

RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL



The World's Oldest Military Air Academy
Celebrating 100 Years of Officer Training

5 February 2020

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Our Centennial and our Founder

To mark the 100th anniversary of the RAF College, the Cranwellian Association embarked on a project to pay tribute to the RAF College's principal Founder - the project: a 7 foot monument of MRAF Viscount Trenchard, to be erected in 2020 within the grounds of the iconic RAF College Hall Officer's Mess.

This booklet serves two purposes; firstly, to record some of the history of the College, its special features and notable personalities; secondly, to record our gratitude to an outstanding leader without whom our College simply would not have existed.

There are many fitting biographies that convey more accurately and in more depth the incredible vision and achievements of Viscount Trenchard as 'Father of the Royal Air Force'. This booklet merely offers a pictorial record to accompany our main tribute, his statue in the College grounds.

Had he been alive today, his reaction may well have been, typically, "Hmmp". But our respect for him and all he did for the RAF and our country is immeasurable, and stands proudly in College grounds for all to see.

College Hall Entrance - The 'Forbidden' Carpet



Whilst under training, cadets are forbidden to walk through the front doors or on the carpet laid in the Rotunda of the College. It is something of a rite of passage into the RAF, and is judged as the moment cadets are actually commissioned

Until they graduate, they must walk around the carpet if requiring access to the reception and/or the ante-rooms and the wings connected to the rotunda.

Slow marching to "Auld Lang Syne" at their graduation parade, up the College steps and into the Rotunda, they step on this carpet for the very first time.

At the rear of this view, you can see the portrait of our founder and "Father of the RAF", MRAF

Viscount Trenchard

Our Founder - '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.

Formation of RAF



The Royal Naval Air Service

Formed 1 July 1914; air arm of the Royal Navy; merged with RFC on 1 April 1918 to form the RAF.

In 1912, setup as Naval Wing of the joint Royal Flying Corps, but administered by the Admiralty's new Air Department; 1 August 1915, the RFC became the flying branch of the British Army while the RNAS became "an integral part of the Royal Navy".



Marshal of The RAF, Viscount
Hugh Trenchard
GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO
(b 1873, d 1956)



Field Marshal
The Right Honourable
Jan Smuts
OM, CH, ED, PC, KC, FRS
(b 1870, d 1950)

Lord Trenchard saw the need for an independent Air Force when Commander of the RFC in France during WW1. He possessed the drive and determination to press his belief in the formation of the RAF and became the Service's first Chief of the Air Staff in 1918.



Field Marshal Smuts - the Chairman of the Cabinet on Air Organisation in July 1917 - wrote the above 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'

1912

1914

1917

1918

Formation of HMS Daedalus, Cranwell

The RFC had constructed its Central Flying School in 1912, on an elevated site of training gallops, about 1.5 mi east of Upavon village, near the edge of the Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. The RFC site was unusual, in that it was bisected by a public highway, the A342 – with the airfield and hangars on the south side of the road, and all the administrative (and some technical) buildings and accommodation on the north side. Though fit for the RFC's purpose, it could not accommodate RNAS training, when the RNAS formed in 1914.



