

RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL “FIRST IMPRESSIONS”



A Summary of Inputs from Cadets
February 1920 - February 2020

Introduction

When cadets enter the RAF College for the first time, it dawns on them just what a life-changing career decision they have made.

Notwithstanding the strenuous training yet to be “enjoyed”, they are confronted by the sheer aura of a College building - the epicentre of the RAF’s spiritual home - and all the history it represents. The names and cherished reputations of Trenchard, Bader, Whittle, Lawrence and many more precede the new cadets, who must wonder what Cranwell life holds in store for them.

Now and then, the experiences of cadet life have been captured and published in the College Journey whose editions have been issued throughout the 100 year history of the College. This album compiles many of the anecdotes that passed the editor’s scrutiny. Some are serious, some lighthearted and some even a little irreverent - such is life when under training.

We offer them here to share some of the experiences of cadets under training who, eventually, graduate with pride at the oldest and, we would claim, finest air force academy in the world.

The 'Forbidden' Carpet of College Hall



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.

September 1920 - First Impressions (1)

CRANWELL : AN IMPRESSION.

It depends so much upon your point of view : from that of the Fleet Street journalist so anxious to save his country's money it looks like one of those gorgeous, cloud-capped palaces in "The Golden Age" or "Dream-Days"; from the point of view of a man walking out from Sleaford or Ancaster on a bleak March morning it represents the nadir of existence, something unbelievably harsh and ugly and inaccessible . . . that lighter-than-air shed gets up and walks towards you and away from you like some ogre with a perverted sense of humour; to the hunting man riding over the soft down in the fast fading light after a day of heaven in the open it means a hot bath, comfort, food and drink, someone to tell the day's wild joys to; to the unimaginative—if the unimaginative can see at all—it looks like a joke, a lot of brick buildings dropped on one side of a wood, a lot of black wooden huts on another side of a wood, a modern country house in a wood, a grotesquely large black shed (you can never fail to see that) well away from a wood, a target, a haystack, a railway station, a lot of signposts, a post-office, and a running track. It is just a ridiculous toy bought by some unthinking Olympian for his giant or Titan babies to play with; the aeroplanes are, of course, his clockwork dragon-flies—every journalist has to say that sooner or later, so I might as well let it slip out now while I remember it.

From the point of view of— But I might go on like this for ever. What is the point of view of every man you have ever brought to it? Isn't it (sickeningly) the same?

"My hat!" he says. "This takes me back; this is an Indian hill station. . . . I can smell —"

"What can you smell?" you ask suspiciously.

He forgets to answer.

"But, my God! what a wind! Can't you fly without an accompanying gale?"

You point out pityingly that it is just possible. He doesn't listen.

"But healthy," he goes on. "Good heavens! you ought to be 'full out' here."

You tell him acidly that this is not Maidenhead, Ascot, or even Goodwood.

"You won't see the cream of England's youth lying in perfectly creased flannels on the greensward fanning themselves in the shimmering heat, if that's what you want," you grunt.

"A bit away from things, isn't it?" he goes on, soaring from platitude to platitude.

"It depends upon what you mean by 'things,'" you retort. "There are quite a lot of aeroplanes."

"Yes, I suppose you come here to fly," he continues.

"Well, as the fishing here isn't frightfully good, we do that sometimes," you moan.

"Yes—but after work . . . you can't fly all day."

By this time you are tired of answering questions.

"Follow me," you say.

He follows; after two hours' steady walking he sinks to the ground.

"I must have a drink," he gasps.

"But I haven't shown you anything yet: there are the swimming-baths, the squash courts, the fives courts, the tennis courts, the hard courts, the billiard-room, the wireless place, the canteen . . ."

"Oh, shut up!" he replies irritably. "We have lifts in London . . ."

"Which reminds me that I forgot to show you the kitchen and the parade ground."

"All right! all right!" he says. "I retract everything: this is a service flat with all modern conveniences; this is . . . oh, anything you like—but why do you try to pretend that you are in a wilderness when you're really a completely organized and very flourishing city?"

"I've not pretended any such thing," I said. "It's the country."

"Yes," he muses; "I believe you're right. They told me Lincolnshire was dull and flat."

"If by dull you mean a county which never looks the same for two minutes . . ."

"And flat with that pull up from Caythorpe . . . yes, we're an inaccurate race."

He settles down to his drink, and falls asleep in the middle of his next question. But what do they know of Cranwell who only Cranwell know?

To realize the endless variety and charm (yes, I repeat, charm—I hated it once) of Cranwell you must explore.

You must go out with the Beagles and the Blankney and the Belvoir, and get lost. If you have any historic sense, you'll rush through the centuries at incredible speed; you'll dash across a road, and see right and left a wide grassy straightness as far as the eye can see either way—Roman—you'll catch sight of a name on a signpost, "Skirth" or some such quaintness—Danish, pure Danish. You'll see an aged face of a workman standing as still as a stone as you flit past. One look, and your mind will hark back—hark back to something remote and precious, and well-nigh lost elsewhere. You may not be much of an archæologist, but in so far as you love this land at all you can't help being proud of something that Time hasn't changed and foreigners haven't spoiled. Lincolnshire is pure England.

Comes summer-time, and you wonder (you can't help it) at the wanton riot of colour in front of the Officers' Mess. This a wilderness? It's like Devon.

September 1920 - First Impressions (2)

You push out on foot, on "stink bike" or "push bike," and rediscover the villages, once clipped like a sheep, and bare to all the winds that blow (and there isn't one which spares Lincolnshire), now nestling among full-foliaged trees, their gardens prolific with the good things of life, their inhabitants pleasure-loving and energetic, unspoilt rustics. . . . Have you noticed how they dance in Lincolnshire? Can you ride ten miles on any evening in the week without seeing a game of cricket in progress?

There is hope for England yet if all her countryside is like this countryside . . . and what is it all due to? The wind! So that is why Cranwell is where it is, and why we are what we are. The wind!

CRANWELL: ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

THERE is an undercurrent throughout the history of a locality which deeply affects those who are connected with the place, and leaves an impression on their memories which remains more deeply rooted than any visual details, though these all combine to produce the spirit of the place. This undercurrent is evolved from the ideals and enthusiasm of the inhabitants and their scenic surroundings, in which they endeavour to attain the collective and individual desires of the community to which they belong.

When we arrived here early in the year, the scene of grey corrugated iron and large open spaces, whose immensity seemed limitless in the sea of damp fog which surrounded the camp, must have made impressions on us which differed from each other as widely as the individual ideals with which each of us set out. The only thought which appeared to be in any degree common to us all was a red-hot enthusiasm to prove the right of our choice of profession, and to have a share in the building up of the institution of which we were the first members.

Most of us had had difficulties of many kinds in getting to Cranwell, and a feeling of relief was evident in those who collected round the mess fireplaces on that first evening.

During the first few parades by early morning moonlight we must have had the appearance of secret detachments of the Bolshevik army in training, since at first, and for several weeks to come, we paraded in an unbelievable variety of mufti intermingled with naval uniform. Such minor drawbacks as our unairmanlike appearance did not, however, damp our keenness to do our occasionally ludicrous best to assist those officers and instructors who began our training.

The countryside round Cranwell makes a fitting background to the discipline of camp life, its strength and restful relief being typical of the country which we hope to serve. In the winter it is bleak and expansive; the winds and mists give a touch

of northern hardness to the scene, as do the severe and rugged stone walls which are common to this part of the country. There are few evergreens round here, but beech and elm trees wave their naked arms over Cranwell village, and sometimes shake the snow in heavy clouds over the roofs of the cottages.

The Lincolnshire cottages are more often built of grey stone than of red brick; in the winter they are externally chilly and hard to look at, but inside are very habitable.

Even as we have a real winter at Cranwell with rain, wind, and snow, so we have a real English summer. Over what were broad expanses of plough a warm breeze sends green and golden waves over the ripening corn. The landscape appears to be more thickly wooded than in the winter, the thick foliage strengthening the outline of clumps of trees; laburnums and other flowering shrubs blaze from the cool green and restful copper colour of shady trees in garden and wood. Grasslands assume a fresher green, sprinkled with daisies and flooded with buttercups, while small wild roses and honeysuckle hide themselves in the hedges. Even the old stone walls are alive with small flowers peeping from crevices, and insects running over their hot and dusty slopes.

There are places round here full of possibilities for all—those who pursue elusive history along the old Roman road, Ermine Street; those who pursue the still more elusive golf-ball on the Rauceby links; and others who prefer to sit in the shade of hedge or wood, and do nothing more energetic than pursue their own thoughts.

The country gives us fox-hunting and beagling, and the hard, smooth roads unwind beneath the wheels of many motor cycles. In the representative sports we are at present few and inexperienced against the many and experienced, and as yet have our traditions at games to make.

Our camp life may be summed up quite shortly: more opportunity for games than we have time to play, rather more work than we think we can do, the whole leaving us barely sufficient time to tie our G.S. ties for dinner.

We are being trained to make the most of every minute, and our surroundings offer about ten times as many opportunities as those minutes will hold.

The country is a relaxation from, and at the same time a stimulant to, our life in the camp. Those of us who walk, ride, or motor-bicycle round the country are often able to recognize features of the landscape from the air, as old friends whose closer acquaintance we have made before.

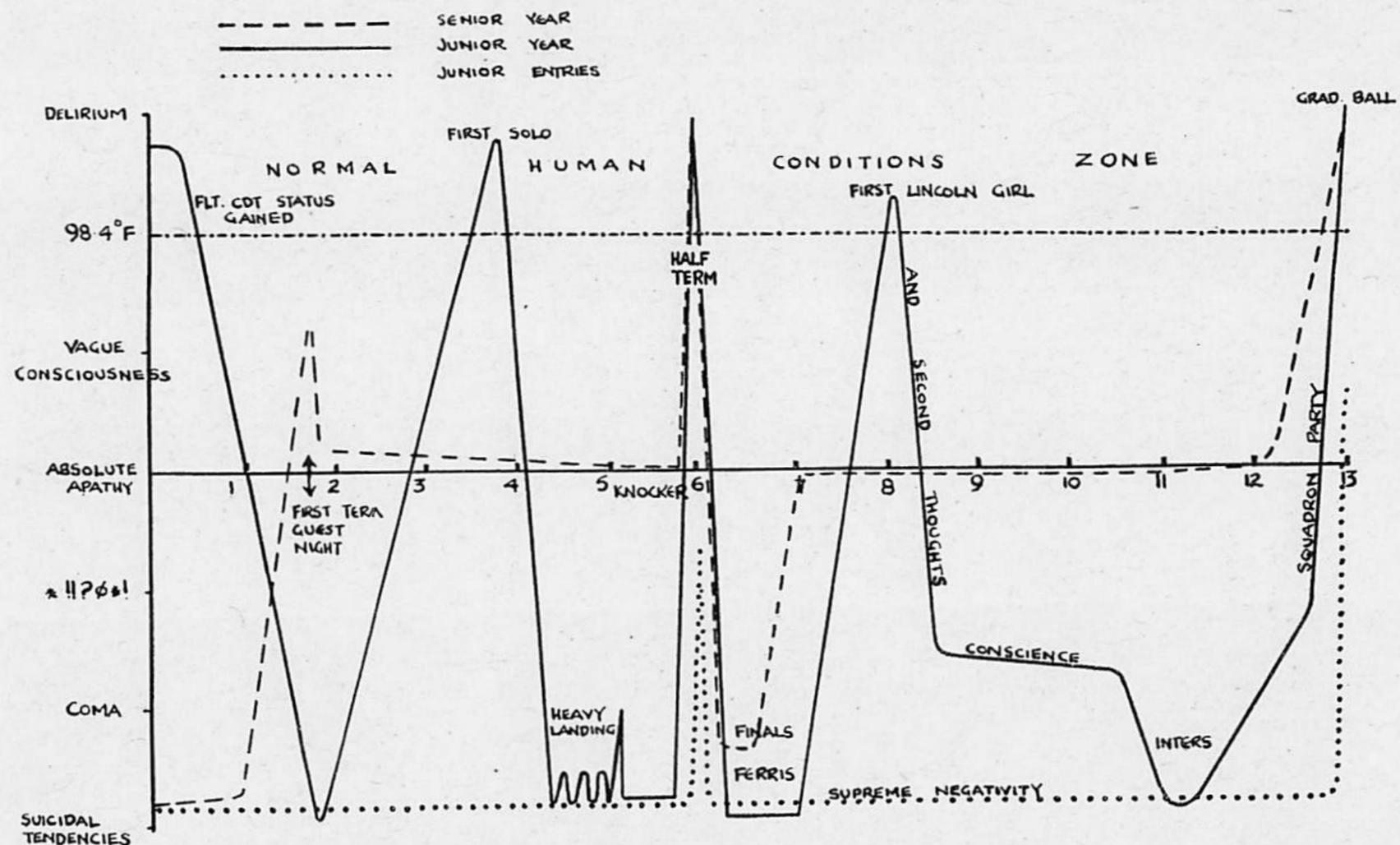
Up here we have an "all-out" winter, an "all-out" summer, and the place itself, with all those living in it, is "all out" to be proved and to attain its ideal of adventure and efficiency.

June 1955 - Life at Cranwell (1)

The Results of an Assessment made by a Board of Unknown Gentlemen on the Life and Natural Habits of the Flight Cadet

These facts have been energetically obtained by a team of research workers who submitted to great danger and hazard in order to obtain accuracy of results. For example, during research work on material for Fig. 3, one member of the team fainted on drill, three got their fingers burnt and a fifth his face slapped.

**Fig. 1: GENERAL ASSESSMENT - I
MORALE IN STAGES v. TERM IN WEEKS**

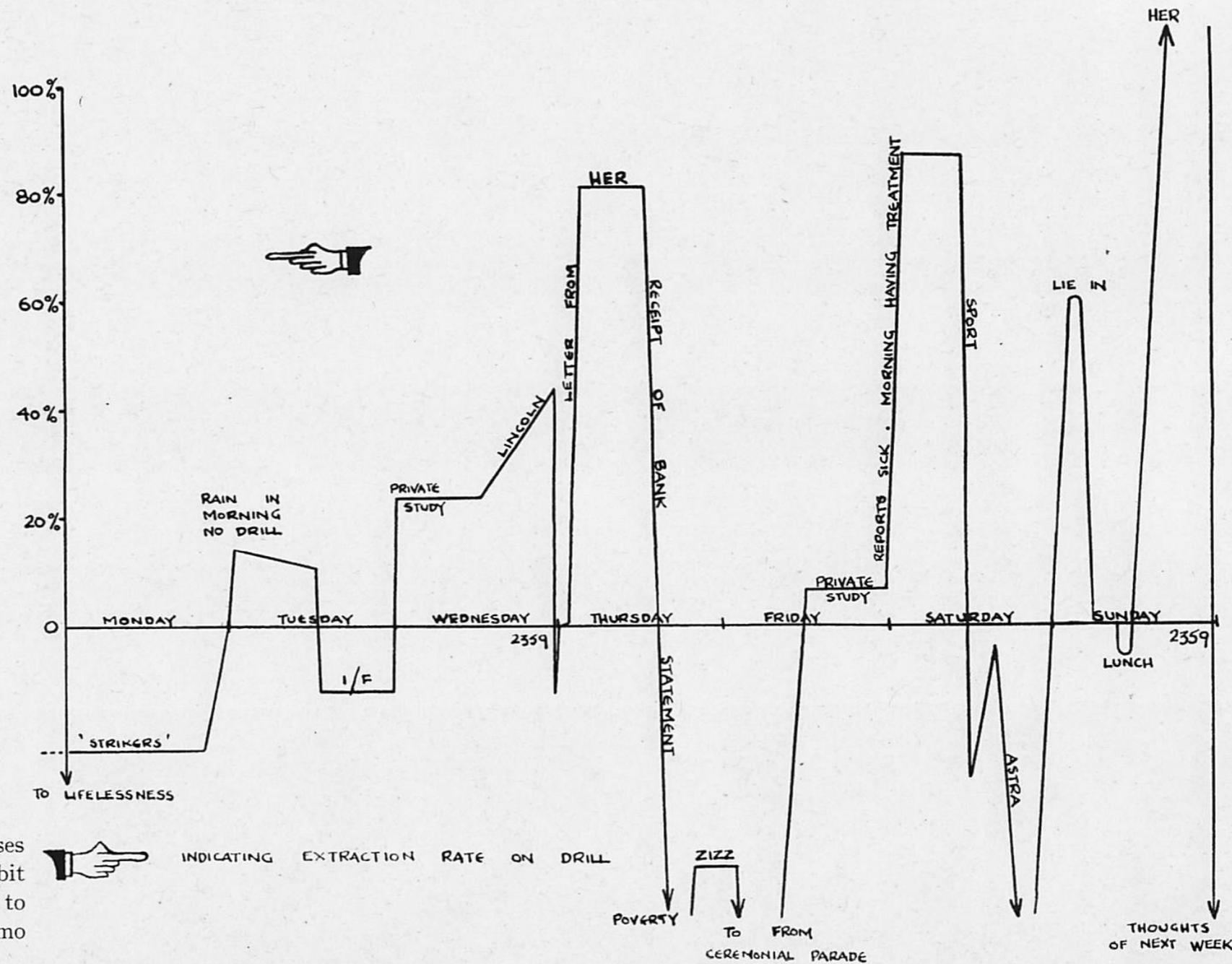


Note: Senior Year graphs are often influenced by a series of purge disturbances from external factors. These reflect considerably on the Junior Year curve.

