the College founders; others are of Cranwellians who went on to excel in their chosen profession whether that be in air combat, or peacetime leadership of the RAF, or both. This album attempts to commemorate their efforts by recording their achievements and their contribution to our heritage; to answer the basic question, "Who were they?".**

**At some stage, we would like to display QR codes next to displayed portraits that, through internet technology, connect you to the biographies contained herein.**



**FOUNDERS**



# ‘Boom’



Marshal of The RAF, Viscount  
**Hugh Trenchard**  
GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO  
‘Father of the RAF’  
(b 1873, d 1956)

Marshal of the Royal Air Force **Hugh Montague Trenchard**, 1st Viscount Trenchard, GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO (3 February 1873 – 10 February 1956) was a British Army officer who was instrumental in establishing the Royal Air Force. He has been described as the "Father of the Royal Air Force."

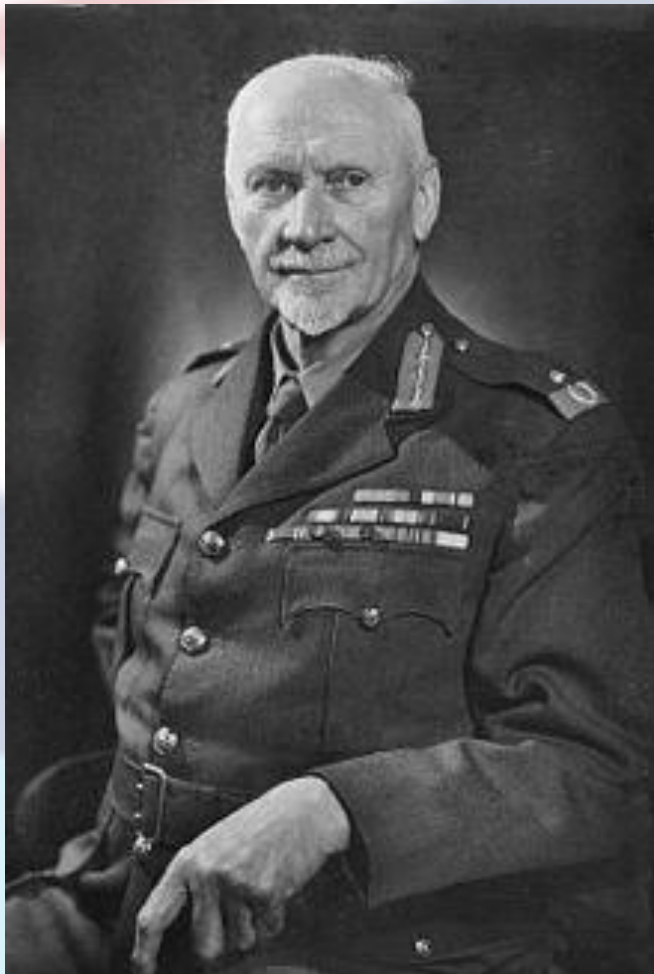
During his formative years, Trenchard struggled academically, failing many examinations and only just succeeding in meeting the minimum standard for commissioned service in the British Army. As a young infantry officer, Trenchard served in India and with the outbreak of the Boer War, he volunteered for service in South Africa. While fighting the Boers, Trenchard was critically wounded and as a result of his injury, he lost a lung, was partially paralysed and returned to Great Britain. On medical advice, Trenchard travelled to Switzerland to recuperate and boredom saw him taking up bobsleighbing. After a heavy crash, Trenchard found that his paralysis was gone and that he could walk unaided. Following further recuperation, Trenchard returned to active service in South Africa.

After the end of the Boer War, Trenchard saw service in Nigeria where he was involved in efforts to bring the interior under settled British rule and quell intertribal violence. During his time in West Africa, Trenchard commanded the Southern Nigeria Regiment for several years.

In Summer 1912, Trenchard learned to fly and gained his aviator's certificate (No. 270) on 31 July flying a Henry Farman biplane of the Sopwith School of Flying at Brooklands. He was subsequently appointed as second in command of the Central Flying School. He held several senior positions in the Royal Flying Corps during World War I, serving as the commander of the Royal Flying Corps in France from 1915 to 1917. In 1918, he briefly served as the first Chief of the Air Staff before taking up command of the Independent Air Force in France. Returning as Chief of the Air Staff under Winston Churchill in 1919, Trenchard spent the following decade securing the future of the Royal Air Force. He was Metropolitan Police Commissioner in the 1930s and a defender of the RAF in his later years. Trenchard is recognised today as one of the early advocates of strategic bombing.