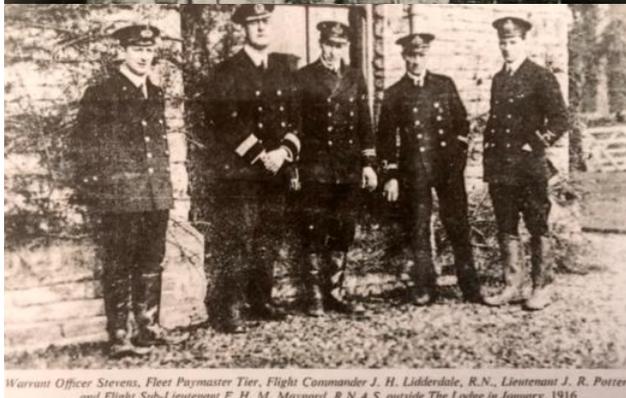
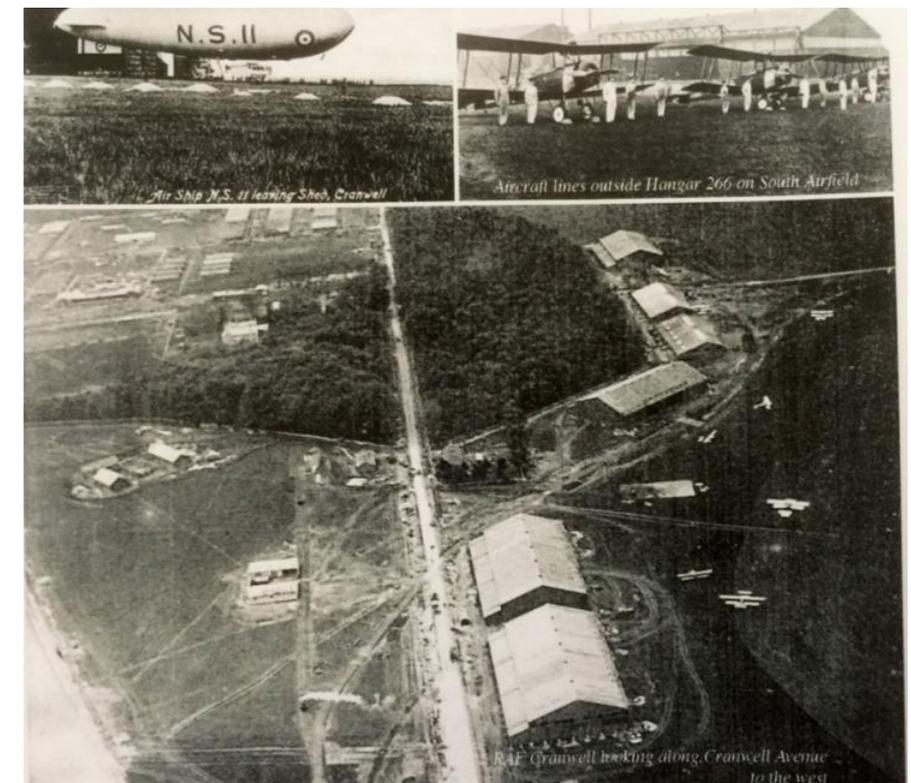
The Admiralty was thus forced to seek alternative accommodation and selected Cranwell as it was close to existing air stations on the east coast and, being in the middle of no-where, it was far away from possible extra curricular distractions.

In keeping with RN tradition, personnel posted to a shore base had to be borne on the books of a naval vessel. In the case of Cranwell staff, they were borne on a renamed Medway hulk - HMS Daedalus - a depot ship for RN personnel serving ashore on Britain's east coast. Under the command of Cdre Geoffrey Paine, the RNAS students at Cranwell effectively became part of the ship's company of HMS Daedalus.

Cranwell Lodge Farm was commandeered from Mr Usher Banks for the Admiralty by CPO Whitlock on 23 November 1915. Accommodation for the men comprised three cottages and the outbuildings. Cranwell Avenue was, at that time, a cart track.

The Lodge was used as the Commandant's accommodation and also the Officer's Mess, or Wardroom in RN parlance, until early 1916 when the Mess building was completed.

With the infrastructure completed, the RNAS Central Training Establishment formed on 1 April 1916 and, in late 1916, RNAS Cranwell was fully established, equipped and operational.



Foundation of the RAF College

1. Realising Trenchard's vision for an RAF College on the lines of Sandhurst and Britannia, RAF Cranwell officially formed on 1 November 1919 and opened for business on 5 February 1920.



3. By 1929, plans had been drawn up. The Secretary of State for Air in Baldwin's Government, Lord Hoare, was highly supportive. The problem was that a general election (which Baldwin was expected to lose) was imminent and so Hoare pulled off what he described as "an act of bluff": Lady Maud Hoare - his wife - laid the foundation stone on 29 Apr 1929 to the left of the entrance, in front of worthies that included Viscount and Lady Trenchard, AVM Longcroft (1st Commandant) and Sir James Grey West (Architect). The event was noted in the Statute Book and so, when the new Government was formed by Macdonald, it seems approval was assumed and building went ahead.



2. The decision to replace the existing corrugated iron huts was made in 1922.

5. Constructed in 1932, the RAF College design was based on St Pancras Station and the dining room on the long room at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The station canopy of the branch line terminus joining the main Cranwell station (currently the guard room) can still be seen from behind the kitchens