June 1955 - Life at Cranwell (2)

Fig. 2: GENERAL ASSESSMENT - II

% INCREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE v. WEEKLY EVENTS (per unit Flt Cdt)



Note: Above 85% cases were found to exhibit signs of life similar to those found in Homo Sapiens.

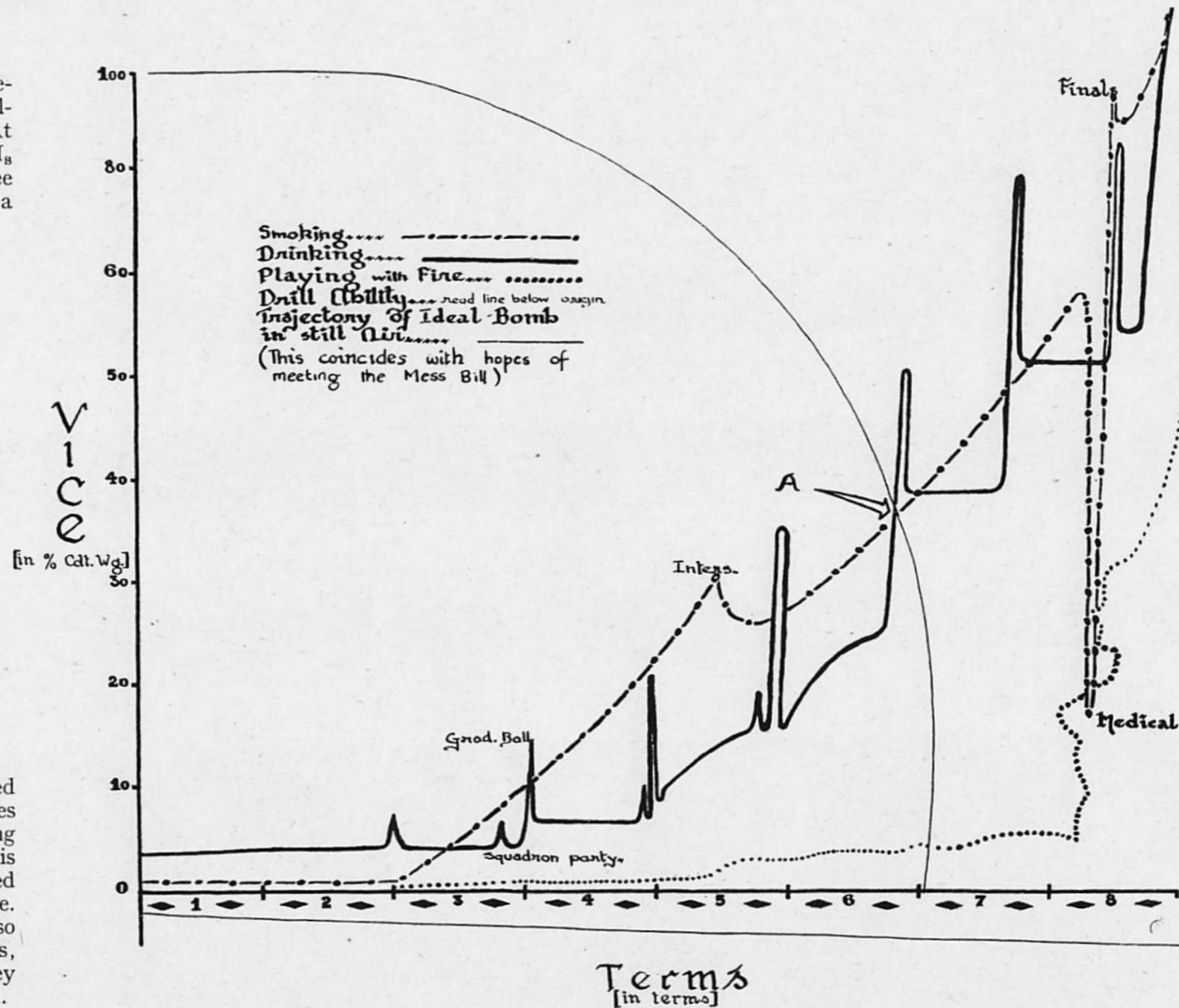


INDICATING EXTRACTION RATE ON DRILL

June 1955 - Life at Cranwell (3)

Fig. 3 : ACTIVE INTERESTS v. COURSE (Plotted as Vice v. Terms)

Note: Point A represents the optimum alcohol-smoke ratio. At this point the I_s reaches its T-T: three sharp hiccups and a puff of smoke result.



Thanks are extended to the external sources who offered interesting information on this subject; it is regretted that it is unprintable. The Board are also indebted to Mavis, Francesca and Shirley for valuable research.

June 1955 - Life at Cranwell (4)

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Fig. 4: DISTANCE/WEAR RATIO (per unit Flt Cdt)

Note: (i) The Ferris Line is obtained by integrating the other curves. The area below this line is directly proportional to energy used and is known as the Bull Area.

(ii) The rapid increase in Senior Entry shoe wear is due to the frantic race to get to coffee break and the ensuing scramble to reach the front of the queue.

(iii) Conversion factor example:

For non-average four-legged Flt Cdt.

$$= \frac{dt}{dw} \cdot \text{Boot} \cdot 4x$$

where

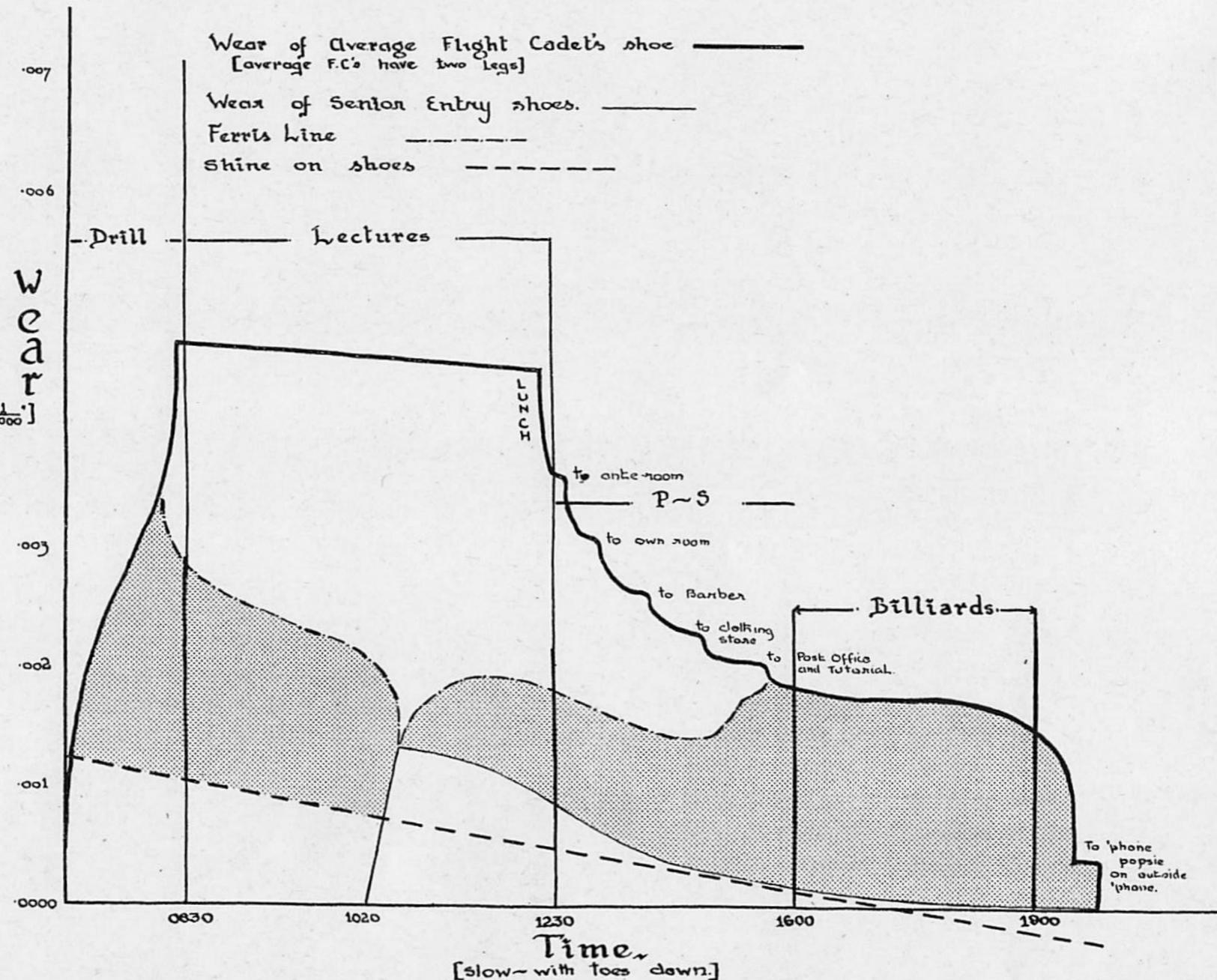
$$dt = dt$$

$$dw = dw$$

$$=$$

$$4 = \text{legs}$$

$$x = \text{footsize in ins. Hg.}$$



The final results of the Board's findings will probably be made public at a later date. This depends entirely upon action taken by Mavis, Francesca and Shirley.

December 1958 - Cadet Wit (1)

Passing-Out Parade of No. 174 Entry

*Speeches by Marshal Rodion Malinovsky and
by the Commandant*

ON the 18th December the Academy welcomed Marshal Rodion Malinovsky as the Reviewing Officer for the graduation parade of No. 174 Entry. The weather was fine, inside, and punctually at 1108 the cadet wing marched on under the command of Senior Commissar Comrade Cadet Z. Z. Kruschev through snow that was only chin high.

A formation of 16 aircraft of Advanced Flying Wing flew past, some with and some without smoke trails—one more proof of the freedom allowed in our people's democracy—as the Reviewing Officer's head, which could just be seen above the snowline, approached the dais.

After the Advance in Review Order, Marshal Malinovsky dug out the Parade Commander and presented him with the Three-Stage Rocket of Honour, the Sputnik Medal for Lunar Studies, and the R. M. Laika Memorial Prize. Watching the presentations carefully was N. S. Kruschev, the father of the prizewinner. The Reviewing Officer went on to make the following speech:

The Reviewing Officer's Address

'It is indeed a great honour for me to be here today and as you know it is customary for the reviewing officer to offer you some few words of advice. Be always on your guard against those detestable bourgeois traits of initiative, resourcefulness and leadership, for these are the arch-enemies of the all-important virtues of comradeship and uniformity. For you know, this is how we of the Free World have so great an advantage. We at the Warsaw Pact H.Q. are proud of the contribution the military forces have made to peace and security, and we are pleased that we have added to the strength, the confidence and the hopes of our peoples. But military requirements are but one contributing factor. We know full well that the great weapon—the great Deterrent—is the strength that springs from the *unity* of our countries.



'This, you see, is where we are so different from those wicked N.A.T.O. countries; take this opportunity of reaffirming your "desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments," your determination "to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization" of your peoples "founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law," and your resolution to contribute your "efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security".'

On the eve of the Passing-Out Parade the Commandant addressed the members of the Senior Entry in a short, touching ceremony.

The Commandant's Address

Igloo 439
Komsomolets Island
Latitude 82°N.

December 1958 - Cadet Wit (2)

ORDER of MERIT



D. G. LUCASTA

Struck down before his goal at the very height of the battle this valiant fighter did not spare himself but took up Chess.

O. U. BAGEROV

Taciturn, unsmiling, Muscle-man First Class of the Soviet Union; his prowess in all realms of sport needs no comment from us.



R. VOLGA-DON

One of our less inhibited comrades who hails from the outer provinces. His greatest ambition at the moment is to travel; he should go far.

C. U. LAITA

Missile marksman Laita, who in private life is no mean organist, introduced the mortar into the Wild-fowling Section and bagged 7½ geese, 3 wolves and 2 gamewardens.



IVAN ORFULITCH

This photograph belies the towering build of this slim Norseman from the Pripet marshes. All life's difficulties he takes in his long, loping stride.

Z. Z. KRUSCHEV

Like his father he has gone Secretarial and there is that certain something about his looks that makes one think he is set for success.



Spring 1964 - Cranwell Past & Present (1)



CRANWELL PAST and PRESENT

*The following three articles represent
the views of three generations and
their impressions of life at the College.*

Spring 1964 - Cranwell Past & Present (2)

Recollections of 'X' Entry 1930

When I was a cadet, and perhaps this still applies, the Squadron you were in was more important than your Entry. Now, however, after many years, the ex-cadets with whom I keep in touch and those best remembered are not the ones who were in 'A' or 'B' or 'C' Squadron, but those who arrived at and left Cranwell at the same time as myself — "X" Entry.

A few reflections on our antics may be of interest to the present generation at Cranwell because, in spite of changes over the years in syllabi, types of aircraft, makes of car etc., what cadets think and what they get up to probably has not really changed very much. If some very senior officers recognise themselves in what follows I hope they will not take offence, and perhaps the use of first names only will provide sufficient anonymity to preserve the dignity of their present ranks.

Like the current syllabus, training was divided into flying, officer training and academics and, to cadets ancient and modern, that remains the order of their importance.

One's first solo is always a great occasion, but I remember feeling somewhat disappointed. My instructor had got me (in seven hours — rather a long time then) to a state where there was little chance of anything going wrong, and all I remember about it was faint surprise at not seeing his head in front of me. Otherwise this epic occasion passed off quite uneventfully and I do not recall any noteworthy incidents. From first solo onwards, Dicky was the best pilot on the course and I think everyone knew this and it was no surprise when he won the flying prize. However, most of us looked on ourselves as the next best pilot! For two years I shared instructors, aeroplanes, flying lockers, cars and even, on occasions, girl friends with John. It followed therefore that, whenever we were flying solo at the same time, we would try a dog-fight, or some rather floppy formation flying. It was fairly harmless, but not always so. One of the tricks was to come in low over the hangars and see who could land in the shortest space. The excitement made us forget the lethality of a hangar when hit by an aeroplane and some of our approaches could not have missed by more than a couple of feet. It was very exciting until we were caught and given an imperial rocket by the C.F.I. Low flying was always the best fun, of course, then as now. The low flying area was bounded by Ermine Street, the railway from Ancaster to Sleaford and the Raucebys — very small by present day standards but quite big enough for our Tutors.

Instructors then, as now, varied greatly. I was lucky and had a Flying Officer not long out of Cranwell. He nursed me along gently and seemed to enjoy it as much as I did. Others, having clambered in, would tell you what to do and the whole sortie could go by without another word being said. Yet others used to roar down the gosport tubes using language that even we cadets hadn't heard before. I for one, used to be quite overcome and the louder the roar the worse I flew. However, he happened only when Duggy was on leave or Orderly Officer or something, and so I survived. So did he and now he's an Air Marshal, and mellower than of yore. My most embarrassing moment occurred just before taking off on my first cross country. I opened the throttle, but instead of moving forward the aircraft tipped gently on to its nose — just in front of the hangar. Even now I have a picture, taken by Monty from inside the hangar, of Louis Dickens and Arthur Sweeney pointing wildly at my aircraft, the latter's large moustache slightly blurred — presumably because it was quivering with rage. I need hardly add that I had tried to take off with the brakes on.

Advanced flying in the Hart and Audax was much more exciting than the Tutor, but best of all was the Fury, on which we all did about 10 hours. Chasing round cu-nims in any aircraft is wonderful but in a Fury it was pure joy and more than confirmed for me that flying was, at that time and for many years to come, all that really mattered.

Towards the end of the last month the main excitement was, of course, postings. The choice was Army Co-op, light bombers, flying boats or fighters. Then, as now, most cadets wanted to go on fighters, and most were disappointed. John and I both plumped for light bombers and found ourselves posted to an airfield about 30 miles away — so the lights of Nottingham continued to beckon us on Saturday nights as they had done for the last two years. I never had cause to regret the choice of either role or location.

In the middle of our last term we all went to Penrhos for practice camp — a wonderful month with splendid weather. The camp was marred only by the death of an airman, who had wandered behind a target when one of us was firing, and by the non-availability of Dilys, in the Veynol Hotel at Abersoch. We had been warned off her on arrival by the M.O. However we discovered later that the warning was not due to any weakness in Dilys's health, but because he had lined her up himself and didn't want any cadets snooping round. As far as I remember we found that Dilys was not the only pebble on the beach.

Officer, or Leadership, Training was characterised mostly by drill, or rather that is what I remember most. As if we didn't have enough, I foolishly added to the total by spending quite a few hours on jankers for various misdemeanours but never, I might add, because of faults in uniform, or dirty boots or wrongly tied puttees. George Priestly was an "ace" batman and I don't recall an occasion when he let us on to parade with a fault in our dress. But, as with the other batmen, his value didn't stop there. I think I learnt as much about the Service and about how to be a good officer from George as I ever did from any lecture or any instructor; in fact it was probably due to his efforts that I became a Corporal. There must be many hundreds of ex-cadets who have every reason to be similarly grateful to the College batmen and staff, and one must pay a very sincere tribute to them for their devoted service.