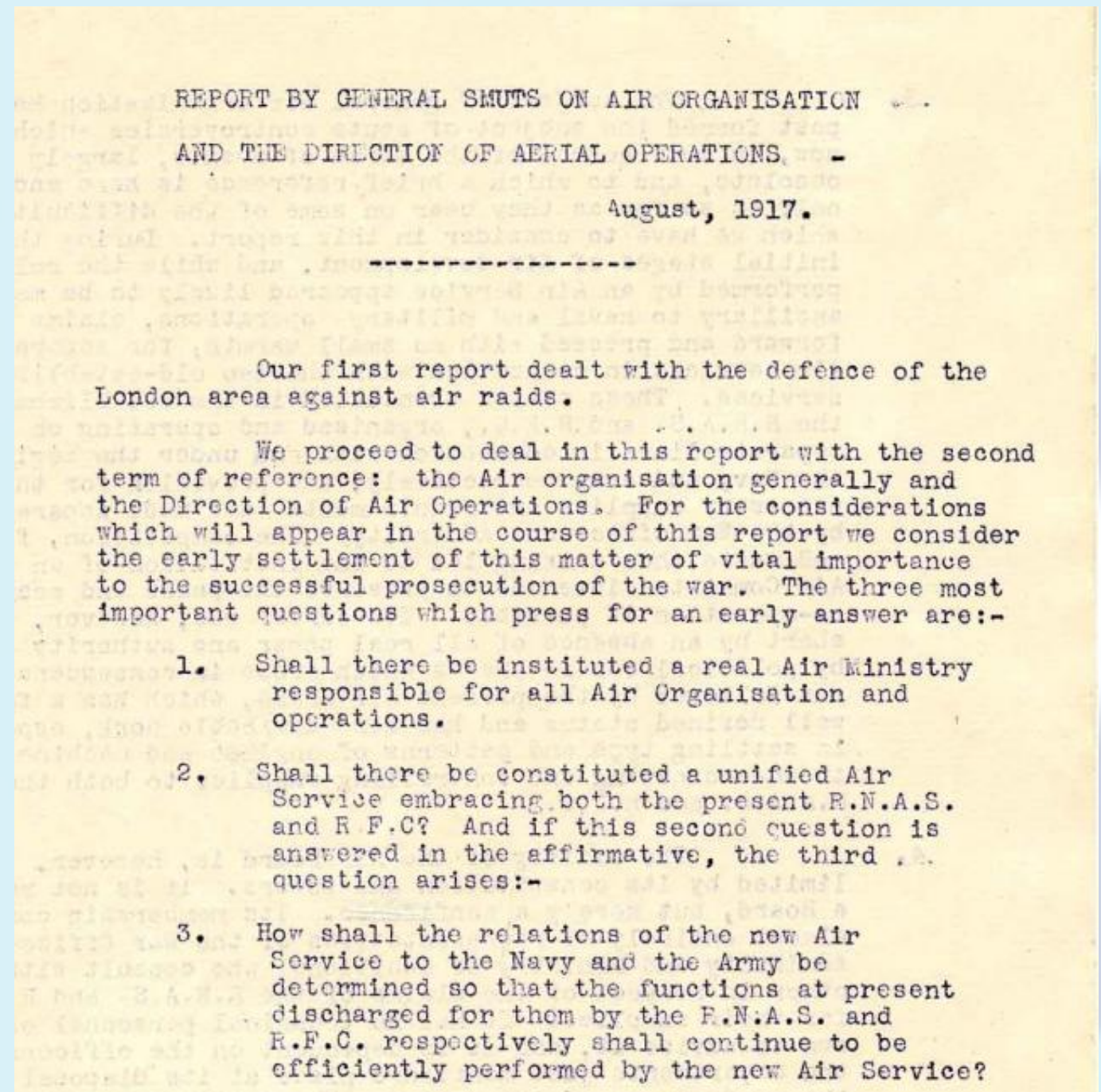
# Field Marshal Jan Smuts



Field Marshal  
The Right Honourable  
**Jan Smuts**

OM, CH, ED, PC, KC, FRS

Author of the White paper on proposing an RAF  
(b 1870, d 1950)



**Field Marshal Smuts - the Chairman of the Cabinet on Air Organisation in July 1917 - shared Trenchard's vision and, in simple terms, wrote the White Paper that justified an independent Air Force, convincing the War Council that air power had the potential for the 'devastation of enemy lands and the destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale'**



# Sir Sefton Brancker



Sir Sefton Brancker - Sir Sefton can be considered as one of the founding fathers of the RAF. Though overshadowed by Lord Trenchard with whom he was to disagree on several occasions, it was he - when the RFC officers from the War Office were posted to France at the start of WWI - who remained in London and provided the vital admin and support to the RFC on the front.