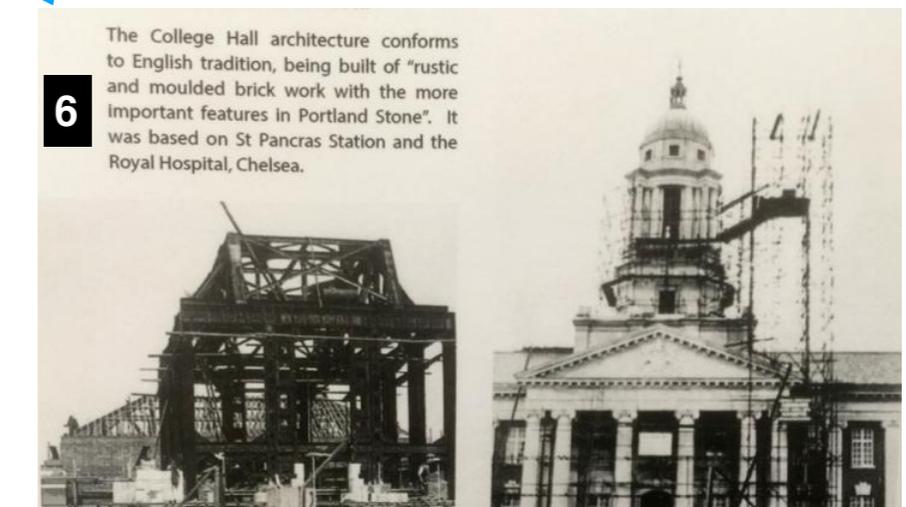


4. A tinned steel time capsule, held within the foundation stone, holds a record of all present and a special edition of the RAF Journal Vol IX No 1 with details of every cadet who passed through the College since its inception in Feb 1920.

6. The new College was first used by cadets in 1933, but not formally opened until 11 Oct 1934 by HRH Edward, Prince of Wales - the honorary Air Commodore in Chief of the Auxiliary Air Force.



7. The Foundation & Commemorative Stones can be seen either side of the front entrance.



The College Arms and Armourial Bearings



Azure on a Chevron between three Cranes volant Argent as many Torteaux each charged with a Lion's Face Or and for the Crest on a Wreath of the Colours a Figure representing Daedalus proper. On either side standing upon a Scroll Or bearing the motto "Superna Petimus" in letters Azure two Eagles wings addorsed and inverted Argent beaked and legged Gules langued and armed Azure gorged with an Astral Crown Or charged with a Fleur-de-Lys Or the dexter fimbriated Vert the sinister fimbriated Gules."

Two plaques, either side of the College front doors, contain the rites for the College to "bear arms". Dated 1929 and 1972, they represent the evolution of the College Arms as depicted today.

Our Founder's Unstinting Dedication (1)



During the summer of 1919, Trenchard worked on completing the demobilisation of the RAF and establishing it on a peacetime basis. This was a sizeable task as the force was budgeted to shrink from 280 squadrons to around 28. It was also during this time that the new RAF officer ranks were approved, despite some opposition from members of the Army Council. Trenchard himself was regraded from Major-General to Air Vice-Marshal, and then promoted to Air Marshal a few days later.

By the autumn of 1919, the budgetary effects of Lloyd George's Ten Year Rule were causing Trenchard some difficulty as he sought to develop the institutions of the RAF. He had to argue against the view that the Army and Navy should provide all the support services and education, leaving the RAF only to provide flying training. He viewed this idea as a precursor to the break-up of the RAF, and in spite of the costs, he wanted its own institutions which would develop airmanship and engender the air spirit. Having convinced Churchill of his case, he oversaw the founding of the RAF (Cadet) College at Cranwell as the world's first military air academy. In 1920, he inaugurated the Aircraft Apprenticeship scheme, which provided the RAF with highly technically trained specialist ground-crews. In 1922, the RAF Staff College at Andover was established to provide air force specific training to the RAF's middle-ranking officers.

Although Trenchard had attained a measure of financial security, the future of the RAF was far from assured. He judged that the chief threat to the new service came from the new First Sea Lord, Admiral Beatty. Looking to take the initiative, Trenchard arranged to see Beatty, meeting with him and arguing that the "air is one and indivisible", put forward a case for an air force with its own strategic role which also controlled army and navy co-operation squadrons. Beatty did not accept Trenchard's argument and Trenchard resorted to asking for a 12 months amnesty to put his plans into action. The request appealed to Beatty's sense of fair play, and he agreed to let Trenchard be until the end of 1920. Around this time Trenchard indicated to Beatty that control over some supporting elements of naval aviation (but not aircrew or aircraft) might be returned to the Admiralty. Trenchard also offered Beatty the option of locating the Air Ministry staff who worked in connection with naval aviation at the Admiralty. Beatty declined the offer and later, when no transfer of any naval aviation assets occurred, came to the view that Trenchard had acted in bad faith.

Our Founder's Unstinting Dedication (2)



Trenchard with 12 Squadron personnel in France during April 1940.

During the early 1920s, the continued independent existence of the RAF and its control of naval aviation were subject to a series of Government reviews. The Balfour Report of 1921, the Geddes Axe of 1922, and the Salisbury Committee of 1923 all found in favour of the RAF's continued existence, despite lobbying from the Admiralty and opposition in Parliament. On each occasion, Trenchard and his staff officers, supported by Christopher Bullock, worked to show that the RAF provided good value for money, and was required for the long-term strategic security of the United Kingdom.