Sport, of course, has always played a very great part in the syllabus and apart from the rigger, which was the main interest, and all the other games, few of us are likely to forget the cross country or first term boxing. I was never any good at either and dreaded both. In the event the cross country wasn't too bad as I wasn't last, as I thought I would be, and thinking back, perhaps the boxing was quite good fun too. At the time, though, the excitement and nervousness weren't pleasant; moreover it was quite apparent that Denis could box whereas I couldn't. Naturally he beat me up but I well remember the feeling of relief when at the end I was still on my feet and none the worse except for a red nose.

The high light, of course, is the final passing-out parade, which in those days was held in the most unsuitable circumstances, on the morning after the Graduation Ball. For this reason there are probably few of us who recall very much about it, except the waves of nausea, and certainly I can't recall who the Reviewing Officer was, or what he said. However, there were other memorable parades too; between them Flt. Lt. Halahan and Mr. Digby saw to that, but perhaps the most memorable was the one when the Commandant turned up on a horse, wearing mess kit trousers. It was all very impressive. In those days the flag pole was on the Orange instead of up by the clock tower and I suppose the change was brought about because of the strange objects which regularly appeared at the masthead.

In academics, I was always struggling, especially in Physics and related subjects. Perhaps if we had paid more attention to "Coulomb" and to Mr. Pytches we would all be much cleverer but there was too much diversion in the form of ink pellets, seeing how many times you could walk round the room in a period, and things like that, to be able to concentrate. My interests were more on the "Prof.'s" side of the house and the appearance, in recent years, of films, plays and books about Lawrence of Arabia bring to mind the intensity and the frequency of "Prof.'s" lectures and discussions about this gentleman. It was not long after "A/C Shaw" had been killed and possibly he was still hot news at the time. Anyway we certainly had our fill of him. The other instructor whom few will forget is the one who taught in Eddy Steddy's empire, the instructional workshops. His lectures and demonstrations were so liberally larded with pornographic references that it was difficult to realise that it was lathes, or engines, or patching a flying boat's hull, that we were supposed to be learning about. The workshops were the scene of another of my more unsuccessful accomplishments. We used to be given a large lump of metal and told to machine it into a perfect cube. The number of times I had to throw away a thing that looked like a rather withered pea and ask for another lump led the instructor to suspect me of hoarding.

It is natural perhaps that many of one's recollections concern off duty activities. Apart from flying, the main preoccupations of most cadets are cars and girl friends and we were no exception. My first car was a 1929 Austin 7 "Chummy" — open of course. It cost £25, quite a lot in those days, and I took delivery on the last day of the first term, intending to drive with Michael down to his home in Halberton, near Tiverton in Devon. My father suggested that we should stop off at my home, 60 miles away, for the night but much to his consternation we

Spring 1964 - Cranwell Past & Present (3)

decided to press on. With hood down, flying helmets and goggles on, and wrapped in rugs we bored on through the night at a steady 30 knots arriving, to our surprise, sometime before dawn. It was an epic journey and the first of many in that splendid car. It did a routine run, for instance, to Nottingham on Saturday nights and lent John and me considerable prestige in our efforts to impress in the "Vic." and the "Palais." The girls we talked into a spin are probably married by now and wondering when they are going to be grandmothers, or warning their younger daughters not to go out with cadets. The diminutiveness of the car did pay off once. At 2 a.m. one morning John and I ran out of petrol five miles from Grantham and we had to push it into the town. I slept through the sermon in Church next day.

My next car was the same model but the mudguards had been replaced by the cycle type, the back had been cut off in a slope and the whole painted scarlet and silver. It was beautiful. I went to London with Peter to collect it. By the time we got to Hatfield, one mudguard had fallen off; by Biggleswade the other was lying with it on the front seat, and the rear lights had failed. In Stamford the car stopped and nothing we could do would get it going. Having to be on Church parade in a few hours time, I removed my scarf and Pete used it as a tow rope to haul me ignominiously back to Cranwell. I still have the scarf — or rather my son has — and it's about ten feet long instead of its original five.

The more wealthy cadets used to indulge in proper sports cars and some of them were gorgeous to behold. Neddy's Amilcar for one, or Jim's Triumph, or the more home made ones. Unfortunately many of them ended upside down on top of their owners and, thinking back, it is incredible that there were not many more serious injuries than there were. The Leadenham straight was ideal for speed runs and on one occasion we had a splendid hill climb in Belton Park. What with these, the normal hazards, and the result of Saturday night swoops into Nottingham, Byard's Leap and Troop's Garage in Leadenham were seldom short of trade.

In the College anterooms in those early days, it seemed to be the custom to spend most of the time wrestling on the floor, or throwing people up to the ceiling in a carpet. Each entry had one half of an anteroom and if you strayed into the half that wasn't yours you were for it. We used to dine in, in mess kit, on four nights a week. Naturally these became rather a bore and we had to resort to various methods of relieving the tedium. One seemed to consist, as far as I can remember in hissing Mr. Curt when he stood at the end of the table and rolled up the long felt mat on which the plates were laid (no dinner mats and candelabra in those days!). Another was to heat the handle of the sugar spoon under the cigarette lighter and pass it hurriedly down the table. It was all fairly childish, but without malice, and the jokes played now are probably far more enterprising, if equally without malice.

The foregoing reminiscences may have given the impression that life at Cranwell, in those days was all play and very little work. This was not so, of course. We had to work jolly hard, but lectures, private study, exams, and the like are not the sort of things which you recall years later, so it is difficult to write about them. However, one thing is quite clear. Cadets today have much more to learn and they learn it much better than we did. And anyone who says that Cranwell cadets are not what they used to be is quite right — they're a great improvement on their predecessors.

And now as I look at the Entry photograph I see that of the 31 cadets in the Group, 15 were killed in the war, 8 have retired since and only 8 remain in the service, 4 of whom have reached air rank. I sincerely hope that entries now at Cranwell do not lose so many of their friends, and that more of them are left to "reach the highest ranks."

First Impressions of Cranwell

1963

Like characters in an ancient gods play, the group at the doors of Sleaford railway station stared gloomily at the dirty piles of snow, at the locked public house, and at the lifeless grey coach parked at the side of the road. All wore hats. Some smoked. Small knots exchanged names and backgrounds around one of the group, otherwise similar but infinitely superior by virtue of one term's lifetime of experience, and listened agog to his horrific descriptions of what lay ahead for them.

The leaden blue-grey coach received them, two pairs of eyes within studying them intently. The coach drove off into the gathering dusk. As they travelled towards Cranwell, the darkness, the snow, and the endless twist of the road destroyed all sense of directions. During the next six weeks few of them left the camp, and this first journey left them without geographical references — they remained "somewhere in Lincolnshire." During this period of isolation, their attitude changed from that of civilians, for some reason unknown to them dressed in blue, to that of members of the Royal Air Force. At first they were hurt when, in traditional fashion, an N.C.O. looked them up and down: "Gentlemen, you're wearing a blue uniform, cap, a nice pair of shiny boots," (what cruel thanks for those painful first steps in 'bulling'), "in fact, you look like flight cadets — but you aren't!" Later, they came to realise the truth of this, when they ceased to resent the ceaseless, omnipresent, omniscient 'system'; when they passed from resentment to resignation to the indignities of 'crowing' (though this process was to drive a long-lasting wedge between the two junior entries); when they were finally deemed to have passed through the initiation into this complicated little society.

Perhaps the greatest impression made upon the group was the intermittent tempo of their first two weeks. Short periods of violent activity were separated by long periods of inactivity made the more agonizing by the thought of what still remained to be done in that far-off "other side of the camp." Other fleeting memories: the first ceremonial parade, the wind so cold that the music was a hideous torture and the apparently immaculate drill which yet left seasoned N.C.Os. replete with fury; the first 'Guest Night' — an hour of stilted, music-accompanied small talk followed by several hours of unbridled and bloody hooliganism, mess games which are horrifying in the chill of the morning after, but which in the heat of the moment seem the only natural expression of the cheerfulness of the occasion; the start of the academic programme, received with mixed feelings ("surely we left this behind at school" or "at last we have something definite to do, a target to aim for"); the first sight of jets streaking over the airfield stirring the deep-seated longing for the air which has excited every generation from the ancient world up until now. (Why else does man traditionally site his gods in the sky, and identify his hell with the downward pull of gravity?); sport at Cranwell associated with the eager recruitment by sports captains keen to pin down an extra head to their 'captain's lists'; the Junior Mess — meals taken in haste to the eternal cacophony of the gramophone.

All this time the strange conflict of feeling: "We are made to jump around at anybody's behest; we are the lowest of the low, and are treated as such; by all logic we should hate this — but we are enjoying it: why?" The answer lies somewhere in the fact that we were all working together to achieve a definite end; we were all part of a larger, far larger, organisation than the Royal Air Force College, but an organisation just as closely knit, and with the same over-riding purpose viz. the protection of this irregular splash of green on blue whose sons we are, and whom, with the help of our experience and whatever deity may exist, we wish to serve as loyal sons. Cranwell is a form of human production line: we arrive as the raw materials, and leave as the finished product. Not for many years will we know the meaning and significance of each and every process, but when we do we shall be grateful for them.

Spring 1964 - Cranwell Past & Present (4)

1919
to
1963

For 44 years Mr. Frederick Green, B.E.M., known to hundreds of flight cadets as "Jimmy," was head batman of "B" Squadron Royal Air Force College, Cranwell. He retired in January and, in an interview with AIR CLUES, gave a few of his impressions of life at the College.

The other day as we talked in "Jimmy" Green's pleasant bungalow in Cranwell village, Provost T.4s were overhead on their approach to the airfield just a stone's throw away. The noise of the aircraft reminded Mr. Green and his wife, Dorothy, of the "hairy" days of the 1930s when they had the bungalow built. Then the pilots would often seek out Jimmy at the College and suggest that he warned his wife to take in the washing which they had spotted on Finals — rain was on the way.

It was typical of the friendly relations which existed between the head batman and the young cadets. In fact, that mutual friendliness is one of his main impressions of life at Cranwell over the years. It still gives him pleasure to know that he was able to help so many cadets over their first hurdles of Service life; and the cadets have always looked to him as a friend and guide. Many of his "charges" have risen to high rank in the Service and the many letters he has received from them over the years show how much they valued his early care.

Were those cadets of the early thirties any different, as viewed by their batman, to the cadets of the jet age? "No different, really," emphasises Jimmy. "They are still a gay crowd and a great company of men. They all have their own little ways, which we have to get used to while they settle in, and you couldn't hope to meet a fitter bunch of chaps anywhere."

So many cadets have passed through his hands that today he finds it hard to recall many by name. But he never forgets their faces. Some return to the College for Reviews and special ceremonial occasions. "They all remember me and ask how I'm getting on," he confided. "They are just as friendly as they always were no matter how high their rank."

It was on 2nd February, 1920, that Mr. Frederick Green, recently released from service with a famous British cavalry regiment, presented himself for duty at the College. He was one of 11 civilians who had applied for jobs at Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and were sent on to Cranwell for duty.

Three days after his arrival, the Royal Air Force College was opened, on 5th February. There were 50 flight cadets in the first intake, he recalls, made up of 25 Sub-Lieutenants and Midshipmen and 25 new R.A.F. entrants.

A feature of the training was that the Royal Navy personnel spent only a year at the College before being posted to squadrons, while the course lasted two years for other cadets. Aircraft in use at that time included the Avro 504J, popularly known as the Mono-Avro (it had a 100h.p. Gnome Monosoupape engine), and two famous aircraft he had first seen on active service with the 11th Hussars in France — the Bristol Fighter and the Sopwith Snipe. Total flying time up to wings standard was 60 hours.

In place of today's impressive buildings there were the original hangars and tin huts put up in 1915 for the Royal Naval Air Service, when the airfield was known as H.M.S. Daedalus.

Mr. Green recalls that cadets had a small room at the end of each hut which was used as a study. There were also rather down-to-earth washing facilities, and one of the batman's duties, he remembers, was to keep the fires in the huts going all night during the winter to prevent the water pipes from freezing. It could be pretty cold and many times he found cadets' shoes frozen to the floor when starting his duties in the morning.

In the tradition of good batmen, Mr. Green was suitably reticent about some of his more amusing recollections of cadet life. "Some of them might not like to be reminded of them

today," he said with a chuckle. But he did pass on one story of the time when 50 hurricane lamps went missing from road works in Boston one evening. Unaccountably these turned up in the cadets' rooms. Trouble ahead, thought Mr. Green, and decided to take action. Unknown to the sleeping cadets the lamps found their way in the dead of night to a disused stores hut. The odd thing about it, Mr. Green assured the police next morning — nobody seemed to know how they got there!

One of his most treasured memories is of the laying of the foundation stone for the new College building in 1929 when Lord Trenchard officiated. Mr. Green had a ringside view of the ceremony from a ground floor window.

In 1940 Mr. Green felt he should do his bit in the war, so he joined the R.A.F. — as a batman, of course. But the College decided it could not do without him and he was promptly posted to Cranwell, this time as Corporal Green. When the war was over he continued to do the same job as a civilian.

He is particularly proud of the fact that two of "his" cadets became Chiefs of the Air Staff — Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Dermot Boyle, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., K.B.E., A.F.C., and Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Thomas Pike, G.C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C. Other of his "charges" who rose to high rank include Air Chief Marshal Sir Edmund Hudleston, G.C.B., C.B.E., Air Chief Marshal Sir Theodore McEvoy, K.C.B., C.B.E., Air Chief Marshal The Earl of Bandon, D.S.O., G.B.E., C.B., C.V.O., Air Marshal Sir Douglas McFadyen, K.C.B., C.B.E., and Air Marshal Sir George Beamish, K.C.B., C.B.E.

At a presentation ceremony on 24th January Air Commodore M. D. Lyne, A.F.C., the Commandant, presented a silver salver to Mr. Green on behalf of the Old Cranwellian's Association. It is inscribed: "With affection and gratitude for 44 years loyal service to the Royal Air Force College." Mr. Green was also presented with a barometer from the cadets of "B" Squadron and a gold watch from the civilian staff.

Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Thomas Pike sent the following signal to Air Commodore Lyne: "Please pass the following message to Mr. J. Green. On the occasion of your retirement after such long and splendid service with the Royal Air Force I join with the many officers serving in this Command in sending you our thanks for all that you have done in the past and every good wish for your happiness and prosperity in the future."



1981 - 54 IOT's Journal Article (1)

Department of Initial Officer Training – personal views by Officer Cadets on No 54 Initial Officer Training Course

REFLECTION (by Officer Cadet P Devereux)

On graduation day of No 54 Initial Officer Training Course (IOTC) I will be 45 years and one month old, and as I walk up the steps into the College Hall for the first time I can reflect on the events that have led me to this memorable day. I will be following directly in the footsteps of some very illustrious officers, who have, no doubt, trodden this same path. The RAF College, Cranwell, and the Apprentice Training School at Halton are perhaps the 2 most solid material memorials to the founder of the RAF, Lord Trenchard. Since the formation of the RAF on 1 April 1918, there have been many changes to the structure of the RAF. In later years there have been swingeing defence cuts by different governments, but over the years both Halton and Cranwell have been relatively untouched by all the changes. Even RAF stations that are synonymous with the history of this country in the last 30 years, for example RAF Kenley and RAF Biggin Hill, have been

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closed, or run down to such an extent that they are now forgotten by the majority of the people. So in a very small way I feel my presence at the RAF College under training as an officer cadet and subsequently as a commissioned officer will make me a very small part of RAF history.

A walk through the corridors of College Hall among the portraits of the Marshals of the RAF, the photographs and portraits of previous Commandants and the photographs of all previous flight cadets and officer cadets is like looking through the pages of the history of the RAF. What a tradition to follow. I doubt very much whether I will be able to make as much of a contribution to aviation as Sir Frank Whittle, but I will endeavour to apply as much diligence to honouring the commands on my commissioning parchment as he did. Perhaps in 1982, when the efficiency of the Service is judged by its ability to manage cost-effectively expensive high technology systems, I might be able to

make a different type of contribution to the future of the Service. The 18-week IOTC prior to commissioning has been the most physically demanding I have ever been on. Tired legs and an aching back tell me that there was too much physical exercise in the syllabus.

Pride will not let me admit that perhaps I was just a little too old to try it at my time of life. The day after, however, I am able to look at it objectively and realise that it is used to good effect to bring out latent leadership qualities in students and slowly but definitely turn them from enthusiastic amateurs into disciplined military-minded people, who will eventually be commissioned officers.

My regret is that I did not apply for a

commission a lot earlier than I did. My previous service has taken me from Belize to Hong Kong, from Benbecula to Zambia, but even the thrill of travel to exotic and not so exotic countries cannot beat the thrill of the final graduation parade. Even as a member of the support squadron on 2 previous occasions, the thrill of being on the parade is one that only very few are privileged to experience. After graduation, I am looking forward to the professional training element of the course before I take my first post as a junior engineer officer on my first unit. The chances of overseas travel now seem very remote but, wherever I am posted, I am looking forward with eager anticipation to the challenge of a new, if shorter, career as a commissioned officer.

1981 - 54 IOT's Journal Article (2)

IMPRESSIONS OF CAMP 2 - TACTICAL LEADERSHIP CAMP (By Student Officer S E Hobson WRAF)

Having spent 4 years at college as a language student, followed by a relaxed year teaching English in the south of France, Cranwell came as rather a shock to the system, the greatest shock of all definitely being Camp 2, the tactical leadership camp. Little wonder there is no mention of it in any of the glossy publications enticing young ladies to make a career with the Royal Air Force. However, having completed Camp 2, I now intend to outline some of the aspects of the camp that made an impression on me.