He reorganised the home squadrons - a necessity, but also an unpopular move - and the training of pilots to ensure that the RFC in France had the aircraft and aircrew which they required. The three Air Boards in 1917 and 1918 on which Brancker sat were the forerunners of the Air Ministry which can arguably be seen to have brought about the formation of the RAF.

On 11 May 1922 he was made Director of Civil Aviation, and worked assiduously to stimulate UK interest in the private flying - both cheap and accessible - with both local authorities and flying clubs. He encouraged Manchester and other cities to construct municipal airports and airfields. He participated in several long-distance survey flights, notably with Alan Cobham. He was an ardent supporter of the development of British civilian air services connecting London to British colonies and dominions overseas.

He pioneered guidelines and a system of governance for flight safety, which became the bedrock of the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA). He strived to maintain flight safety standards on the UK's airships, R100 and R101. He insisted that the government should not cut costs and tinker with their flagship design, but to no avail and it was a tragic irony that he should be killed, with Air Minister Lord Thomson, in the ensuing R101 disaster.



**CHIEFS OF AIR STAFF**



# Former Chiefs of Air Staff (1)



Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Sir Andrew Henry Humphrey**  
GCB, OBE, DFC, AFC & Two Bars  
(10 Jan 1921 – 24 Jan 1977)

Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Sir Andrew Henry Humphrey**,  
GCB, OBE, DFC, AFC & Two Bars  
(10 Jan 1921 – 24 Jan 1977)  
was a senior officer in the Royal Air Force. He fought in the Second World War as a fighter pilot taking part in the Battle of Britain and also took part in the withdrawal from Aden in November 1967.  
As Chief of the Air Staff he advised the Labour Government on the implementation of their latest Defence Review. He then served as Chief of the Defence Staff but caught pneumonia within three months of taking office and died shortly afterwards.



Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Sir Keith Alec Williamson**,  
GCB, AFC  
(born 25 February 1928)

Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Sir Keith Alec Williamson**,  
GCB, AFC  
(born 25 February 1928)  
served with the Royal Australian Air Force, flying Meteors in a ground attack role during the Korean War.  
He was a squadron commander and then a station commander during the 1960s and a senior air commander in the 1980s.  
He was Chief of the Air Staff during the early 1980s at the time of the emergency airlift of food and supplies to Ethiopia ("Operation Bushel").



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Michael James Graydon**,  
GCB, CBE  
(b 24 October 1938)

Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Michael James Graydon**,  
GCB, CBE  
(b 24 October 1938)  
was a fast jet pilot in the 1960s, a squadron commander in the 1970s and a station commander in the 1980s, before serving as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Strike Command during the Gulf War.  
He was Chief of the Air Staff from 1992 to 1997 in which role he advised the British Government on the implementation of No Fly Zones in Iraq and Bosnia and implemented the Front Line First initiative.



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Richard Edward Johns**,  
GCB, KCVO, CBE  
(born 28 July 1939)

Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Richard Edward Johns**,  
GCB, KCVO, CBE  
(born 28 July 1939)  
was a fighter pilot in the 1960s, a squadron commander in the 1970s and a station commander in the 1980s. He served as one of three British directors of operations on the senior planning staff for the British contribution to the Gulf War in 1991 and then acted as a supporting commander for joint operations in the Balkans in 1994.  
As CAS, he advised the Government on RAF aspects of the Strategic Defence Review and on NATO's Kosovo air campaign.