Trenchard also sought to secure the RAF's future by finding a war-fighting role for the new Service. In 1920, he successfully argued that it should take the lead during the 1920 conflict between British forces and Somaliland dervishes. The success of this small air action then allowed him to put the case for the RAF's air policing of the vast distances of the British Empire.

Trenchard particularly argued for it to take the lead in Iraq at the Cairo Conference of 1921, and in 1922 the RAF was given control of all British Forces in Iraq. The RAF also carried out imperial air policing over India's North-West Frontier Province. In early 1920, he suggested that it could even be used to violently suppress if necessary "industrial disturbances, or risings" in the United Kingdom itself, following on from his experience in such matters in successfully quelling the troop mutiny at Southampton Docks in the previous year. Churchill was unsettled at Trenchard's apparent willingness to use lethal military force domestically upon British subjects, and told him by reply not to refer to this proposal again.

By late 1924, the creation of the reserve air force, known as the Auxiliary Air Force, meant that Trenchard was able to modestly expand the RAF's strength, and over the next two years, 25 auxiliary squadrons were created. It was during this period that he oversaw the introduction of the short-service commission scheme, which proved to be useful in providing some of the regular manning on the new squadrons. He also instigated the University Air Squadron scheme, and in 1925 the first three UAS squadrons were formed at Cambridge, London and Oxford.

Following the British failure to win the Schneider Trophy in 1925, Trenchard ensured that finances were available for an RAF team, with which the High Speed Flight was formed in preparation for the 1927 race. After the British won in 1927, he continued to use Air Ministry funds to support the race, including purchasing two Supermarine S.6 aircraft which won the race in 1929. He was criticised for this by figures in HM Treasury for wasting money.

Our Founder's Unstinting Dedication (3)



The Lord Trenchard speaking informally with Sir Arthur Tedder during World War II

On 1 January 1927, Trenchard was promoted from Air Chief Marshal to Marshal of the Royal Air Force, becoming the first person to hold the RAF's highest rank. The following year, he began to feel that he had achieved all he could as Chief of the Air Staff and that he should give way to a younger man, and he offered his resignation to the Cabinet in late 1928, although it was not initially accepted.

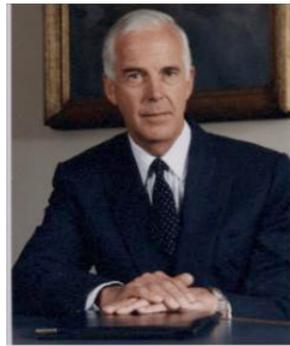
Around the same time as Trenchard was considering his future, the British Legation and some European diplomatic staff based in Kabul were cut off from the outside world as a result of the civil war in Afghanistan. After word of the crisis had reached London, the Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain sent for Trenchard, who assured him that the RAF would be able to rescue the stranded civilians. The Kabul Airlift began on Christmas Eve and took nine weeks to rescue around 600 people.

Trenchard continued as Chief of the Air Staff until 1 January 1930. Immediately after he had relinquished his appointment, he was created Baron Trenchard, of Wolfeton in the County of Dorset, entering the House of Lords, becoming the RAF's first peer.

Looking back over Trenchard's time as Chief of the Air Staff, while he had successfully preserved the fledgling RAF, his emphasis on the Air Force providing defence at a comparatively low cost had led to a stagnation and even deterioration in the quality of the Service's fighting equipment.

Just after the outbreak of World War II, Prime Minister Chamberlain summoned Trenchard and offered him the job of organising advanced training for RAF pilots in Canada, possibly as a pretext to remove Trenchard from England. He turned the post down, saying that the role required a younger man who had up-to-date knowledge of training matters. He then spent the remainder of 1939 arguing that the RAF should be used to strike against Germany from its bases in France. In 1940, he was offered the job of co-ordinating the camouflaging of England, which he flatly refused. Without an official role, he took it upon himself to spend the spring of 1940 visiting RAF units, including those of the Advanced Air Striking Force in France. In April, Sir Samuel Hoare, who was again Secretary of State for Air, unsuccessfully attempted to get him to come back as Chief of the Air Staff.

The Trenchard Memorial Statue



Air Chief Marshal
Sir Michael Graydon
GCB, CBE



Air Marshal
Sir Chris Coville
KCB, FRAeS

One of the most significant events of College history was the formation of the Old Cranwellian Association, at an inaugural meeting chaired by the Commandant, Air Commodore Borton, on 14 July 1926. Ever since, the Association has strived to contribute to the efficiency of the RAF, fostering *esprit de corps* and comradeship among serving and retired officers. It is no surprise, therefore, that today's Cranwellian Association (CA) wanted to pay a fitting tribute to the world's oldest military air academy, especially to its founder Lord Trenchard, but also to some 28,000 alumni to date.