During the 2 weeks before Camp 2, the RAF Regiment spent 2 or 3 days at Cranwell explaining 'O' Groups, warning orders, field signals and all the other useful information we would need. It all sounded terribly specialised and it was very difficult to imagine oneself in a position to use this information competently.

At Stanford Training Area, the RAF Regiment again gave us training in tactics, which still seemed totally confusing. I could never imagine myself following fire control orders with any effectiveness, let alone actually controlling a section by using them. As it was, the WRAF were at a disadvantage owing to the 'small problem' of not actually having anything to fire with. One tended to feel a little silly shouting 'Bang Bang' and trying to look threateningly military with a stick while all the men were brandishing self-loading rifles and machine guns, which make real battle noises. However, once the assessment phase of camp began, warning orders, O Groups, field signals and fire

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control orders all began to make sense, and there was more of a point to crawling through the undergrowth and taking up 'all-round defence' when there was a 'real' enemy.

As the camp progressed, engaging the enemy became more and more important, and each section took winning and losing battles very personally. It became a matter of section pride to win efficiently, in spite of the enemy's apparent immortality.

Both sides always seemed to be able to run-through any amount of bullets that the other pumped into them, and the ensuing arguments as to who had been killed often became quite heated, with post-mortems lasting for hours.

Probably the most important aspect of a section's effectiveness at camp was morale. In my opinion, Orange Forces' morale was exceptionally high and, in particular, my own section. Having been soaked literally to the skin, when lying spreadeagled behind a machine gun in the middle of a field during the worst storm of the camp, the troops were still laughing and joking.

Even the prospect of yet another menu D composition could not dampen morale. It was quite something to see the efforts that went into livening up the food situation. The meals, concocted from baconburgers and AB biscuits, showed just as much initiative as any field lead. No matter how tired a section became, food was always of prime importance and supper-time was the highlight of the day. There was something very comforting about the sight of a mess tin bubbling gently over a hexi-burner, with the

prospect of yet another 0200-0400 guard duty just around the corner.

At the beginning of Camp 2, guard duty and stand-to appeared to be rather meaningless. It seemed ludicrous to be standing in a trench wearing a tin helmet, respirators at the ready, waiting for exactly the same thing. It was not until the latter part of camp that one felt the enemy might not be quite so predictable.

The final battle of the camp made all the sleepless nights worthwhile, even though it was preceded by us having to sleep in a bivouac wearing full NBC kit. Prior to coming to Cranwell, I would never have thought of going to bed wearing 2 pairs of boots, 2 pairs of trousers and 2 jackets, ready to be woken at 0400 hours to fight the last life and death battle with the dreaded Blue Force.

Although the RAF Regiment's final decision

gave Blue Forces overall victory, I think Orange felt that, all in all, we had won sufficient minor battles in the conflict to merit a fair amount of smugness, and that we could afford to be generous and let Blue Force win at least something. After all, intelligence had informed us all along of how low their morale was, and how badly they had been trained. How they must have needed that victory!

In conclusion, I would say that the impressions cadets had of the tactical leadership camp would be as varied as the cadets themselves, but, in my opinion, almost everyone enjoyed the camp and the majority came away with a sense of achievement. I feel that tactical leadership camp has been one of the most demanding and worthwhile requirements of the initial officer training course.

1983-1984 - Colonial Impressions

COLONIAL IMPRESSIONS OF CRANWELL

This article has been prepared by Sqn Ldr Stefan Jerga, RAAF and Capt Jim Henderson, USAF, Department of Air Warfare.

As one Colonial cyclist sat shivering and shaken next to his bike on the black ice recently, his keen aerosystems-trained mind was quick to note that while in fact the road was named "Lighter-Than-Air", unfortunately, he was not. Brushing the frost from his uniform and fleeting glimpses of a distant warm and sunny homeland from his thoughts, he consoled himself that although Cranwell is not exactly Bondi Beach or Waikiki, it does have much to offer those officers fortunate enough to occupy exchange positions at the College.

Cranwell is blessed with a sizeable multi-national contingent from the Australian, Canadian, French, German and United States air forces in-exchange posts spread throughout the station, from the Department of Initial Officer Training through the Basic Flying Training School to the Department of Air Warfare (DAW). The authors are assigned to avionics systems training positions within DAW. They are responsible for lectures to the Air Warfare Course and the General Duties Aerosystems Course (GD ASC) on navigation-attack systems, inertial navigation systems, airborne radar, computer hardware and aircraft displays. Unfortunately, prior to taking up these positions on the DAW staff it is necessary to do a very intensive years training (penance?) as members of the GD ASC. This course not only furnishes the requisite background knowledge for the aforementioned instructional duties but also provides excellent qualifications for future service appointments. The high regard accorded the "ASQ" training within the aerospace community was witnessed by the number of Aries ties worn by hosts during the GD ASC visits to industry. This tie incidentally is the "old school tie" of the GD ASC.

In addition to the benefits received from the training within the formal syllabus, the course also serves as a forum in which members from a variety of NATO and Commonwealth countries can exchange cultural and professional ideas. While there has always been a need for this activity to foster understanding and strengthen bonds between allies, it has gained significantly greater importance with the proliferation of

multi-national defence projects such as the current Tornado programme and the proposed European Combat Aircraft.

German, Italian and RAF officers from the 1983 GD ASC have received postings in which they will be working on the Tornado programme within their respective services. The experience and knowledge gained from the course will help them to make meaningful contributions to the continuing success of the Tornado.

While it would be difficult to overstate the value of the training and the cultural interchange which one receives at Cranwell, perhaps the most important feature of exchange duty is that although an officer continues to wear the uniform of his parent service, for all intents and purposes he is a part of the RAF team and is integrated into the RAF community as much as possible. One notable exception is that he is not issued with the coveted engraved "green card" invitation to participate in certain after hours (Taceval type) activities. While this restricts access to some base facilities at times, these hardships are willingly endured by those unlucky enough to enjoy them!

In addition to Cranwell's excellent reputation as a professional training institution, it is almost equally renowned for its location. When he founded the College, Lord Trenchard is reported to have made a statement to the effect that he wanted a location where young cadets would not have to suffer the distraction of a big city environment. His success in this endeavour cannot be argued. However, for the visiting exchange officer who is keen to travel, Cranwell's central location provides an excellent base from which to launch holidays throughout the UK and on the Continent as well. Such travels provide exchange officers and especially their wives and children a rare opportunity to visit such world famous attractions as Buckingham Palace, the Eiffel Tower, the Vatican and the Tower of Pisa. In addition to their travel experiences, very young children also tend to pick up a version of the Lincolnshire accent at no additional charge.

At Cranwell, visiting officers are able to observe many of the finest traditions of the RAF. One example is the NATO guest night held twice each year in College Hall. Despite the occasional rubber duck masquerading as a grouse in the entree, these evenings are experiences which will be remembered for a lifetime. Also, by the end of 3 years, one should be able to identify and recount the history behind at least half of the portraits hanging within the College Hall dining room.

Life is not all work at Cranwell, and there are a number of excellent recreational facilities at the College which are available for use by exchange officers and their families during their tour. It is also to the credit of the Royal Air Force that some of these facilities are made available to

local residents on a regular basis. Such activities are an important step in maintaining a good rapport between the RAF and the civilian community.

In conclusion, while the exchange officers at Cranwell perform important functional roles within the various departments in which they are located, their most important role is the sharing of professional and cultural ideas and experiences with their hosts. The exchange programme provides a medium in which to practise the cooperation amongst the allies which is vital to the defence of the western world. The satisfaction of having been a part of this enterprise will endure long after memories of the occasional "black ice" have melted and gone.

1984-1985 - Cadet Memoirs (1)

MEMOIRS OF A CADET

This article was prepared by Flying Officer M Rubenstein MSc BSc, 79 Initial Officer Training Course.

INTRODUCTION

Ten years is a quarter of one's productive life. It is a suitable landmark at which to stop and consult the map: to check where one has been, and to reconsider the route ahead. In 1982, during 12 months at a military college, I did just that. I discovered that my life had lost its forward momentum and its sense of direction. After a decade in engineering I was surrounded by dark, turbulent horizons. I was a prisoner of nihilism, trapped in a seemingly fantastic routine, and unable to justify my existence let alone any remuneration. It became impossible to distinguish one day from the next. I was determined to repudiate the lack-lustre, automatic actions of each day: travelling to work on the same train, seeing the same people, hearing the same inane conversations, and performing the same senseless tasks. And my superiors were no more content than I; the only difference between us was their acquiescence to this state.

I had had sufficient contact with the military world to formulate a belief that the military life can add that vital spark which converts a two-dimensional figure into a three-dimensional person. It had taken a long time, but I had finally realised that service in the armed forces was probably the only occupation with which I would be content. Fortunately, I came to realise this before it was too late. And the Royal Air Force came as my Saviour.

If music has the power to express feelings too abstruse and profound to be described in words, and I believe it has, then Mahler's Second Symphony, The Resurrection, allegorises my present sentiments. The first movement questions the relevance and meaning of our existence. In much the same vein, T E Lawrence, in *The Mint*, states, "perhaps all physical existence is a weary pain to man: only his alert stubborn spirit will not acknowledge it." Thankfully, Mahler answers these questions. He carries us from

the mechanical and aimless trivialities of life through to a climatic awakening and Renaissance. I see my time on the Initial Officer Training Course, IOTC, as this cathartic transition, this *Dies Irae*. Is this not the essence of the collegial motto, "superna petimus"?

I have written only about those features of the course that will remain vivid in years to come. Consequently, a large part of this article is devoted to our leadership training and to the two camps which consolidated that training. My week in the office simulator is mentioned because, apart from being the most enjoyable week of the course, it served to alloy most of our academic studies. But people will be remembered long after the content of the course has been forgotten. And with so many vivid characters in my Squadron, I have felt compelled to speculate on how we will choose to remember them.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The various exercises in leadership in the early stages of the course lead to the important Camp One and Camp Two. More so than any other part of the course, these are the media through which one's character is developed and altered. These preparatory tasks provide a training in the methodical and systematic solution of problems. Certainly, against my expectations, I can vouch for improved and more disciplined thought-processes and cerebrations. It was also through these initial exercises that we discovered the effects of different styles of leadership. The considerate leader has the full support and effort of his flight; the inconsiderate leader does not.

The cadet who would clap his hands twice and shout, "OK, flight run," deserved the mutinous response which resulted in a resigned "OK, flight walk." We were always conscious of the part played by our greatest benefactor: fine weather. It was not until

Camp One that leadership under adverse weather conditions was tested. What a different proposition that proved to be! These exercises also fostered greater intimacy and cohesiveness within the flight. The execution of our tasks gradually became more coordinated and resolute. At the same time, the allegiance to the flight grew stronger.

THE NON-COMMISSIONED INSTRUCTORS

Our non-commissioned instructors were the oil that made the machinery run smoothly. Their congeniality contributed largely to an enjoyable and remarkable course. Their humour, idiosyncrasies and charismatic panache have endeared them to us. Long after IOTC has become a translucent haze, they will remain in our memories. One will be typically remembered as the person who, when the fire-control order "fire at will" was shouted, leaped out onto Langford Bridge and hailed, "I'm Will."

My memories of another will include his demonstration of therapeutic benefits of ironing clothes and polishing shoes. I shall also recall his aplomb during the most humorous incident of the course. It came as a foreign student practised his communication drill on the squad. His credibility was immediately destroyed by a falsetto voice and unintelligible commands, but his undoing lay in the failure to project his voice. For, he gave the command, "about turn," just as an overflying jet roared at its loudest. Consequently, only the rear half heard or understood this and the two halves marched off in opposite directions unaware of the débâcle. His attempt to redeem this crisis, by shouting "about turn," resulted in both sections marching towards each other in mirthful astonishment. Our favourite NCO halted us just in time to prevent a tearful head-on collision. With characteristic sensitivity, the instructor grasped the reins and minimised that cadet's embarrassment.

How will we remember our two guardian angels, the Squadron SNCOs? I will recall the first as the person who carried out the first inspection of my room and who took a genuine interest in the books I had on display. I shall also picture him striding down

the aisle of the lecture hall at the start of a lecture on ceremonial and asking, "How many bars does a flight lieutenant have?" "Two," we all replied. "Right" he said "that's the Customs and Etiquette lecture over with. Everyone get down to Hangar 69." And who will not think of the other epigrammatic SNCO whenever recollection of the phrase, "I froze in that position," is triggered? Some cadets will also remember him running Top Dog. But most of us will smile at some humorous recollection, such as his impassive reply when asked if all swords are the same: "No, some are older than others." With such instructors, our lessons and training was anything but tedious.

CAMP ONE

From the day one arrives on the IOTC, one is assailed by stories of Camp One and Top Dog. Consummating eight days of wearisome exercises, Top Dog is reputedly the hardest military race in Britain. Before Camp One, we had not experienced adverse, or even unpleasant, weather. Consequently, our potential powers of leadership had not been tested thoroughly. The exercises that demanded most from the leader were those conducted at night and in the rain. Then, everyone is disposed to indolence. The leader's powers of motivation are subjected to the acid test under such conditions. The effect the leader has on his team should not be underestimated: my memories of the aptly named Exercise Bad Trip are still haunted by pain, yet a member of another flight admitted to enjoying that exercise. There is nothing simulative about the emotions of the team even though the task may seem spurious.

During Camp One we passed the peak of our fitness, and Top Dog represented the target to which that fitness was directed. It symbolised the physical climax of the course. An electric tension permeated our camp at Otterburn on the day Top Dog was run. And the singing on the vehicle taking us to the race was an unsuccessful attempt to quash that tension. It was also an expression of solidarity in the face of common adversity. Within the first few minutes of the race, I had waded through the river twice, and fallen in

1984-1985 - Cadet Memoirs (2)

once. Running in wet clothes and with wet feet was a wholly new experience and one to which I rapidly had to accustom myself. The race comprised seemingly unending collections of pine-poles, ropes, oil-drums and stretchers. And, to top it all, there was the ubiquitous hernia-box – and a raw egg. (Though the humour associated with the egg was lost to us at the time). Since then, there have been numerous occasions when I have wondered how we carried our various impediments up the herculean ascents. My emotional relief on approaching the finishing line was a reflection of the imminent conquest of the physical zenith of the course. But my sympathies lie with those who did not participate in this race, for it is through such an experience that the essence of the phrase, *per ardua ad astra*, is revealed. An anti-climatic depression was a feature of the week following Camp One: a major obstacle had been surmounted and the next one seemed both small and distant. Coupled with this was a, hitherto unknown, physical tiredness.

ACADEMIC STUDIES

The office simulator (and to a lesser extent, the examinations) represented the culmination of most of our academic studies. It was the focal point of our training in written and oral communications, Air Force Law, Service knowledge, accounts and personnel. It was also my most enjoyable week of the course. But the most captivating simulations were the practice charges. Unlike most of the physical sciences, where quantities can be defined precisely, the law is open to a certain amount of subjective interpretation. And that provides much substance for dialectical discussion.

The accent in the simulator was on humour and fun. If nothing else, it relieves the directing staff's frustrations. I did, however, come close to crossing the line of acceptability with a member of the directing staff.

As OC Families, I had just received her request to have her lounge painted lilac. I then telephoned her in her role as OC WSF to relay this request. "Lilac," she said, "that's a bit faggish, isn't it?" "Yes," I replied, "but I've just been speaking to her and she's an American. And you know what they are like."

CAMP TWO

Camp Two, the tactical camp, was preceded by exercises on the campus playing fields designed to remind us of the duties of a leader. And this was one of the times when I marvelled at our achievements in Camp One. After two days of light exertion, our feet and bodies ached more than they ever did at Otterburn. Morale, in the initial phase of Camp Two, was as low as the rain was heavy. Wet clothes are tolerable, but wet feet are debilitating. The provision of weatherproof footwear would effect a singular improvement of the morale of the fighting man.

Our lack of sleep and our mental tension played strange tricks on us. One morning I awoke to see a man in a respirator pointing a rifle at me. As I fumbled my way through all the permutations of affixing the magazine to a self-loading rifle, I thought that this was not my idea of a joke. When he made no moves to prevent my actions, I studied him closer and saw that he was nothing more offensive than the shadow cast by the heater of the paraffin lamp. The state of limbo between the oblivion of sleep and alert wakefulness, with all its grotesque images, was one we were to visit often in Camp Two.

Though I might not have realised it at the time, my term as squadron commander for the final three days of Camp Two ranks as one of my life's cardinal experiences. The first of these days was the closest I have come to a living nightmare: never have I experienced such anxiety. I could see my suffering reflected in the sympathetic and consolatory expression on the face of one particular cadet. Her gentle and solacious encouragements were made all the more sincere by her having occupied the same post only three days earlier. Since then, I have deliberated on the part played by the lack of sleep on my anxiety; I suspect it was greater than I will give it credit. But the extra-mundane reward was commensurate with my suffering – *per ardua ad astra*. To be chosen for that executive post is a privilege shared by a select few. My first day in command was a storm which, with encouragement, I rode out. My second day, after some sleep, was quite different; I came to realise that I was part of a game, a game between a member of the directing

staff and me. And part of the privilege lay in the unfolding discovery of the real person behind the abrasive facade. This was a game, a battle of wits, I was determined to enjoy and play to its fullest. So, when he telephoned me at midnight to ask what I would say if he told me we were going to move camp within 4 hours and in total darkness, I replied, "I would say that our friendship was about to come to an abrupt end, Sir." Needless to say, we did not move camp, and our friendship is still intact. Now that it is over, I can see those events more objectively; I still drift off into a reverie to relive some incident or other of those three days. In spite of the torture of the first 24 hours, I would submit myself unequivocally, to the same rigours again.