# Former Chiefs of Air Staff (2)



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Peter Ted Squire**  
GCB, DFC, AFC, DL, FRAeS  
(born 7 October 1945)



Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Baron, Graham Eric Stirrup (aka 'Jock')**  
KG, GCB, AFC, FRAeS, FCMI  
(born 4 December 1949),



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Glenn Lester Torpy**  
GCB, CBE, DSO  
(born 27 July 1953)



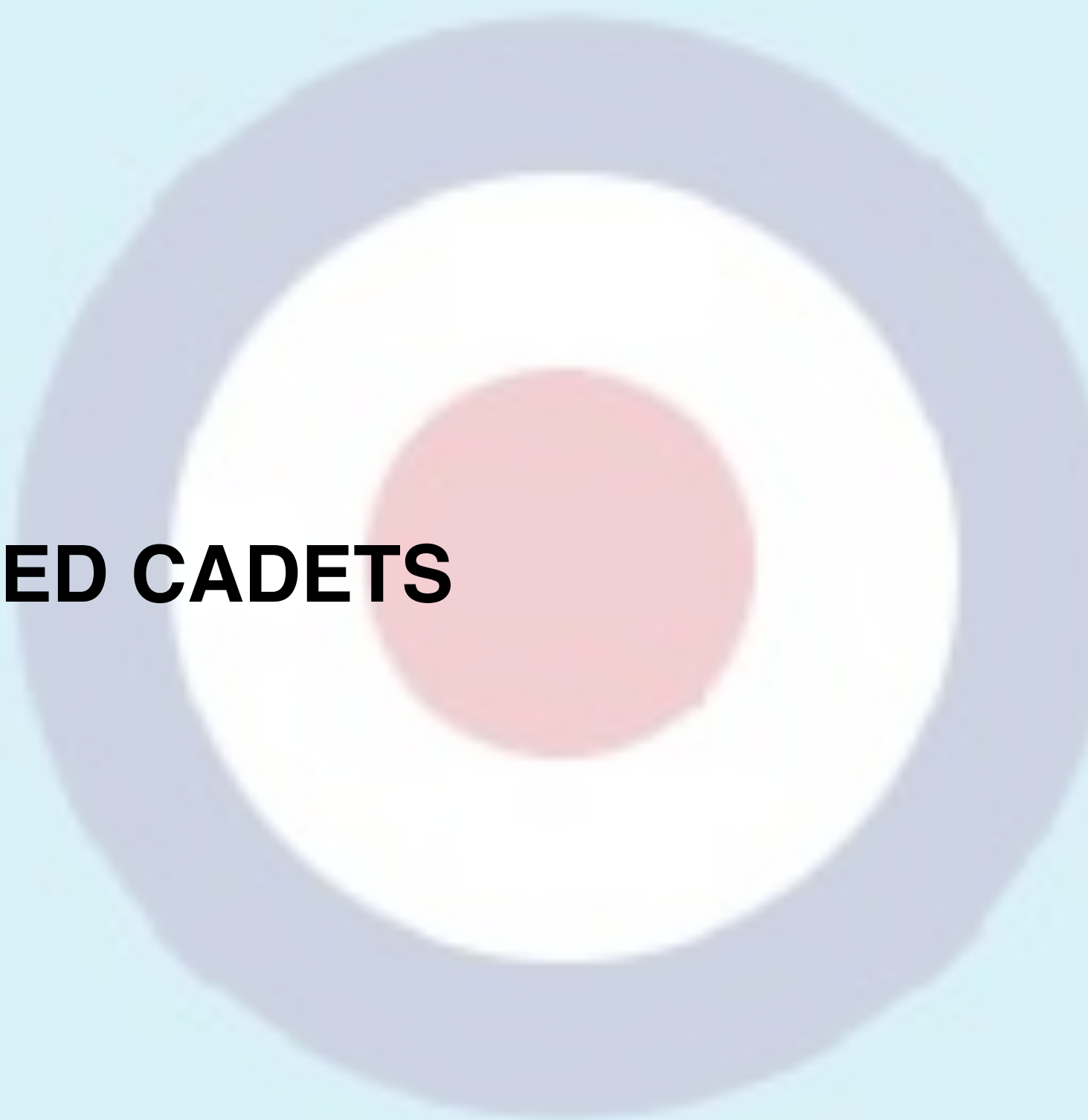
Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Stephen Gary George Dalton**  
GCB, ADC  
(born 23 April 1954)

Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Peter Ted Squire**  
GCB, DFC, AFC, DL, FRAeS  
(born 7 October 1945)  
was a fast jet pilot in the 1970s, a squadron commander during the Falklands War and a senior air commander in the 1990s. Squire was Chief of the Air Staff from 2000 to 2003 during which time both Operation Veritas (in Afghanistan) and Operation Telic (in Iraq) were initiated. In retirement he became Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Imperial War Museum and Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
**Graham Eric Stirrup, Baron Stirrup (aka 'Jock')**  
KG, GCB, AFC, FRAeS, FCMI  
(born 4 December 1949),  
was a jet pilot, commanded No. 2 Squadron and later Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Strike Command. In 2003, Stirrup was Chief of the Air Staff. He became Chief of the Defence Staff in 2006: during his time in office the British Armed Forces faced significant commitments both to Iraq (Operation Telic) and Afghanistan (Operation Herrick). Stirrup retired as Chief of the Defence Staff on 29 October 2010, taking a seat in the House of Lords in 2011.

Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Glenn Lester Torpy**  
GCB, CBE, DSO  
(born 27 July 1953)  
was a fast jet pilot in the late 1970s and 1980s, saw active service during the Gulf War and then went on to higher command. He was the air component commander on Operation Telic (British operations in Iraq). He served as Chief of the Air Staff, the professional head of the RAF, from 2006 to 2009. In that role Torpy hosted the RAF's biggest air display in two decades, and argued for consolidation of all British air power in the hands of the RAF.

Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Stephen Gary George Dalton**  
GCB, ADC  
(born 23 April 1954)  
commanding officer of XIII Squadron, and served as Head of Air Operations at the Ministry of Defence during the preparations for and conduct of Operation Telic in Iraq.  
  
Appointed CAS in 2009, he advised the Government on the deployment of air power during the Libyan conflict. In that capacity he implemented 2,700 redundancies, as determined by the Strategic Defence and Security Review.



# **SELECTED CADETS**



# Three of our very best Cadets



Wg Cdr **Hugh Gordon Malcolm VC**  
(2 May 1917 – 4 December 1942)

Malcolm was the only College cadet to be awarded a VC, heroically leading 18 Sqn in a bombing raid on an enemy fighter airfield near Chougui, Tunisia, against overwhelming odds. He was posthumously awarded a VC in April 1943, the first to be awarded in the North Africa campaign. His name is remembered through the formation of the Malcolm Clubs that provide welfare services for RAF families.



Air Commodore **Sir Frank Whittle** OM KBE CB FRS FRAeS  
(1 June 1907 – 9 August 1996)

Despite passing the RAF entrance examination with a very high mark, Whittle failed twice to enter the RAF because he was too small, at just 5 feet tall. Undeterred, he applied again under an assumed name, passing the physical and, in September 1923, 364365 Boy Whittle, F started his three-year training as an aircraft mechanic in No. 1 Squadron of No. 4 Apprentices Wing. Recognised by RAF staff as a genius, he developed the jet engine that first flew in a Gloster E28/39 at Cranwell in 1941.



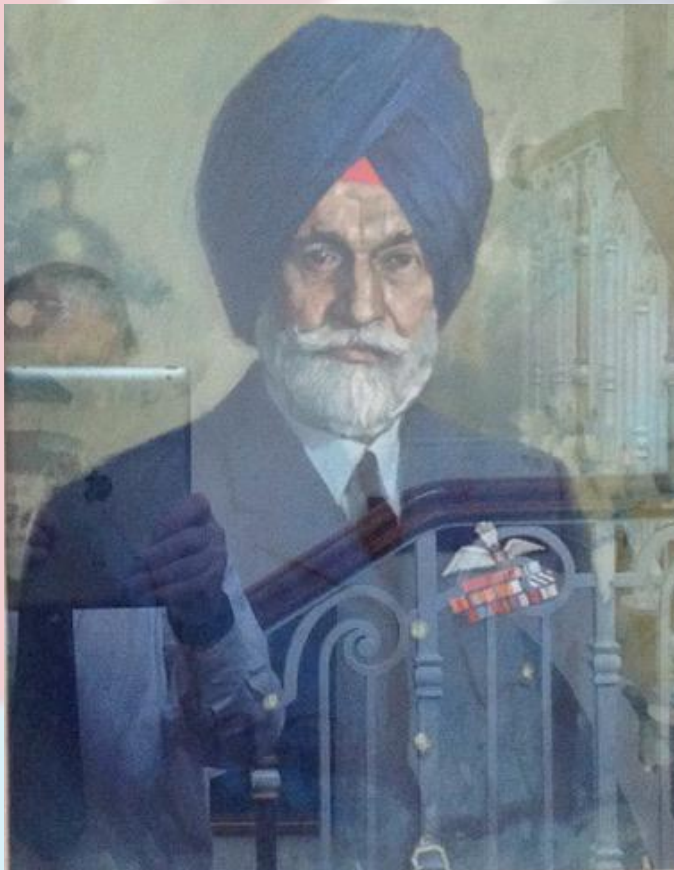
Group Captain **Sir Douglas Robert Steuart Bader**  
CBE, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, FRAeS, DL  
(21 February 1910 – 5 September 1982)