As the President of the CA and former Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Michael Graydon, recalls:

"The story is relatively simple. We canvassed ideas after early discussion with the College about what we might do to commemorate the 100th anniversary; initially, proposals were for something inside the College, for example a Michael Angelo-type painting on the dome in the Rotunda. There were many others, including flying scholarships for air cadets, but in the end the majority favoured a statue of our founder - and after confirming a consensus of the membership at an AGM, we all went for it"

Directing a small project team of volunteers within his Executive Committee, Chairman Sir Chris Coville embarked on a campaign to raise £150,000 for the monument, achieving his target within 18 months through substantial donations from Cranwellians world-wide.

To establish a monument befitting both the College and its Founder, the CA wanted the very best sculptor to undertake the task. Following a rigorous selection process involving four distinguished sculptors, the CA Trustees appointed Vivien Mallock, who has established an international reputation as a renowned artist and sculptor of extraordinary versatility. Indeed, the College already owns an example of her work in the miniature of Douglas Bader displayed in the Rotunda.

Initially designing a small maquette to mutually agree detail, she went on to deliver the magnificent seven foot monument that graces the College grounds today.



Vivien Mallock

Former Chiefs of Air Staff (1)

[On Display in the College Dining Hall]



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

Second World War 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)

Served with the Royal Australian Air Force, flying Meteors in a ground attack role during the Korean War. 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)

Fast jet pilot in the 1960s, a squadron commander in the 1970s, a station commander in the 1980s, before serving as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Strike Command during the Gulf War. Chief of the Air Staff from 1992 to 1997, advising the HMG 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)

Fighter pilot in the 1960s, a squadron commander in the 1970s and a station commander in the 1980s. One of three British directors of operations planning the British contribution to the Gulf War in 1991; in 1994, a supporting commander for joint ops in the Balkans. As CAS, he advised HMG on RAF aspects of the Strategic Defence Review and on NATO's Kosovo air campaign.

Former Chiefs of Air Staff (2)

[On Display in the College Dining Hall]



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

Fast jet pilot in the 1970s, a squadron commander during the Falklands War and a senior air commander in the 1990s. Chief of the Air Staff from 2000 to 2003 during which both Operation Veritas (in Afghanistan) and Operation Telic (in Iraq) initiated. In retirement, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Imperial War Museum and Vice-Chairman of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



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

Jet pilot, commanded No. 2 Squadron and later Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Strike Command. Chief of the Air Staff in 2003. Chief of the Defence Staff in 2006: during which the British Armed Forces faced significant commitments both to Iraq (Operation Telic) and Afghanistan (Operation Herrick). 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)

Fast jet pilot in the late 1970s and 1980s, saw active service during the Gulf War before higher command. Air component commander on Operation Telic (British operations in Iraq).
Chief of the Air Staff from 2006 to 2009, hosting the RAF's biggest air display in two decades, and arguing 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. Head of Air Operations at MOD during the preparations for and conduct of Operation Telic in Iraq.
As CAS in 2009, advised HMG on the deployment of air power during the Libyan conflict. Successfully implemented 2,700 redundancies, in accordance with the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Past Commandants & Assistant Commandants

[On Display in the College Inner Corridors]



The corridors leading away from the College rotunda contain portraits, photographs and paintings of Commandants, graduates and significant events such as HM The Queen's Review of the College.

To the West Wing are the photographs of former Commandants of the College (and some Cranwell graduates who received gallantry awards); to the East there are hand drawn portraits (cheaper than photographs in their day) of Assistant Commandants - the most recent Commandants and their Assistants appear furthest from the rotunda.



The Rotunda of College Hall



A unique feature of the College is its Rotunda. Aloft hang the standards of temporarily disbanded squadrons and the boards announcing previous cadet prizewinners

Squadron standards, which are permitted a maximum of 8 battle honours, are consecrated items that may be touched only by the ungloved hands of the monarch or clergy. Standards of fully disbanded squadrons are held in the church or cathedral closest to the squadron's base.

Prize winners displayed include those of leadership trophies (e.g. Sword of Honour) and those for exceptional flying, engineering, supply and secretarial skills.

Three of our very best Cadets

[On Display in the College Dining Hall]



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 provided welfare services for RAF families for four decades.