RETROSPECTION

The Fates have smiled upon me during IOTC. And to record my views of the course

O Glaube, mein Herz, O glaube:
Es geht dir nichts verloren!
Dein ist, was du gesehnt!
Dein, was du Geliebt,
Was du gestritten!

O glaube,
Du warst nicht umsonst geboren!
Hast nicht umsonst gelebt,
Gelitten!

Was entstanden ist
Das muss vergehen!
Was vergangen, auferstehen!
Hor' auf zu heben!
Bereite dich zu leben

Aufersteh'n ja aufersteh'n
Wirst du, mein Herz, in einem Nu!
Was du geschlagen
Zu Gott wird es dich targe!

is, for me, a privilege akin to that of my command in Camp Two.

Recording one's emotions not only crystallises and focuses those emotions, but it also prevents the erosion and temper of those sensations with time. I have accepted the confirmation of my graduation with equanimity tinged with sadness; graduation signifies the end of the course that provides us with a passport into a club that reflects everything that is sublime about our country.

At dinner the other day, the cadet whose words so encouraged me during Camp Two, said "You've enjoyed this course haven't you?" I said that was perfectly correct and asked her how she knew. "I can tell from the contented look on your face," she answered. How acute that observation was: contented summarises my present state completely. It is only fitting to end with parts of text of the final movement of Mahler's Second Symphony which quintessentialises my view of the past 18 weeks.

O believe, my heart, O believe
Nothing is lost with thee!
Thine is what thou hast desired,
What thou hast lived for,
What thou hast fought for!

O believe,
Thou wert not born in vain!
Hast not lived in vain,
Suffered in vain!

What has come into being
Must perish,
What perished must rise again.
Cease from trembling!
Prepare thyself to live!

Rise again, yea thou wilt rise again,
My heart, in the twinkling of an eye!
What thou hast fought for
Shall lead thee to God!

1985-1986 - 90 IOT Impressions (1)

IMPRESSIONS OF IOTC – THE RAF INITIAL OFFICERS TRAINING COURSE

This article has been prepared by Fg Off K Broeders WRAF, until recently a member of No 90 IOTC

I journeyed to Cranwell in a state of quiet disbelief, numbed both by the fact that I had been accepted and that I had taken this momentous step. I realized that it was one thing to feel patriotic at 3 pm on Christmas Day and another to throw over a secure, well paid job, attempt the notoriously tough Initial Officer Training Course and, if successful, devote at least the next 6 years to the active defence of the nation. Well, I wanted a challenge, a purpose and camaraderie, and here it was.

The first gathering of the Squadron was not as daunting as I feared it would be. It was not the meeting of demigods of youthful vitality summing one another up but a coming together of 120 people of all ages and backgrounds, with one common aim – to survive IOT and graduate as RAF officers in 18 weeks time.

The Initial Officers Training Course, IOTC, is divided into 3 main fields and 3 main phases; the fields being physical discipline, practical leadership and an officer's responsibilities and communications both Service and social; the phases lasting approximately 6 weeks each, encompass theory, practical application and simulation of both office and battle environments, covering the officer's behaviour in both peacetime and wartime roles.

Taking the oath was a moving moment of commitment. There would be many times over the next 18 weeks when I would think back to that moment and remember that a short spell of discomfort was a small price to pay for the purpose and sense of belonging such a vow could give.

The Squadron was divided into 13 flights and I was a member of lucky 13. Though of very different characters, the individuals pulled together as a team and our 'esprit de corps' grew out of an abundance of good-humoured banter and the gritty determination to survive as a team. This required

discipline, which I initially found to be one of the hardest aspects of the Course. I was not by nature a particularly passive, tidy or punctual person. University life was more 'prone' than 'laid back', and in my subsequent office experience smart dress and formality occasioned comment. Nevertheless, I soon found that assurance grew out of organisation, direction from self-control, and pride and achievement out of punctuality and hard graft. That was just from self-discipline; in a team you learn tolerance from the recognition of your own shortcomings. You make excuses for yourself only to find that you are the only one listening to them, and as you learn that you are not alone in your failures or your successes you begin to see yourself as others see you, which can be quite disturbing to your self-image.

Drill was a form of both self-and team-discipline. As a team improves in drill it improves in mutual co-ordination. Each individual is made aware of the way he moves and then must be considerate and acutely observant in adapting his pace and movements to suit group members until the team begins to move in perfect, or near-perfect, unison. Of course our progress is watched over by our beloved drill Flight Sergeant with his own inimitable blend of encouragement, discipline and wry humour reflecting it all too succinctly.

Another major aspect of physical discipline was endurance training, including sport and gym, all of which I approached with fearful apprehension. I was not particularly fit, thinking a gentle jog around the block was a good 'work-out'. On our first PT lesson the sergeant suggested a little warm-up run...it lasted 4½ miles! However my team helped me with constant encouragement, even re-running the last lap of races with me. The most gruelling of the physical training were the LAT runs. Officially named Leadership Agility Training we felt Long And

Traumatic was a more apt title. They involved running as a team in full combats, boots and equipment, over a 1½ or 3 mile cross country course over fields, through woods and up the aptly named 'Cardiac Hill'. My mental approach to these was one of unmitigated fear compounded of my dedicated belief in my own lack of fitness, the guilt of 'letting down' the Flight and the haunting vision of trudging in last under the scornful scrutiny of the Training Officer and waiting Squadron. To escape this, I went out each night on a short LAT run and later the long LAT run, and after a week or so I was startled to find myself actually enjoying the exertion, feeling a sense of purpose and achievement, especially when the effects were reflected in my team performance and we could stand at the finish, flushed with pride and exertion, cheering-on the other flights coming in.

In leadership instruction IOT does not attempt to give you set answers to set situations. It gives you a formula, to fit almost any situation, in which to channel one's addled thoughts once initial panic has subsided. It is better to be prepared for any eventuality with a sound skeleton formula than to be full of ready-made plans for situations which never arise. The emphasis is on initiative and management skills where one must balance the priorities of task, group and individual needs. We then consolidate these theoretical skills in practical application exercises. These are specifically designed to make you maintain control of a flight, co-ordinating manpower, materials and individual initiative to complete a seemingly impossible task in a seemingly impossible time. The time and resource limitations created the pressure which often affected the leader's decision and plan making. The exercises provided a wide range of situations and imagination could embellish the more spartan plots. It was ironic to use fantasy to supply realism but without something to fire their enthusiasm a team would often lack the sense of urgency and awareness that time pressure and a heightened sense of personal danger could create. In Camp One, we put both our physical training and leadership abilities to the test on Salisbury Plain in 2-3 hour long

leadership exercises covering 6-10 kilometres. In previous camps I found my navigation gave me problems. I found it impossible to translate distance on the map into kilometres to be covered on the landscape. In fact, I could see no correlation between what I saw on paper and the countryside around me. Being unsure of my direction, I was unsure in command. Under hesitant and dithering guidance the Flight was in a constant state of 'committee' and was naturally irritated and diversified. I had learnt my lesson – to lead you must 'know your stuff' or at least, use the people that do. Camp One lasted a gruelling 8½ days with exercises every morning, afternoon and evening, culminating in 'Top Dog', a 12 kilometre race during which the flight picks up a variety of barrels, 20 foot saplings, 100



Take this 20-foot sapling and...

foot lashings and other items of heavy equipment and races over hill and dale against other flights. It is a very spirited race, and when over we all went back to camp, put off our combats, donned out 'blues' and sat down to celebrate in style with a 'dining-in' followed by a cadet revue.

In the 'professional studies' part of the course we were instructed in all aspects of our future careers as RAF officers, from Defence Studies to etiquette and social responsibilities, from Welfare and communications to

1985-1986 - 90 IOT Impressions (2)

Air Force Law and Station organization. We began to realize the managerial, social and moral obligations of being an officer. The welfare and discipline of the men under your command is in your hands and a subtle balance must be maintained in both Service and social life, since an officer must also act as an example in both. Tone is all important, with senior and subordinate ranks alike, since people often take their tone from your own. In Oral Communications, we were instructed in the art of speaking successfully to people. We composed and presented several talks of varying length and examined the video recordings afterwards. It was startling to see the unintentional distractions caused by fidgets, tone of voice or even repeated idiosyncrasies. I had studied drama in College but found it of little help. It was easier to play a part before a sea of faceless strangers than to present a talk to ten people you knew. Thus my 2 minute talk, so carefully prepared, was abandoned on the lectern and I babbled incoherently for 4½ minutes before my Flight Commander humanely intervened. Preparation was good but as with leadership planning it was better to speak spontaneously from a set of key points than to reach out a set speech. The most confident Flight members were not always the most confident speakers. We all appreciated the change of stance from social to official as we began to give briefings. It felt much better to have information to get across in a command situation than a 'jolly anecdote' to impart; rather like being in costume with a script.

Often, to alleviate the theoretical bombardment, the Directing Staff would give talented theatrical presentations putting across the application of Welfare and Air Force Law lessons as lectures never could. Their ingenuity was employed once again in creating situations and characters which were to be used in the third phase of our learning process...the Office Simulator. For this we were each given a typical officer post and put into a station/office environment. We were then subjected to various routine and unexpected situations which an officer might find himself confronted with and which put to the test all the aspects of our professional training. They combined correspondence files,

and communications over the phone with welfare interviews, civilian complaints and the taking of disciplinary charges. This gave us all a good opportunity to consolidate our training and acquaint ourselves with office procedure. It was also great fun since the Directing Staff displayed great talent in their efforts to portray different characters and we duly responded in kind.

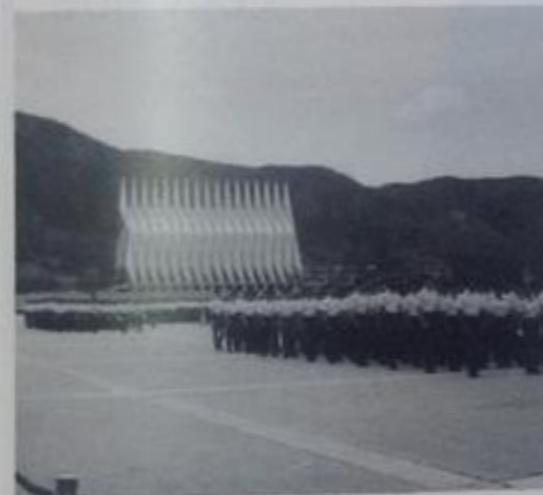
We then began a week of Regiment training in the basic use of firearms, battle tactics, first aid, gas attack procedures and other elementary skills for survival in almost any battle environment. There is a special quality in RAF Regiment Instructors; they combine informality with deadly seriousness, knock-about humour with efficient professional instruction. RT lessons were exciting and informative and the Regiment personnel are some of the most popular and respected people at the College.

The culmination of both our physical training and Regiment instruction was Camp Two, the 7-day simulated battle camp. In this, the Squadron was split into two opposing forces, Blue and Orange. A scenario was then created to lend a sense of realism. Each person was armed with either a rifle or a submachine gun and blank rounds. We both set up Camp deep in the wilds of a training ground digging trenches, camouflaging tents and setting up a command, intelligence and guard control centre. Then for 7 days we left civilisation behind in a world of combat missions, recce parties and ambushes, coping with gas attacks, enemy raids and directing staff injects. It was rather like being a partisan in the Resistance and sometimes we went for 36 hours of exercises without returning to Camp. It was one of the most exciting things I've ever done or taken part in and I would love to do it again. It pushed you to your limits of your endurance, initiative and spirits. It was a revelation to me, being fresh from comfortable civilian life, just how hardy, determined and enthusiastic I could be in such unlikely circumstances. The sense of fellow spirit and achievement at the end was wonderful although the Final Conflict did not live up to our impossible expectations.

Thus the Course had moved the learning process from group responsibility and

theoretical education to individual responsibility and practical experience finally preparing us for the final stage, Simulation, of both our peacetime and wartime responsibilities. Out of 120 original cadets, 86 graduated first time.

After graduation I was lucky enough to be selected for a cultural exchange with the USAF academy in Colorado Springs, and was therefore able to compare the two very different methods of training. The US Air Force has many different forms of entry catering for graduates, ex-service, etc. The Academy at Colorado takes cadets straight from high school and offers a four year course during which cadets study for a degree in physics, aeronautics and other related subjects. There are approximately 4,000 cadets going through Academy at any one time 85% of which hope to be pilots.



Marching into lunch.

The RAF, on the other hand, sends all its officers through Cranwell. They are from widely varying backgrounds and destined for service in any one of the branches in the RAF. Whereas the USAFA cadets emerged with a uniform education, attitudes and experience, Cranwell cadets were individuals throughout the entire course each

with something different to offer and uniformity existed only in dress and discipline. A degree in America is somewhere between 'O' and 'A' level GCE but usually covers several different subjects. The educational criteria for IOT is a minimum of 5 'O' levels including Maths but the course embraced honours graduates and experienced ex-servicemen alike. IOT candidates can apply through local Career Information Offices or in-service channels and all go through the Biggin Hill Initial Officer Selection. If they fail to get through IOT they can opt to go through a rigorous appeal board. USAFA candidates are nominated by their Governor and Senator and many resort to litigation and high court action when they are 'dropped'.

The sports facilities at USAFA are unparalleled by anything in this country, civilian or Service, and the standard of sporting prowess amongst cadets is the pride of the Academy. Often cadets were accepted on the strength of their sporting achievement. Limited finances in the RAF sadly restricts such facilities; nevertheless, Cranwell caters for a wide range of sporting interests and cadets can work on a high level of personal fitness or take up a new sport rather than compete with other people perhaps younger and fitter than themselves.

Overall, partisan though it may be, I prefer the Cranwell method of instruction. It offers an 18-week intensive training in almost all aspects of officer responsibility, many of which are not covered by the USAFA four-year course. It requires and improves discipline, fitness, initiative, leadership, communication and understanding without impairing individuality, and since Britain is a nation of individuals who respond to these qualities and yet who have an innate mistrust of 'perfect', stereotypical, embodiments of them, IOT produces the most effective kind of officer for its force. However IOT is only the basic introduction to a career in which one is constantly learning and developing, but as such it is both personally challenging and professionally sound.

2006 - Cadet Reflections (1)

CADET REFLECTIONS



A SQUADRON 2005 By Acr Cdt's Howard and Searle



Acr Cdt J O Howard is training to be a WSO and is on No 225 NCAITC.



Acr Cdt A P Searle is training to be a WSO and is on No 225 NCAITC.

NCAITC is the primary course undertaken by all Non-Commissioned Aircrew (NCA). The course lasts for 10 weeks and aircrew cadets pass out with the rank of Acting Sergeant. The course is very compact and demanding and is designed to give the cadets a foundation in the skills required to be a credible SNCO in the RAF which in other trades can take many years to attain. As part of the training they undertake several activities to aid in their development. These activities include a project weekend, a resource and initiative week and a visit to London taking in St Clement Danes, the RAF Church, and the RAF Museum, Hendon.

All activities throughout NCAITC are organised and run by nominated cadets as part of their development. These leads are a very important aspect of the training and assessment. Working from terms of reference (TORs) provided by the Directing Staff (DS), the event IC is responsible for making all necessary arrangements. Tasks undertaken by the IC

include: delegating appropriate tasks to other members of the course as they see fit, transport, equipment and ensuring the smooth running of the event itself.

Project Weekend (Week 2)

The NCAITC carry out a project weekend at the end of the second week. Its purpose is to assist in bonding the course together early on whilst at the same time doing something worthwhile in the community. Course 225 this year took on the challenge of rejuvenating a local school's conservation area and improving various other areas of the school grounds.



The primary task was to clear out an old pond and replace the split liner. Three further tasks needed carrying out, these were laying a path to the pond, gravelling a section of the school front and tidying up a flower bed. Work started at around 0900 on Saturday and the day ran fairly smoothly, the weather was on our side and spirits were high. We finished work at around 1700 and headed back to Cranwell to get ready for the project weekend night out. The course were joined by the Course Commander for a typical lads' night out to celebrate Acr Cdt Macleod's 28th birthday, that somehow involved a tiara and earrings! Understandably, the next day started slightly later and less highly spirited than the day before, however we soldiered on, up until just before lunch when Acr Cdt Lee upset a wasps nest with a half moon hoe. The ensuing drama gave many of us sharp pains as our sides split at the sight of Acr Cdt Lee running around and stripping off to get wasps out of his clothes. Four wasps were later found in his boot. Other courses this year have done such things as rebuilding a Neolithic cairn, constructing a bridge on the ranges at Otterburn, and on more than one occasion carrying out maintenance and gardening at Rothbury House, a RAFA house that caters for both permanent residents and a number of short term guests. Rothbury House is one of A Sqn's nominated charities, for which it regularly raises money.