Joined the RAF in 1928, commissioned in 1930, lost both legs in an aerobatic accident in 1931. Despite being discharged on medical grounds, he rejoined in 1939 to become a renowned flying ace, credited with 22 aerial victories, four shared victories, six probables, one shared probable and 11 enemy aircraft damaged. Shot down in 1941 - blue-on-blue - he 'resided' in Colditz Camp for the next 4 years.

**C**ourage **A**bility **D**edication **E**nergy **T**eamwork **S**ingle-mindedness



# VIP Gallery - West Mezzanine



Marshal of the Indian Air Force  
**Arjan Singh**  
DFC  
(14 Apr 1919 – 16 Sep 2017)

Marshal of the Indian Air Force **Arjan Singh** served as Chief of the Air Staff from 1964 to 1969. For his distinguished service in commanding the IAF during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan and in 1966 became the first IAF officer to be promoted to Air Chief Marshal. After retiring from the IAF, he served as a diplomat, politician and advisor to the Indian government. He was Lieutenant Governor of Delhi from 1989 to 1990. In 2002, he became the first and only officer of the Indian Air Force to be promoted to five-star rank. He was awarded the DFC by King George VI in June 1944.



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir William John Wratten**  
GCB, CB, AFC  
(15 Aug 1939)

ACM **Sir William Wratten** graduated from RAF Cranwell in 1960. He commanded 23 Squadron (1975) RAF Coningsby (1980), RAF Stanley (1982). He went on to serve as DOR (Air) 1 at MOD (1983), as SASO at HQ 1 Group in 1986 and as AOC 11 Group in 1989. As an AVM, he was Air Commander British Forces Middle East from 17 November 1990 until the end of the Gulf War (the senior air force officer in Operation Granby). He retired as AOC-in-C STC in 1997.



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Peter Edward Squire**  
GCB, DFC, AFC, DL, FRAeS  
(7 Oct 45)

ACM **Sir Peter Squire** graduated from the RAF College in 1966. He was a fast jet pilot in the 1970s, a squadron commander during the Falklands War and a senior air commander in the 1990s. He was CAS from 2000 to 2003 during which time both Operation Veritas (in Afghanistan) and Operation Telic (in Iraq) were initiated. In retirement he became Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Imperial War Museum and Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir John Thomson**  
GCB, CBE, AFC  
(7 Jun 1941 – 10 Jul 1994)

ACM **Sir John Thomson** graduated from RAF College Cranwell in 1962. He was appointed OC 41 Squadron in 1976, PSO to the CAS in 1979, and Station Commander at RAF Bruggen in 1981. He went on to be Director of Defence Concepts at the MoD in 1985, AOC 1 Gp in 1987 and ACAS in 1989. He became AOC-in-C at SC in 1991, and AOC-in-C at STC in 1992. In July 1994, he became the first Commander in Chief of the new NATO command, Allied Forces North-Western Europe. However, only days after taking up this post, he became ill and was rushed at RAF Halton where he died aged 53.



# VIP Gallery - Top Corridor West



Flight Lieutenant  
**Henry Richard Danvers Waghorn**  
AFC  
Flight Cadet 1922-1924  
Winner of Schneider Trophy 1929



Air Vice Marshal  
**Laurence Frank Sinclair**  
GC, KCB, CB, CBE, DSO\*  
Flight Cadet 1926-1928  
One of two cadets to win GC



Group Captain  
**Philip J Robinson**  
OBE, DFC\*\*  
140 IOT 1992  
Iraq and Afghanistan Ops



Air Marshal  
**Sir Kenneth William Hayr**  
KCB, KBE, AFC  
Flight Cadet 69 Entry 1954-1957  
AOC-in-C STC 1988



Group Captain  
**Adolph Gysbert 'Sailor' Malan**  
DSO\*, DFC\*  
OC 74 Sqn Battle of Britain  
Anti-apartheid Movement



Air Commodore  
**Stephen Haistwell Hardy**  
CBE  
Flight Cadet 1924-1925  
Cmnd Advanced Trg School



Flight Lieutenant  
**Bernard Clegg**  
DFC  
Flight Cadet Jan-Dec 1939  
Killed on active service 1943