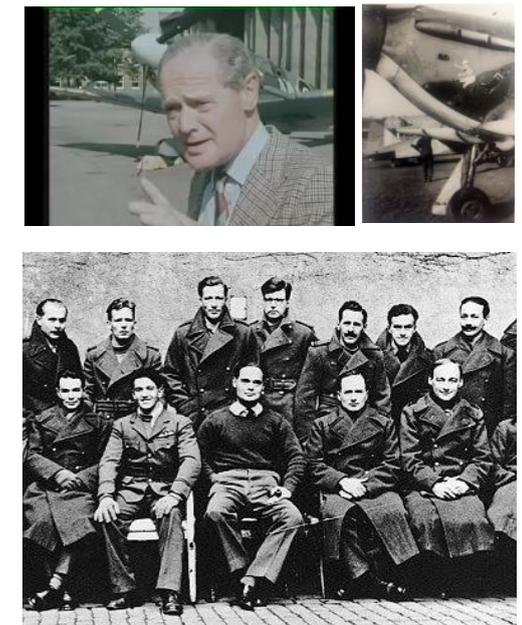
Air Commodore Sir Frank Whittle
OM KBE CB FRS FRAeS
(1 June 1907 – 9 August 1996)

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)

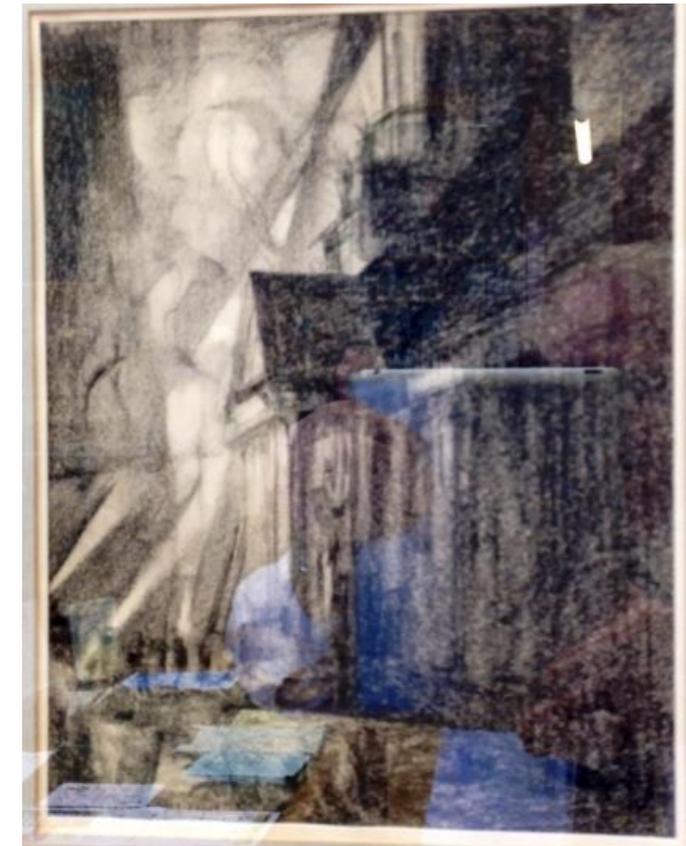
Joined the RAF in 1928, commissioned in 1930, lost both legs in an aerobatic accident in 1931. Despite being discharged on medical grounds, he rejoined in 1939 to become a renowned flying ace, credited with 22 aerial victories, four shared victories, six probables, one shared probable and 11 enemy aircraft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



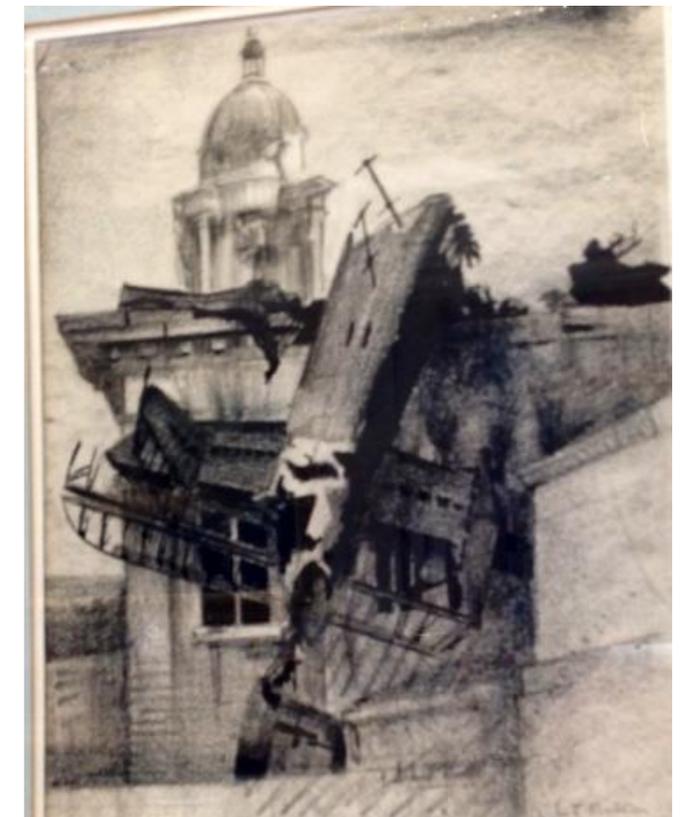
Courage **A**bility **D**edication **E**nergy **T**eamwork **S**ingle-mindedness