Resource and Initiative (R & I) Week (formerly week 4)

R & I was removed from the programme due to cost and time restraints and has now been replaced with navigation training in the local area. However, it used to be a four day package of exercises which took place in the fourth week of NCAITC. The package was designed to develop navigation skills, encourage teamwork and test the cadets' courage and determination. Day one involved instruction on basic navigation, briefing and team leading. Day 2 was the navigation consolidation day designed to build confidence in map and compass work. The last 2 days were the adventure training phase with activities on offer including rock climbing, caving, canoeing and mountain biking: During Course 220 many people discovered sports they would like to take up in the future. Acr Cdt Pringle and Wadson particularly enjoyed the Mountain

Biking, racing down the hills like madmen. At the other end of the scale Acr Cdt Cabot, a mountain goat on the way up the hill, could be seen, fear in his eyes down hilling very slowly. Despite the time of year the weather was generally good however, the ground was very muddy which I think added to the fun. Canoeing is not a sport many people look forward to in January when the maximum ambient temperature is 3°C, but their usual high level of enthusiasm, most managed to stay in their Canadian canoes for the lesson, only Acr Cdt Dowds taking an early, rather fresh, bath. It was a surprise for many when at the end of the lesson we started extreme cross training combining canoeing with circuit training. Two cadets sat on the side rails of the canoe facing each other, they then began sit-ups dunking their heads in the water with each repetition. It was not long before Acr Cdt Turner and Wadson rolled their canoe. In a foolish act of teamwork the rest of the group joined them in the water. This part of the course was a great way for individuals to experience something new and for the course to bond as a team. Sadly, course 222 was the last course to undertake R & I week.



London Visit (Week 6)

The London visit includes a trip to St Clement Danes, the RAF Church and the RAF Museum, Hendon. The purpose of the visit is to introduce cadets to the history and heritage of the RAF and also to instil in them a sense of pride for the courage of former members of the RAF. We started early with a coach ride to St Clement Danes in Central London. The course being relatively resourceful, made the most of this good opportunity to catch up on some sleep. Once we arrived we were given a brief history of the church by one of the stewards and were greeted by the resident Padre over tea and biscuits. We were then given the chance to roam the church and admire its architecture and history, such as the books of remembrance and the bomb scars up the walls. Given the time of year course 225 attended, which was the day before Remembrance Day, the time spent at St Clement Danes was particularly solemn and it was a good chance for us to reflect on the commitment we had made and the sacrifice of those

who have gone before us. Once we finished at the church we moved onto the RAF Museum Hendon. This was a good opportunity to browse the museum in our own time and without a set programme, it allowed us to focus on the parts that were of interest and was a great way to learn more about our heritage as a nation and as an air force. We were feeling particularly generous by this point and were keen to assist the museum by purchasing generously priced refreshments in one of the 3 cafes. After a couple of hours at the museum we re-boarded the coach for the fight out of London back to RAF Cranwell still managing to just about muster enough energy for one last nap.



Conclusion

Over the course, these activities have given the Aircrew Cadets of courses 221 through to 225 the opportunity to develop their teamwork and leadership skills. At the same time we have been able to give something back to the community and expand our awareness of RAF culture and ethos. The course has changed with the removal of R & I week and the addition of the London visit, enabling a more focused approach to producing the NCA of the future.



2006 - Cadet Reflections (2)



B SQUADRON

NO 214 IOTC 6 FEB - 22 JUL 2005

By Student Officer Paul Tolley



SO Paul Tolley graduated from B Sqn on 22 July 2005 and is training for the Fly(P) Branch.

B Squadron, 214 IOT. The last of the Tigers, and a very unique course. The 24 week IOT course has been a long and individual journey for every cadet and this article will take you through some of the defining moments and events that made 214 IOT such a special course. Everyone has had their own ups and downs, but the Squadron has developed its own style and spirit as the period has progressed due in part, no doubt, to the small size of the cadet body, the characters within it and the Directing Staff.

Despite some dubious tactics from the 'Dolphin' teams, such as practicing, we managed to force the afternoon into a tied lead before the final event, known as Superstars. In this event a selection of fine athletes are pitted against each other in a relay race of strength and endurance, encompassing everything from sit-ups to step machines, with the first team to the podium taking the trophy and the glory. Or at least that is how it is supposed to work. In this instance C Squadron ended up walking away with the trophy by a matter of mere seconds, but it was the Tiger Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader John Jackson, who exited the hall with a smile on his face. He had just watched his Squadron, despite being heavily outnumbered, not only come very close to victory but also drown out the cheers of the Dolphin supporters. This was perhaps the first occasion at which the very unique and colourful spirit of the 214 Tigers was shown, although it was certainly not the last.

During Basic Phase we became renowned for not being able to get things right first time, whether it was uniform, block inspections or saluting officers. The culmination of this was a 'Change Parade' on the Wednesday lunchtime of Week 3. For those not in the know, a Change Parade involves the entire Squadron changing from greens into blues, then into PT kit, civilian clothes and back into greens, each within the space of 3 minutes, before having a one-way conversation with the Regiment Training Squadron Training Officer on the Parade Square, with the added bonus in our case of driving snow. As a consequence, a very late night followed as cadets attempted to resurrect their inspection lockers from clothes strewn across the room. Many of us were sceptical when it was briefed that a Change Parade was "not a punishment but a training aid", but the truth of it was that it worked. The next day we were smarter in both dress and deportment, and looked more like a military body. It was a turning point for 214 IOT, and things slowly began to pick up from there.

Once we had overcome the hurdle of Basic Phase and moved onto B Squadron, it swiftly became clear that the size of the Squadron did not mean we had less character or spirit than other Squadrons. Nowhere was this better seen during those initial weeks as Tigers than in competition against C Squadron during our first inter-Squadron sports afternoon.

Outside of the Leadership Phase of the course with its routine of classroom lessons, practical exercises and PT there was still time for several social and sporting events and our Sports Committee came up with the novel idea of a Dodge Ball tournament for an evening's merriment. A minor American sport made famous a couple of years ago by the film of the same name, Dodge Ball involves a team of 5 throwing something akin to a volleyball at the opposing team to try and eliminate opponents by hitting them. With flights competing in fancy dress ranging from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to fairies the night was a resounding success, ending with 10 Flight being declared the winners and more importantly, the 6 Flight cheerleaders winning the fancy dress competition. The tournament was one of the first events to be reported in the Tiger Times, the new B Squadron fortnightly newspaper which has kept Squadron members abreast of news, events and gossip throughout the Course. Credit must go to all the committees and their members for making the course so successful outside the learning arena: being such a small squadron cadets ended up with several secondary duties and tended to take to them all with a passion.

Field Leadership Camp (FLC) passed with the usual long distances, wounded pilots, radioactive isotopes (which always seemed to be unnecessarily heavy), pine poles and shark-

infested custard. The FLC dinner was a merry affair, due in part to the modest amounts of alcohol consumed but mostly to the sheer exhaustion of the cadets when combined with that alcohol. It was sad to lose some of the most colourful characters to 215 IOT after FLC, with our loss of 12 cadets being very definitely their gain. We are proud of the philosophy "Once a Tiger, always a Tiger" and maintained close links with those cadets throughout the second half of the course.

The 2 weeks after FLC were laden with social events, from a training Dining-In Night during which a senior officer's glass was smashed from his hand with a pole that had just snapped in half as a result of an over-exuberant Tug-O-War, to a Mid-Course Reception and party which lasted until around 4.30am. The charity Stars In Their Eyes night saw some good, bad and just ugly performances from members of the Squadron and the competition ended with a victory for Officer Cadet Jo Whalen singing Perfect by Fairground Attraction. The auction, bar profits and raffle raised nearly £2500 for the 2 Squadron charities, Canine Partners for Independence and Hazel's Footprints Trust, an amazing total from fewer than 70 people, and it was hoped that over £4000 would be raised by the end of the course. Entertainment during the evening was provided by the resident Squadron band, Direct Moulded Soul, along with karaoke for the less musically-gifted.

After the merriment of so many social events, the Tigers began to settle into Academic Phase and Week 17: Exam Week. With 1 week to go, things were not looking hopeful for the dreaded Operational Studies (OS) exam. In fact, things were looking so dismal that members of B Squadron staff were taking bets on how many would fail! Who the optimist was that won the pot was never disclosed, but after a week-end of cramming, 214 IOT became the first course in at least 10 years to have a 100% pass rate for the OS exam, a feat that was repeated during the Essential Service Knowledge exam later during the week.

After the 3 week Carousel Phase attention was turned to Exercise PEACEKEEPER, the final challenge of IOT and a culmination of 21 weeks of teaching and learning. As a small squadron the shift pattern was changed to two 8-hour shifts per day with 8 hours off, rather than the traditional 12 on, 12 off pattern. The resulting loss of time off-duty was taken well by the Tigers, with a strong sense of teamwork helping leaders and teams alike to get through the days in good spirits. Nowhere was this better seen than when ENDEX was declared 24 hours early as a result of the London Underground bombs on 7th July 2005. Squadron members came out of scenario to meet a rapidly unfolding series of events and the possibility of being deployed in support of increased security measures. In the end this did not occur and we returned to RAF Cranwell for our final assessed event: the aptly-titled Ultimate Challenge. This race involves each flight running around the North Airfield collecting equipment with which to build a chariot before transporting it 9km around Cranwell and then completing a 3.2km individual best effort run. The top 5 run times are added to the chariot race time to find the winning flight time. Determination and teamwork once again came to the fore, and when Group Captain Chambers announced the results it emerged that 4 of the 6 flights competing had broken the previous record with 9 Flight winning in a time of 2 hrs 49 mins, over 5 minutes faster than the previous record.

So there it is: a picture of B Squadron, 214 IOT, the last of the Tigers. The resounding theme from the Directing Staff has been the uniqueness of the Squadron, and its development from an average squadron to a determined and motivated team which has set several firsts and records throughout the course, no mean feat in view of the size of the Squadron. We are very proud of what we have achieved, and look forward to carrying these accomplishments forward into the wider RAF.



2006 - Cadet Reflections (3)

C SQUADRON

NO 216 IOTC - 29 MAY - 24 NOV 2005

THE LAST OF THE "OLD" SCHOOL

By Student Officer Gerard Shaw



SO Gerard Shaw LLB graduated from C Sqn on 24 November 2005 and is training for the Fly(P) Branch

It all began in some distant day back in May, with the arrival of approximately one hundred cadets heralding from the far southwest to Scotland. Various acquaintances from the selection boards and Familiarisation Visits were re-made. We were then separated into the small flights that would be our 'home' and launched into the first basic phase. This phase broadly equates to the Common Core Skills course, involving weapon drills, theoretical and practical first aid as well as a heavy militarization aspect through the use of regular inspections of both kit and rooms. Emphasis was also placed upon several key military doctrines, particularly the use of the chain of command; several unfortunate ex-rankers endeavouring to cope with the younger cadets unschooled in such comprehensive communication skills. Use was occasionally made of "training aids" such as Show Parades and Restrictions to aid

On the 24th November of this year, over two decades of RAF history will come to a close with the graduating cadets of 216 IOT marching through the famous front doors of RAFC Cranwell. The 24 week IOT course undertaken by us and many others before us will cease, and in its place will arise a new, 30 week course. It will be a challenge for the planners of the new course to sustain the challenges we have faced and are yet to face in this, the last of the old style.

those slipping beneath the prescribed standards! Not all the initial training was given by the Directing Staff, however; we have learned many lessons through our own endeavours: one cadet teaching us that not only is Sprite an unsuitable filling for irons, but also that superglue is wholly inappropriate for retaining creases in our newly ironed uniforms. Finally, despite the broadly fit standard of the course, extended periods were spent in the gym, pool and running round the north airfield of Cranwell, beginning our attempts to prepare ourselves physically for the rigours later in the course; in particular, the Field Leadership Camp.

An inescapable element of IOT is that wherever in the course you may be, there is always a forthcoming assessment or examination to put pressure on you and concentrate your mind towards the next set of goals. The first of these were the Basic Phase exams and practical tests, and there was suitable relief for all concerned upon successful completion of these, as well as the suitable reward of being moved onto Squadron and receiving the blue coloured tabs of our C Squadron.

Immediately, the challenges of Basic Phase forgotten, the ominous challenge of the Leadership Phase and ultimately FLC entered the cadets' minds. Having been re-flighted following the Basic Phase, the first hurdle was to bond with our new flight members. Various teamwork exercises have been developed in order to expedite this process; the most interesting two being the blind backwards fall from height into the arms of our new flight members, and the individual trust exercise: don a blindfold, and sprint undaunted towards a solid concrete wall, trusting your new team-mate to call out "stop"



in time. Perhaps unsurprisingly, some cadets were hesitant to co-operate quite so willingly/recklessly with their new peers, but the exercise proved invaluable for developing the necessary trust needed for the leadership phase, and we were assured that come graduation, the shared tribulations of the course would mean that we would indeed trust one another sufficiently to run undaunted towards the wall. Whether this will actually be tested remains to be seen!

The practical leadership exercises prior to FLC done, the cadets were bussed to Otterburn for their next major test. Although assessment had been carried out prior to this, Otterburn was where it counted, and over the 8 days of log-carrying, tripod building, navigation, bridging and code-breaking the cadet body was tested to its limits both mentally and, in particular, physically. Many a cadet would have been grateful for the 12 previous weeks' worth of PT! Morale in the camp remained high throughout though, particularly with the mercifully dry weather (a fact for which I remain thankful.) On completion of all exercises, the cadets were able to relax briefly at the FLC dinner; the alcohol on the night causing an unusually disproportionate response following the rigours of the previous 8 days.

The elation after the successful completion of the leadership phase soon subsided with the realisation that the academic phase was upon us, and, in particular, the Operational Studies and Essential Service Knowledge examinations. With various Oral



Communications lectures and presentations to be prepared, committees and Dining In nights to attend, as well as myriad social functions outside the IOT programme, revision time was at a premium, and the stress levels of the cadets rose proportionately to the decreasing amount of time before the exams in Week 17. Happily, the exams were largely successful.

On completion of the academics the course began a three week "Carousel," rotating between a week's adventurous training in Grantown-On-Spey, a week attached to an RAF station, and a week comprising two days' counselling training with RAF padres in Ampert House in Hampshire and three days on a Station Management Simulator back at Cranwell. Perhaps more than any other training, these three weeks proved to be of obvious application to the jobs we will be paid to do in the RAF, and highlighted the far greater magnitude of responsibility we will face having left Cranwell. Indeed, the difficulty of the training will not cease to rise once past IOT; my eye-opening (and ear-busting, to my colleagues' amusement) experience of a tail chase in a Tucano during my visit to RAF Linton-On-Ouse making it only too clear that my pilot training will hold new and greater challenges.

So for 216, the final hurdle awaits: Peacekeeper. Although ominous in itself, and undoubtedly warranting the effort that has got the course thus far, it is but one stage in the process of becoming an officer, and when the doors shut behind the last cadet of the last course, our job really begins.



2006 - Cadet Reflections (4)



D SQUADRON NO 215 IOTC - 3 APR - 29 SEP 2005 THE LAST DANCE OF THE DRAGON By Student Officer Toby Steward



SO Toby Steward graduated from D Sqn on 29 September 2005 and is training for the Ops Spt (Regt) Branch.

Lock up the offices on the top corridor; the Dragons have left the building. 'D' Sqn's last cadets in the guise of 215 IOTC graduated on the 29th September and did so in some style. The graduation parade itself, lauded as one of the very best of recent years, encapsulated, as drill should, so much more: the pride, the attitude, the swagger, and most of all the determination of the whole Sqn. It is worth stressing from the outset that from the beginning this was no ordinary D Sqn. It was a Sqn that had no time for dwelling on the reputedly poor performances by previous D Sqn's,

while at the same time wanting desperately to leave its own positive mark, and a lasting legacy as such. This is the story of the last 'D' Sqn.

It never fails to amaze me how different places can become after initial impressions. And so it was that the windy barren parade square of No1 Mess that had seemed so enormous on our familiarisation visit shrank quickly to be our home, for the first eight weeks. We took our first tentative steps of drill there, most of us very much the military fledglings learning to walk.

Basic Phase passed swiftly though, thanks in part to the myriad of lessons, covering Weapons Training, First Aid, NBC, Drill and PT, but thanks also to the weekend break spent in Breda, Holland, where about 15 members of Course 215 competed in the Inter-Collegiate Games, representing RAFC Cranwell in sports including swimming, cross-country, rugby and the Dash. Returning home, weary yet happy, our next weekend could not have been any more different as we were treated to the joys of the Respirator Test Facility at RAF Digby. Coughing and spluttering our way into Week 4, the cadets all took part in short tests, covering the Common Core Skills which we had learnt so far, and spent 2 nights bivvying out in Reeve's Plantation. It was here that we enjoyed our first taste of 24 hour Ration Packs and pledged our allegiances to either the Brown corner or the Fruit corner when it came to scrounging extra biscuits.

It was not impossible but it was testing, and there was something for every person, every week at least, that was challenging, and the glow of a satisfaction that you can only achieve from completing something that even if only for a split second one might not have thought possible. For some it might have been surviving those damp nights in the dense forests of Reeve's Plantation, for others the deceptively high diving board in the pool. It might have been the final straw-4 hrs night sleep after wrestling with ironing and bulling shoes, a good time on a gut-busting mile and a half effort, or perhaps even learning to love CS gas!

D Sqn never saw one of the dreaded and much talked about change parades; the bogey monster of Basic Phase, but few people will forget the sight of our colleagues show parading their room chairs early one morning in May. I for one though will miss the extraordinarily close little communities that can only be formed in such tight and sparse surroundings, which along with the warm and welcoming mess staff really make those formative few weeks.