Air Chief Marshal  
**Henry Neil George Wheeler**  
KCB, CB, CBE, OBE, DSO, DFC\*, AFC  
Flight Cadet 1935-1937  
Dominion Nomination, South Africa



# VIP Gallery - Top Corridor East



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Wallace Kyle**  
GCB, KCVO, CBE, DSO, DFC, KStJ  
Flight Cadet 1928-1929  
Assistant Commandant 1951-1952



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir George Holroyd Mills**  
GCB, DFC  
Flight Cadet 1920-1921  
Gentleman Usher of Black Rod



Air Marshal  
**Sir John Baldwin**  
KBE, CB, DSO  
Commandant of CFS 1929-1932  
Commandant 1936-1938



Air Chief Marshal  
**The Earl of Bandon**  
DSO  
Flight Cadet 1923-1924



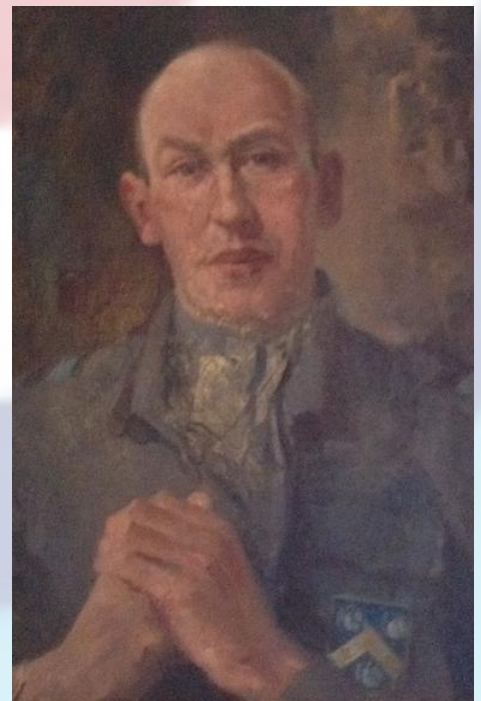
Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Edmund Hudleston**  
GCB, CBE  
Flight Cadet 1927-1928  
C-in-C AFCE 1964-1965



Wing Commander  
**Roland Prosper "Bea" Beamont**  
CBE, DSO\*, DFC\*  
BoB Fighter Pilot and Jet Aircraft Test Pilot  
First British Pilot to exceed Machs 1 and 2



Air Chief Marshal  
**Sir Godfrey Marshall Paine**  
KCB, MVO  
First Commandant CFS May 1912  
First Cmdt RNAS Cranwell Dec 1915



Air Commodore  
**Richard Atcherley**  
GCB, KCVO, CBE, DSO, DFC, KStJ  
Flight Cadet 1922-1924  
1st Cadet to become Cmdt 1951-1952



# Sinking of the Tirpitz - East Mezzanine

## James Brian Tait DSO\*\*\* DFC



On 12 November 1944, the Royal Air Force carried out one of the most successful precision bombing attacks of the Second World War, resulting in the sinking of the German battleship '**Admiral von Tirpitz**'. The attack was made by 29 Lancasters of Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons.

No fewer than 10 attacks, by RAF and Royal Navy aircraft and by British and Russian submarines, had already been made on the Tirpitz since she had been completed in 1941; the German Navy bragged the ship as unsinkable - rather like her sister ship, the Bismark, sunk in 1941.

Two RAF bomber attacks preceded the successful one of 12 November:

- On 15 September, Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons, operating from Yagodnik near Archangel in Russia, attacked the Tirpitz, but were prevented from making accurate bombing runs by a smoke screen which surrounded the vessel. However, the Tirpitz was hit by one of thirteen 12,000lb Tallboy bombs and was unable to put to sea, a fact not known to the Allies at the time. The ship was towed to an anchorage 4 miles from Tromso.
- On 29 October, the two squadrons made another attack, flying direct from Lossiemouth, with Lancasters fitted with more powerful Merlin 24 engines, lightened by the removal of the mid-upper gun turret, some of the armour plating and other equipment, and fitted with overload fuel tanks. Each Lancaster carried a 'Tallboy' bomb, but again the attack was a disappointment as low cloud interfered with bombing runs. The ship did, however, sustain some damage on this occasion.

But on 12 November, Lancasters of Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons, led respectively by Squadron Leader AG Williams DFC and Wing Commander JB Tait DSO DFC, took off from Lossiemouth at about 3 a.m. They flew to a rendezvous point, a lake 100 miles south-east of Tromso, at 1,000 feet to avoid early detection by enemy radar.