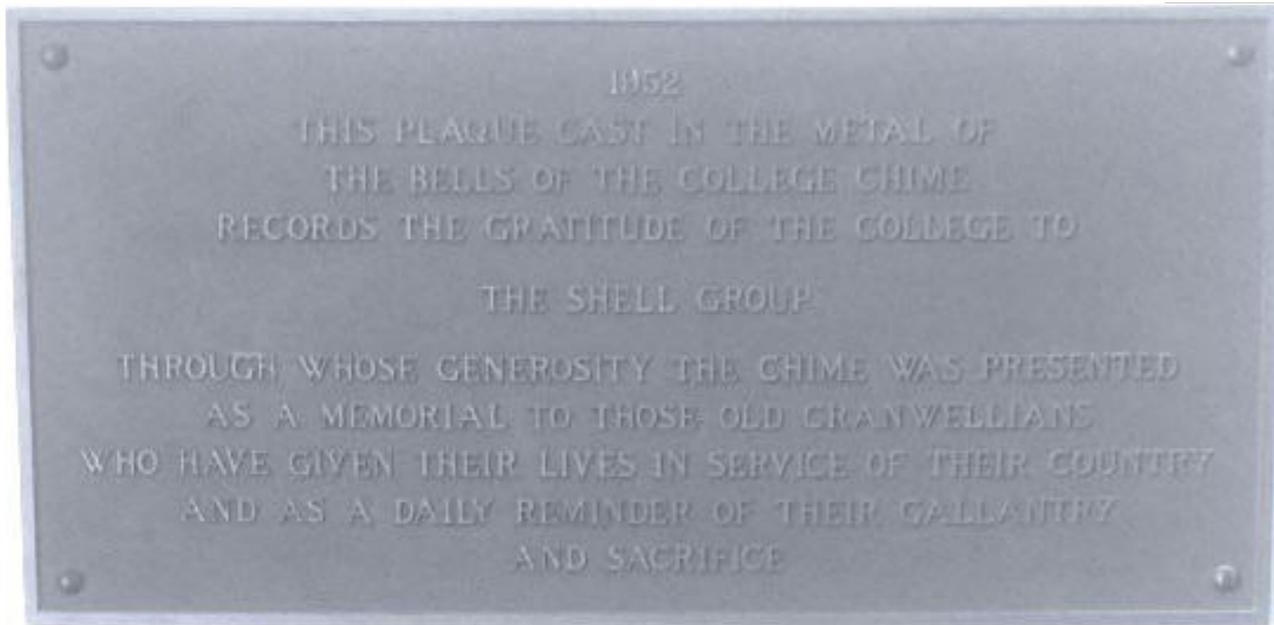
'Wizard Prang'



The Whitley Bomber which crashed at Cranwell on 18 March 1942 caused the only damage to College Hall throughout the war period. The three crew members of the aircraft were sadly killed in the accident, but the personnel who would have been sleeping in the building later that night were spared injury as they were at the cinema at the time of the crash. The pictures show the incident itself and the various stages of repair to the College buildings. The brass engine plate recovered from the wreckage of the aircraft is also displayed.