With a complete reshuffle of flights we were introduced to our flight commanders for the next stage of the course and the 'D' Sqn corridor. Once we had all mastered the art of entering a room and saluting with out mishap (banging one's hand on the door frame for example), the course moved up another gear and we were off, into the leadership stage. Room inspections continued apace, but the benchmark now was higher, and we set ourselves the goal of making the name of D Squadron one to be proud of. Through Group Dynamics, Leadership training and 2 Navigation exercises we rapidly progressed through the training, forming bonds which were to stand us in good stead for the more trying moments still to come. These bonds were further enforced by social events, such as each Flight's participation in a 24 Hour Charity Drillathon, and a good indication of the DS' dedication to mentoring the cadets through to Graduation could be seen when Flight Commanders opted to join their Flights on a freezing cold Parade Square at 3am on a Saturday morning, rather than stay tucked up in bed as they could have done.

Leadership Phase continued with 2 weeks of UPEX on the North Airfield and some weird pine pole constructions could be seen, as cadets struggled to cross shark-infested waters

and minefields. This was followed by APEX 1 at RAF Cranwell and APEX 2 at Proteus Training Area in Sherwood Forest, during which the intensity and difficulty of leads increased, but the resolve of the cadets never diminished. We left for FLC confident in each of our abilities to save the day at least three times in a day, for extended periods.

It was during this part of the course that D Squadron discovered their love of winning all things sport-related, beating B Squadron in the Inter-Squadron games not once but twice, and winning the College Dash Trophy. Cadets from D Squadron also took part in the Old Cranwellian's Weekend, playing a variety of sports on the Saturday and parading on the Sunday before the church service in St. Michaels. They received much praise for their efforts, especially since they had to leave for FLC at Otterburn immediately after the parade.

Unfortunately an apparent intelligence leak meant that our deployment to Otterburn was compromised, and demonic savages were waiting to ambush us as we got off the bus. No, nothing to do with the Belgian Army we were to share the camp with (interesting looking as they were with their many strange beard combinations), but rather the far more coordinated attacks of the fiendish summer midges of Scotland. FLC brought many more challenges of course - physical and mental tiredness, and the strain of some pretty intense exertion in very hot temperatures. As an acclimatisation exercise for work in the Middle East it was perfect.

A dozen members of Course 215 were lost to R-Flight, but they have subsequently passed FLC second time round and are looking forward to graduating with Course 216. After FLC came the academic phase and a whole host of social functions. D Squadron enjoyed the Training Dining-In, Partners Day and the Mid-Course Function, dancing away at the disco until the early hours. Our Back-to School Karaoke Night was enjoyed by all and the sight of OC D Squadron singing Sonny and Cher's 'I Got You Babe' with the Squadron Adjutant was worth the entry fee alone. But it was not just informal events that we participated in - twenty cadets attended the VJ Day services in Lincoln Cathedral and I myself was afforded the privilege of reading one of the lessons that day.

The fierce attitude with which we won our first inter-squadron games has set us of on a roll of success, the feeling of which fed back into the whole Sqn infectious. Our impressive Grand slam of inter-squadron games was no accident. Even

when 'up against it' facing a far larger and extremely strong 'C' squadron in our final tournament, we still powered to another win.

After the mental strain of OS and ESK exams, and a well-deserved two week break during Block Leave, we moved onto Carousel, 3 weeks of Adventurous Training at RAF Grantown-on-Spey in Scotland, the Station Management Simulator at Cranwell, and Station visits which ranged from RAF Aldergrove to RAF Uxbridge, to, wait for it... RAF Digby.

The very real mystery element to our final hurdle, Ex PEACE-KEEPER, was what to expect. Was it a DW exercise? Was SO (dev-flight) Palik going to be hounding the gates as our simulated refugee? Was it going to be utterly exhausting, and most importantly, were we going to get to fire lots of 'blanks'? The answer; that it was such an enjoyable and absorbing exercise, in which one forgot almost instantly about any apprehensions regarding our qualifications to be in the driving seat of a Peacekeeping mission. Thrown right in, but with the subtle support of the DS, and the less subtle direction of the RTS, one soon felt entirely believable as an OC Engineering responsible for the servicing of Harriers with deadlines for very real missions, or issuing tactical orders in the event of an ambush as a commander on the ground.

One morning's duty Combined Incident Team were lucky enough to lead an assault on CHOM, 'bomb-bursting from the back of a Puma. The chilling sight of seeing colleagues streaming over the bank through simulated gas down to the air-raid shelter, silhouetted by the moonlight, wrestling half asleep with respirators was a powerful experience to remind all of us of the relevance of our NBC lessons. The confidence with which people left, the vast majority having consolidated so much of what they had learnt over the last 6 months during their leads, was clear. D Sqn were ready to overcome Ex ULTIMATE CHALLENGE and take their privileged places on the Graduation Parade Square.

To return to benchmarks far less tangible than the results of any one event, the feeling of being on D Sqn has been something special. From the very first week, long before the Sqn's motto of 'Determined' was etched into the consciousness of all of us, the unspoken attitude of our Sqn was just that - Determined; Determined to leave a legacy as the best 'D' Sqn ever, Determined to help each other, and Determined now to meet the exacting standards required of a Junior Officer.



2006 - Cadet Reflections (5)

SPECIALIST ENTRANT AND RE-ENTRANT (SERE) COURSE

By Rev (Flt Lt) Ruth Jackson MA (Cantab) BA



SO Ruth Jackson MA(Cantab) BA graduated into the Chaplaincy Branch from 285 SERE on 29 September 2005.

What do you get if take 14 doctors, 1 vicar, 3 nurses, 1 RAF re-entrant and a dentist, throw them all into eight intensive weeks of training at OACTU and then unleash them out into an unsuspecting world? The answers could well be many and varied, but in the case of 285 SERE the correct answer is 19 Flight Lieutenants and a Squadron Leader....

The SERE course is a condensed version of the main IOT course, which is specially designed for those who come into the RAF with specific profes-

sional qualifications, or who have previously held a commission in the Armed Forces and are coming back into the fold. Obviously time constraints mean that a lot is asked of the course members, and some aspects of IOT have to be reduced, or even in the case of weapons training, missed out altogether. These elements will however be covered at a later stage, and the course certainly isn't an easy ride!

There is in fact quite a substantial amount of integration between SERE cadets and the main IOT squadrons, especially in the second half of the course. 285 was the last SERE course to run before the new course format comes into play next year. We were therefore privileged to deploy alongside C Squadron for the last Field Leadership Camp (FLC) of the current IOT system, at Otterburn. We were extremely proud as a course of our positions (2nd and 4th) in the 'Pilot Down' exercise, although we were constantly told that it was *not* in fact a race.....

The hectic pace of the SERE course was then brought home to us, as we then had only three days back in the classroom to draw breath, before deploying with D Squadron on Exercise Peacekeeper. This is an exercise based on a peace-keeping operation in the Balkans, and provided us with many new challenges and a very steep learning curve, but also many new friends from D Squadron.

There have been some great highs and some deep lows on the course, not least the disappointment of losing members of the course to injury and further training. Some of the highs were shared by all, others were more personal moments of triumph, however, for some inexplicable reason, getting to Burger King on the way back from FLC, appears to have been a fairly universal high! On a more serious note, being pushed

outside of our professional comfort zones, and facing new and unexpected challenges has been tough at times for all of us. However we leave with a genuine sense of satisfaction and achievement at having overcome all those challenges and a greater confidence as we head off into the wider RAF.

The final two weeks of the course was mainly dedicated to practising our Drill for the graduation parade, at one point even practising in the dark, in order to make sure that we were up to scratch on the big day. By all accounts of those who were watching, it was worth the extra effort, we certainly thoroughly enjoyed the day, and were extremely proud to graduate alongside our friends and colleagues from D Squadron.

Journal Article 2010 - Recollections of IOTC 16 (1)

Personal Recollections of IOT Course 16 Along With Recommendations of How to be Successful

Officer Cadet Babalola, B Squadron, OACTU, Belize Defence Force

My name is Mark Babalola. I represented Belize Defence Force on Initial Officer Training Course 16. This article is my personal recollection of a worthy journey through Initial Officer Training. The aim is to provide potential international and national cadets whose dream is to get commissioned at RAF College Cranwell an insight of what to expect. Furthermore, this article will provide valuable information and recommendations of how to be successful throughout the Course.

On the 16 March 2009, I stepped off British Airways at Heathrow Airport – my destination RAF College Cranwell. This was a dream come true. I had been longing for this Course ever since I became a member of the Belize Defence Force Air Cadet Corp (BDFACC) in the summer of 2006. The retired Brigadier General Lloyd Gillette initiated BDFACC in order to promote aviation interest in Belize. I would not have been here if it had not been for that vision becoming a reality. The College was the first Military Air Force College in the world; this was enough for me to have remained consistent in my goal of coming to the College.

I arrived at Grantham after a long train ride from Heathrow Airport. Once at Grantham, I made a call to my point of contact in order to be picked up. One thing I did not realize was my visit was prepared for in advance; transportation was already on standby

for me along with other potential officer cadets who were heading to the College. The administration care of my arrival was handled very diligently.

When I arrived at RAF Cranwell I met my point of contact and the other two international cadets, Al-Harthy and Al-Wahshi, who were from the Oman Air Force. From there on, our induction week started. The induction week comprised of several activities. During that week we got a tour of the Station and met Wing Commander Allport who is the Commanding Officer of the International Training Office. Wing Commander Allport gave us a general overview of what to expect during the Course. In addition, he made us feel welcome to a new community and offered us advice on how to cope with things during the Course. I personally appreciated the honesty portrayed toward us during the initial brief and have maintained communication with Wing Commander Allport throughout my time at Cranwell. The first impression I received made me very comfortable to approach him with any problem.

The induction week was a huge advantage from my perspective. Techniques for getting our kit sorted were shown to us over and over again by our host. There was no excuse to have not understood anything we were shown throughout that week. There were only three of us compared to a hundred plus cadets the

following week when Initial Officer Training Course 16 started. As a result of the techniques shown during our induction week and by our Squadron staff, I managed to avoid restrictions! The other reasons the induction week was an advantage was all the other 'admin' we had an opportunity to sort out – all three of us had collected all our kit and were taken to Grantham to purchase mobile phones, toiletries, stationery and cleaning materials which were essential to get our room up to inspection standards.

Flight staff and cadets.



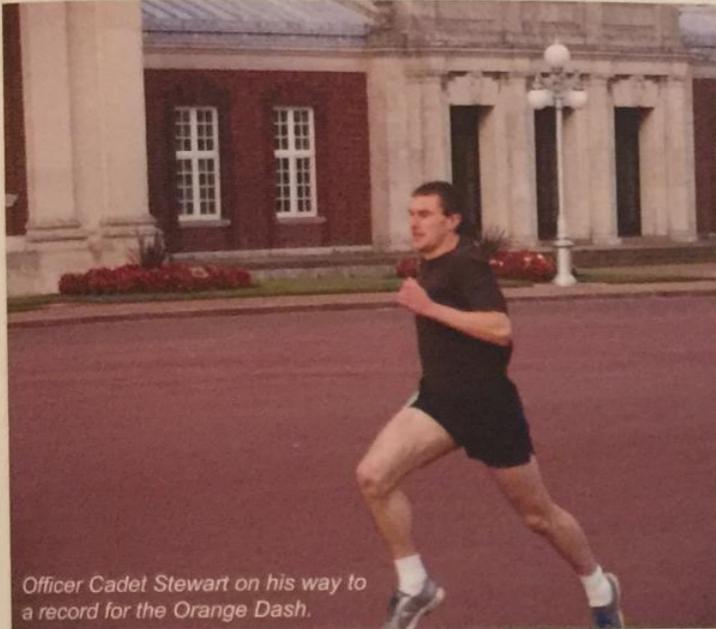
The standards expected for inspection.



Can you spot the cadets?



Journal Article 2010 - Recollections of IOTC 16 (2)



Officer Cadet Stewart on his way to a record for the Orange Dash.

On 23 March 2009, IOT 16 under B Squadron started with approximately 130 officer cadets. The Course resulted in forming four flights. Initially, our Squadron Commander was Major Wilkins who was the Army Exchange Officer. He was a very influential Commander who always conveyed the reality about the journey we were all on. He made it clear from the start that the road was not going to be easy but despite that, it was achievable. The Deputy Squadron Commander was Flight Lieutenant Scott. By the end of second term, Flight Lieutenant Scott took over as Squadron Commander and Flight Lieutenant Robson became the Deputy Squadron Commander. The structure is very easy to understand. B Squadron is comprised of one Squadron Commander, one Deputy Squadron Commander, four Flight Commanders and four Deputy Flight Commanders.

A Flight was "my family to be" for the next 32 weeks. Flight Lieutenant Sheppard and Flight Sergeant Sinclair were my Flight Staff; they nurtured me throughout the Course along with other staff members. I would not have made it through the Course without their support. I must stress that it is very important to keep your Flight Staff informed; doing so will enable them to know where you are struggling and as a result they will be able to help where necessary. My other fellow international cadets went to their respective flights. Officer Cadet Al-Harty went to C Flight and Officer Cadet Al-Wahshi went to D Flight.

I was fortunate to be in A Flight from the start. A Flight won the Squadron's drill competition in Term One. Furthermore, A Flight had Officer Cadet Stewart who was the fastest runner in OACTU. He even managed to set the new record for the Orange Dash at the Inter-Squadron Sports Competition during Term One. Furthermore, he won the Inter-Squadron Sports Cross Country on four occasions. He was the only male on our course to score 300 points on his fitness test. In addition to this, we had Officer Cadet Woodcock who is a member of the Royal Air Force Rugby Team. During the last week in Term Two, he represented the RAF in the International Sevens Tournament held in Denmark. All members of A Flight bonded together very well from the very start.

A lot of cadets found Term One physically and mentally demanding. Our Flight lost two credible cadets due to injury. I was at an advantage due to my Basic Training background. I was used to less sleep, bulling shoes, polishing boots, drill, ironing, block jobs and constant muscle soreness as a result of daily physical education. One thing worth mentioning at this point was how the ex-serving airmen helped a lot of cadets who had no form of military experience. Even though the Flight Sergeants helped with extra lessons, having the ex-serving airmen to aid at any given time made progress easier for a lot of cadets.

During the first five weeks of Term One we spent the bulk of our time with the Regiment Training Flight, Training Support Flight, Leadership Training Squadron and the Physical Education Squadron. Regiment Training Flight is responsible for providing Initial Ground Defence Trg (IGDT) for all IOT cadets, including instruction in First Aid, Weapon Training, CBRN, and Skill at Arms, Recuperation and Live Firing. Training Support Flight instructors were responsible for teaching Land Navigation skills, and for developing the cadets' personal standards regarding their uniforms, equipment and accommodation. All knowledge learned during these periods was put into practice during Fieldcraft Exercises also known as 'Bivvy weekend' at the end of Week 3. The Bivvy weekend was an introduction to the standards expected whenever in the field. In addition to that, we had a chance to practise all the navigation and personal care lessons that we were taught.

By Week 5, we had Ex STATIC which was designed to put all lessons learned in leadership to the test in the OASC Hanger. The rewarding aspect of this exercise was the introduction of Action Plans and group discussion. Each leader had to articulate an



B Squadron's favourite evening pastime!

Action Plan after he completed his lead. The Action Plan was an effective tool to help recognize what had gone wrong, what needs to be improved, and what plan the leader hopes to implement to make things better for future leads. Furthermore, as a result of the group discussion, several things that the leader might have overlooked could be voiced by his followers. This enables the follower to offer the leader advice that can assist in future leads. This technique was used throughout the exercises leading up to Exercise DECISIVE EDGE I. Additionally in Week 5, we had our first Initial Officer Training Fitness Assessment – the IOTFA – which is a 'pass or get re-coursed' assessment. The daily Physical Training sessions had boosted our fitness level.

Force Development Training Centre Fairbourne in Wales during Week 7 introduced me to an important self awareness tool known as Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI). SDI aided my performance throughout my time at Cranwell. The SDI is designed

Journal Article 2010 - Recollections of IOTC 16 (3)



The CBRN conga.

to help individuals identify their strengths in relating to their subordinates under two conditions. The conditions are firstly when everything is going well and secondly when they are faced with conflict. SDI can be used so that one's personal strength may be used to improve relationships with others. It is also an inventory for taking stock of motivational values (the basis for how you feel and act in different situations), and I recommend you grasp the understanding at the initial stage because it will help you to be successful in your leads. Having a basic knowledge of how your peers react during different situations will empower you to be able to deal with them effectively.

We concluded Term One with Ex Dynamic II. For the first time, we conducted a 3-day exercise off Cranwell grounds. The most important advice I have is always keep your personal admin squared away. Follow the instruction given by the Regiment Staff at Bivvy Weekend thoroughly, or else you will suffer the consequence at the most crucial time!

Operational Studies are taught in Term One, however the main bulk of the workload is delivered during Term Two. Air Power Studies (APS) are delivered by King's College London staff; Staff Studies are delivered by ex-Service lecturers that are in the RAF Reserves. I must admit that prior to coming to Cranwell I had no sound knowledge of Air Power or the detailed chronology of how the major wars transpired and I now have a sound foundation knowledge. My advice to all potential or present candidates out



A short rest before more activities.

there is put in the maximum effort at all times, avoid distraction during lectures and furthermore, do not hesitate to ask questions. Although I was new to the topics and style of teaching, I did manage to pass all my assessments. Therefore whether you are a foreign cadet or not, there is no excuse to fail!