Climbing to bombing height - between 12,000 and 16,000 feet - they spotted the warship about 20 miles away. This time the smoke screen was out of action and there were no defending fighters.

When the bombers were about 13 miles away, the main guns of the Tirpitz opened fire and were shortly joined by shore batteries and two flak ships. One Lancaster was shot down.



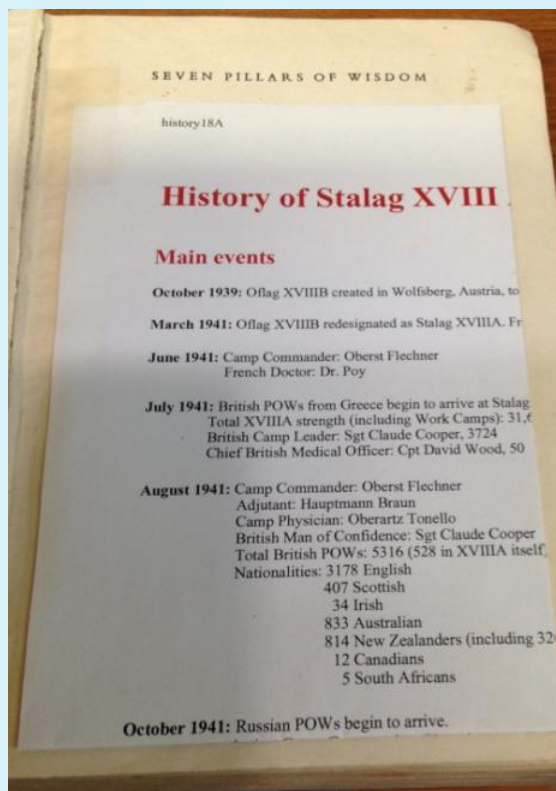
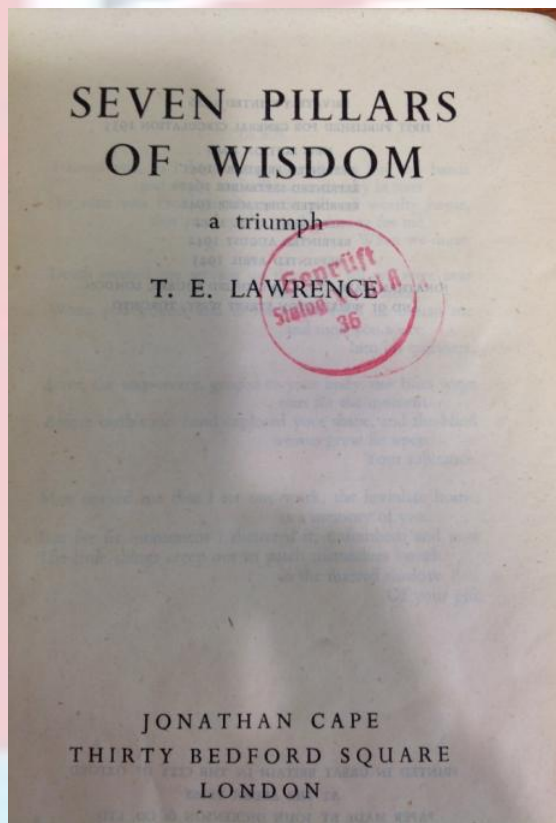
Tait (fifth from left) standing with crew by the tail of their Lancaster at Woodhall Spa, the day after their successful sinking of the Tirpitz



The first Tallboy bombs narrowly missed the target, but then, in rapid succession, came three direct hits. A column of steam and smoke shot up to about 300 feet and within a few minutes the ship had started to list badly. About 10 minutes after the first bomb struck, the Tirpitz had completely turned turtle with only the hull visible from the air.



# TE Lawrence (aka AC Shaw)



The "Lawrence Room" is named after Col TE Lawrence (AC2 TE Shaw) or Lawrence of Arabia. TE Lawrence was stationed at RAF Cranwell as AC2 TE Shaw" 1925-1926. It was whilst he was stationed at RAF Cranwell, that Lawrence wrote "*Revolt in the Desert*". He also presented a hand annotated proof copy of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to the College Library which remains in the collection today. If you go up the stairs, on your right, you will see a model of part of the men's accommodation and the then SHQ. This was made in 1934.