Bell Chimes donated by Shell

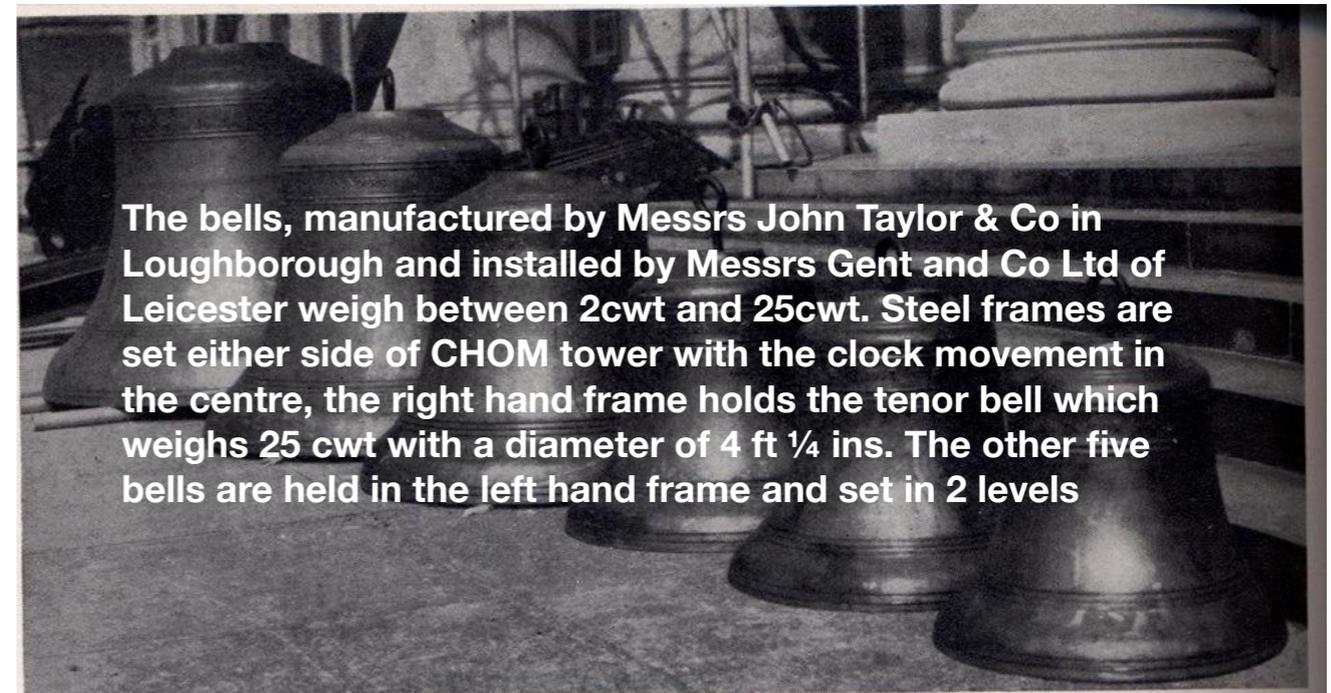


1952

**THIS PLAQUE CAST IN THE METAL OF
THE BELLS OF THE COLLEGE CHIME
RECORDS THE GRATITUDE OF THE COLLEGE TO**

THE SHELL GROUP

**THROUGH WHOSE GENEROSITY THE CHIME WAS PRESENTED
AS A MEMORIAL TO THOSE OLD CRANWELLIANS
WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY
AND AS A DAILY REMINDER OF THEIR GALLANTRY
AND SACRIFICE**



The bells, manufactured by Messrs John Taylor & Co in Loughborough and installed by Messrs Gent and Co Ltd of Leicester weigh between 2cwt and 25cwt. Steel frames are set either side of CHOM tower with the clock movement in the centre, the right hand frame holds the tenor bell which weighs 25 cwt with a diameter of 4 ft ¼ ins. The other five bells are held in the left hand frame and set in 2 levels

Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader CBE DSO* DFC*
Flight Cadet 1928-30

Managing Director of Shell Aviation when the Shell Group presented the College Chime
31 July 1952

The Keeper of the Lighthouse



The cupola over the RAF College main hall houses the last operational aerial lighthouse in the UK, a legacy from days when RNAS aircraft operated between the east coast and Cranwell (HMS Daedalus).

In the 1920s and 30s, ahead of radio navigation aids, a network of aerial lighthouses had been set up to guide aircraft at night. In the dome is a light, which, in the early days, could be seen as far as thirty miles away as the UK's most inland lighthouse. The modern light is not so powerful and scans at 15 rpm.

To this day, the Commandant of the College assumes the responsibilities as 'Keeper of the Lighthouse'.



Air Commodore Suraya A Marshall ADC MA LLB RAF

The Queen's Colour for the RAF College



The heraldic portrait of the Queen's Colour is on the East Wall of the Rotunda. The actual colour is held by a large bronze eagle, donated by Sir Philip Sassoon - Secretary of State for Air 1933 - at the west end of the Dining Room.



HM the Queen has been gracious to award and renew the colour on five occasions. The first colour presented by HM The Queen in 1960 hangs in the Church of St Michael and All Angels, the College Chapel. The current colour was presented by HRH Prince Edward in 2016.



Graduation Parade - "The End of the Beginning"



Lincolnshire Poacher

AIDA slow march

Auld Lang Syne