In Term Two, Officer Cadet Falih from Iraq joined our Course. This resulted in a total of four international cadets. As I mentioned before, the vast majority of the Operational Studies occurs in Term Two. The first weekend after leave, we had Exercise MILAID. I viewed the Exercise as the most exciting exercise compared to all the previous exercises. I do not want to spoil the surprise for you. All I can do is, assure you if you put in the work, you will reap the benefit. Just keep in mind that 'field admin' is very important. You can only be effective if you are healthy!

Term Two was referred to by Flight Sergeant Sinclair as the pressure cooker. If your time is not managed properly, you can be a victim of the system. Whatever you volunteer for or are tasked with, always take time out to organize yourself! You will be surprised how quickly demands are made from all corners. It is up to you to deal with it in an orderly fashion that will suit your schedule. Term Two was indeed a pressure cooker; Flight Sergeant Sinclair was right after all! My Flight lost a total of five people due to failure on Exercise DECISIVE EDGE I (Ex DE I), one due to injury while on Ex DE I, and one more by the end of Term Two due to not meeting the required standard that would



The hazards of exercises.

Ex MILAID - who knows what we will find next



Journal Article 2010 - Recollections of IOTC 16 (4)



Officer Cadet Babalola, bottom right, at Granttown-on-Spey.

Amport House.



enable him to progress. The demand is there and as I mentioned earlier, it is up to you, as potential leaders, to be able to deal with ambiguity because at some point in your career, that will arise! Be a team player in everything you do. Help others who are struggling whenever possible, I can guarantee that you are going to need them at some point further down the line!

Term Three flew by pretty quickly. We were all treated as Junior Officers. The daily mentoring and advising had ceased.



Cadets off on another mission.

Everyone was aware of the standard expected therefore there was no excuse for any mistake. "We were all given enough rope to hang ourselves". Basically the only thing stopping you from graduating at this stage is you! The way you present yourself, your actions and most of all, your attitude indicates a lot to the Staff. Weeks 2 to 5 of Term Three were the Carousel phase. The phase consisted of different activities such as Station Visits, Force Development Training at Granttown-on-Spey, Amport House for Care in Leadership training and the Basic Air Warfare Course taught in Trenchard Hall, Cranwell. The entire Squadron was split into four groups for the duration of the Carousel Phase. It seemed odd because it was the only time at this stage in our training that some of us got a chance to work with other members from different Flights. This bonding was necessary because each group consisted of personnel who will be working together in the same Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) in the Combined Operation Centre (COC) when we deploy to RAF Syerston for Ex DE II in Week 7 of Term Three.

Each group visited selected RAF stations for a familiarization programme. The purpose of the visit was to get a basic understanding of how a Station operates, what life as an Officer in the wider Air Force is like and also to interact with serving personnel either commissioned or non-commissioned. I was overwhelmed with knowledge gained by the end of my group's visit to RAF Wittering. It was a great opportunity to have acquired

such information at first hand. The purpose of the training at Granttown-on-Spey was to practice Mission Command in a risk environment. One cadet was appointed as leader and they had a mission to complete and were able to dissect and disseminate the tasks within the group in order for the optimum performance to be achieved.

The visit to Amport House was very productive. There we undertook the Care in Leadership Course. The Course was geared to empowering us (potential officers) with skills that will help us to look after the wellbeing of our subordinates. We spent a lot of time listening because as an officer, it is a critical skill that will enable a leader to know what his or her subordinates is feeling and how the individual emotional state will affect his or her operational effectiveness. We concluded the Carousel with Basic Air Warfare Course. I truly enjoyed every bit of time I spent over at Trenchard Hall for the duration of the two weeks. I learnt a lot about the capability that the RAF brings to the table. Furthermore, the Estimate tool was reinforced to a comprehensive standard. The knowledge gained completely exceeded my initial expectations.

The next big challenge ahead was Ex DE II. What makes it more challenging was the fact that Term Three was responsible for the planning. Everyone had a role in the COC. Due to that role, there was a lot of planning sessions. I thought the operational studies were demanding in terms of personal allocated hours of reviewing

Journal Article 2011 - IOT Lessons Learnt (1)

Initial Officer Training: Do the Lessons Learnt Apply to the Wider Air Force?

Flight Lieutenant Alexandra Sheard, 31 Squadron, Royal Air Force Marham

July 2006, RAF College Cranwell parade square, the moment we had spent months working towards had arrived. As we marched up the steps to throw our hats in the rotunda there was a great feeling of jubilation; we were graduating officers, ready to take on the challenges that the wider RAF had to throw at us. We had completed the academics, the leadership exercises and the PT sessions. Ultimate challenge had been conquered, the last door plate polished and we had ironed the perfect shirt. We packed our shoeboxes and duvets into the car, discarded empty Brasso tins and flash wipes and set off to our various posts within the RAF, but how many of the lessons that we had learnt would come along with us?

We graduated IOT with a firm base of knowledge: a knowledge of Air Power, historic and current, learnt from the academics, where we developed the ability to debate and back up our argument; a knowledge of how the RAF works, how all of the cogs fit into place; the Ethos and Core Values expected of us to uphold not just as officers but as members of Her Majesty's Forces; and a foundation of leadership, how to lead, how to follow, when to be a transactional leader and when being transformational would be more appropriate to the situation.

We developed and learned how to use our individual strengths and skills to our advantage and experimented using a variety of leadership styles. We learnt to understand the value of working as a team and the benefit and support that can be gained from working together. We all graduated with a solid base knowledge of the key attributes required by an officer in today's modern RAF, taking part in an ever-changing world in an age of expeditionary warfare and asymmetric threats.

Reviewing the time since graduation nearly 5 years down the line, I'm asked to look back over my early years as a Junior Officer and consider how the lessons which were learnt have been applied and developed and how they apply to my role within the RAF.

Since graduating from RAF Cranwell, my path has taken me through flying training and to the front line as a pilot on the Tornado GR4. Following IOT graduation I went to RAF Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire to fly the Tucano. From there it was to RAF Valley on Anglesey to learn how to both fly the Hawk and how to use the aircraft tactically, before going to RAF Lossiemouth in Moray, Scotland for the GR4 Operational Conversion Unit (OCU). Graduating from the OCU, I

Flt Lt Sheard receives the Sword of Honour for IOTC No 1



am now a member of 31 Squadron (the Goldstars), RAF Marham in Norfolk. Since graduation my time has also encompassed a couple of holds at Shrivenham and RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire and a few outdoor survival courses along the way. I haven't served out of area yet and I don't pretend to know what it is like to do so.

In this short article I am aiming to evaluate the attributes which were taught at IOT and their relevance beyond RAFC Cranwell. The list of leadership attributes were laid down by the Officer Cadet Training Review which led to the formation of the new IOT Course. They are as follows:

- Warfighter
- Courageous
- Able to lead tomorrow's recruit
- Emotionally intelligent
- Flexible and responsive
- Willing to take risks
- Politically and globally astute
- Mentally agile – physically robust
- Able to handle ambiguity
- Technologically competent

As I consider the attributes from a personal viewpoint I am considering what I have needed to call upon since IOT to progress through flying training to the frontline. Each of the above attributes have been required at different times as I have advanced through training. Going through flying training there was the underlying element of aiming to pass a course to the highest of standards and learning as much as possible to help in the future. There were different sizes of goals; small scale daily goals to pass each trip and large scale to pass the course. On top of this was the further development of officer qualities; short talks and presentations, leadership days and secondary duties.

Obviously there were no more inspections but the need to uphold military standards was ever present. On the face of it, flying training may appear to be just that. My experience, however, is that many of the other attributes developed at RAFC Cranwell are required throughout, both as a pilot and an officer. As with all professions and branches within the RAF there are required personal attributes, qualities which were seen during selection at the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC), established and honed on IOT and put to use across the breadth of officers throughout the RAF.

Warfighter, Courageous

The adage through IOT is that all RAF personnel, commissioned or non-commissioned are 'Warfighters first, specialists second, though they may be second to none in their specialisation' (Leadership; An Anthology, 2009). It seems pertinent to open with an attribute so relevant to our current military situation and so iconic of serving in the military, and I look at this with particular focus on courage.

We don't test physical courage every day but moral courage is always demanded. With any training which is inherently dangerous, an open culture where blame is not attributed is vital. This underlies all flying training. We are actively encouraged to speak up if we have messed up, however large or small the incident, knowing that someone else can learn from our mistakes, as we can from them. There is a culture not just for open honesty, but also the ability to accept responsibility for what you have done and consider how to not let it happen again. To have the moral courage to speak up when something is not right, no matter how hard it is to do, can earn respect, as honesty always does.

Being open and honest improves trust which is a vital link not just between the aircrew but very importantly, between the aircrew and the ground crew; a relationship which directly enhances the effectiveness of a squadron.

Technological Competence

The application of technological competence throughout training has been vital. Ground school, exams, boldface tests and briefs ensure that the knowledge is present and accessible. There is no escaping the fact that knowing about your aircraft will save both yourself and anyone who is flying with you. Weapons knowledge and competence when using the kit and systems can provide a vital contribution to



the troops that we are supporting on the ground, our primary role on the GR4 in Afghanistan; indeed, understanding weapon effects and characteristics can make the difference between life and death.

Flexible and responsive

In the 2010 RAFC Journal, Flt Lt Artus wrote about the results of a survey at the Officer and Aircrew Cadet Training Unit (OACTU) which investigated which attributes the staff and cadets felt were most important to be a RAF leader (Attributes for RAF Leaders: What does OACTU believe is important? Flt Lt Artus 2010). The combined staff and cadet result indicated that the most important attribute was being 'flexible and responsive' and the second 'mentally agile'. As the famous quote goes 'Flexibility is the key to air power'. Any role in the RAF needs to be flexible and responsive in order to adapt to an ever-changing world. This is relevant through the flying training system, but it has been proven essential for an officer to have a positive attitude to change.

Overcoming problems by finding an alternative way and not just stopping at a brick wall has been an element called upon time and time again since graduating IOT. Challenges range from everyday issues: changes in flight profiles and the weather, to life-changing moves; the decision about where you are going to be based and

future tours. The ability to constantly look for the other options, opportunities, or silver linings that emerge is vital. Equally, coping with the effect, good or bad that change can bring, highlights the importance of flexibility and responsiveness.

Mental Agility

Mental agility is my final point of main leadership attributes which I feel has been transferred throughout IOT and needed consistently since then. From the Royal Air Force Leadership: An Anthology (2009) there is a definition of mental agility and physical robustness that I feel pertinent to both IOT and future training. 'They must be physically robust and able to withstand the strain of operations, so that their mental capacity does not fail them under stress.' On IOT it was obvious that the fitter you were the less you had to focus on fitness and the more energy you could spend focussing on the job in hand, namely the leadership task you were performing. There is a need to be physically robust to fly, but more so, is the need for mental agility.

Going through flying training you are pushed further and further at each stage to build up the capacity required. There are various ways of doing this: it can start in the planning cycle where 'injects' are put in, or time constraints enforced; it can be when airborne with re-tasking and maintaining control of the situation when everything is changing.

It is all with the aim that ultimately one day when on operations, mental capacity does not fail when it is needed most when under stress and in an adverse situation. The flying training system acts as a series of stepping stones, building up capacity bit by bit, developing new skills on each aircraft that you progress to. The aim is that one day, something that you could never imagine doing (flying 550 kts, 100 ft and dropping weapons, which seemed unheard of when on the Tutor at 120kts) is within your reach and you feel comfortable performing that task.

In conclusion, did the skills that I graduated with from IOT prepare me for flying training and my responsibilities as an officer? In short, yes. The skills laid down in the attribute list I feel are vital to any officer or leader. From my personal view, the attributes which I feel that I have called on the most through training are Warfighter, Courage, Mental Agility,

Technological Competence and Flexibility and Responsiveness. I feel that elements of the other attributes have also been needed, some to a greater extent than others and some will inevitably be further developed in the future.

The attributes of a leader are in the individual to begin with, it is recognised by OASC, developed on IOT and further developed throughout our careers. In writing this I have considered those areas I feel are personally relevant, both as a pilot and an officer.

Each of us should be able to see in our own job what attributes we use and develop. In every branch in the RAF different attributes are needed but our broader responsibilities as officers stretch beyond the boundaries of individual branches. IOT is the first of a series of stepping stones, setting the beginning of a career journey where each stage challenges and highlights the use of different leadership attributes.

Journal Article 2011 - IOTC 23 Reflections (2)

IOT 23: Reflections of Term One

Officer Cadet Buchanan, C Squadron: Initial Officer Training Course 23, OACTU

It is with mixed emotion that we approach the end of the first term of Initial Officer Training. No. 1 Mess will no longer be our home and we, C Squadron, will be heading to College Hall Officers' Mess (CHOM) to spend the next two terms. We are full of anticipation for the lessons and a healthy respect for the challenges to come. Though the buildings and fabric of No 1 Mess have become an integral part of our routine and have thus shaped our time so far, I can safely say that the comforts of CHOM that lie ahead look very attractive.

On our first day we could see in each other the potential to command; however, it was also clear that we would all need some refinement before we would become the leaders of tomorrow and meet the expectations placed on us. The Leadership Instructors were there to provide theory and practical exercises to develop our style of leadership, congruent to those expected of a Royal Air Force Junior Officer. The RAF Regiment were also a major influence in our first term; their role was to turn us from civilians to well drilled military personnel.

The RAF Regiment staff of Regiment Training Flight (RTF) within Force Protection Training Squadron (FPTS) guided us for the first few weeks of the course; their role was to teach us basic military skills. We have been taught the necessary skills to survive in a theatre of combat. From learning to administer first aid to keep a fellow airman alive in that crucial 'Golden Hour', to how to strip, clean, make safe, load and eventually fire a rifle. With a certain degree of patience and a large proportion of humour, they have supported us in our transformation from the bewildered first week cadets to the well-prepared officer cadets we should be. The virtues of comradeship, humour and the ability to switch from light-hearted to deadly serious were instilled in us alongside those basic military drills and skill that will be used throughout our careers.

A few feet away from Block 78 lies the No. 1 parade square and whether the skies are as clear as the ground is cold or the air is so thick with snow that our drill instructors are barely visible, we are taught how to march. Various officers passing by have often indicated that our displays of drill have brightened their mornings. Our gradual progression from not being able to keep time and move as a unit, to being capable of switching between Slow Marching and Quick Marching seamlessly is largely due to the tenacity of the Drill Instructors who were rigorous in their reinforcement of understanding. Though it may have been a difficult journey at the time, the sound of our shoes striking in unison on the parade square come graduation will make it all worthwhile.



Phrases and acronyms such as 'The 7 Question Estimate', 'PICSIE' (Planning, Initiate, Control, Support, Informing and Evaluation) and 'SMEAC' (Situation, Mission, Execution, Any Questions and Check Understanding) are probably common parlance for most commissioned officers however, these were largely foreign ideas and concepts to the majority of us in the beginning. Through the use of the practical field Exercises STATIC, DYNAMIC and ACTIVE EDGE, these ideas became, and continue to be, familiar and useful tools. These exercises also provide great opportunities to depart from the classroom and spend time doing what the majority of us envisaged training would be like. Carrying out patrols, practising the correct methods of moving as a unit and living under a bivouac (a shelter made generally from a waterproof sheet suspended by bungee cords) may seem like hardships to some, but to us they were welcome breaks from classroom lessons; more importantly, it allowed us to put theory into practice.

Air Power Studies is the study of military tactics, politics and the fundamentals of Air Power. This subject is taught by lecturers from Kings College London and takes us away from the disciplined military world. It encourages us to contemplate and analyse our future roles in an academic forum and helps us understand our position within a wider context. Our lessons have taken us, step-by-step, from the basics of why we have the military, how militaries are used and why we use them, to how the actions of one man on a battlefield can affect the entire outcome of a campaign. This puts much of the training into perspective and explains why various activities, that may seem dry at the time, (for example, the rigorous, exact movements of rifle drill or having an understanding of global politics and how our responsibilities as a nation influences our foreign policy) are so necessary. Our lecturers take great pains to ensure that as officers of the future we understand exactly why we do what we do and the repercussions of decisions made.

To prepare us for the exercises to come and military life in general, physical education training has become part of our daily routine. Throughout, from swimming, to circuits, to the drive and determination in aero runs, to the regimented static strength of Battle Physical Training, the firm guiding hands of the staff have kept us free from injury and embarrassment, but they have also pushed us to achieve our best. As a Squadron, we have earned, if not the respect of the staff, then at least the begrudging acceptance that we are making progress. It is with great pride that I look upon my fellow cadets and how they have changed from being merely fit to being fit enough to run 6km with a full backpack and still have the drive and energy to sprint another 200m.

All of the attributes that have been taught were built upon at our most recent excursion out of RAFC Cranwell to the Force Development and Training Centre (FDTC) at Fairbourne in North West Wales. We suffered a great deal of dislocation of expectation (a useful phrase provided for us by our Flight Sergeant) due to having been provided with a summer schedule for a winter course. Despite this, the growth and enjoyment that resulted from attending the course were substantial; perhaps this was due to us completing a tough course in adverse conditions. It gave the Squadron a chance to apply the physical education and leadership training we had received in an environment

No.1 Parade Square in relatively tropical conditions



Exercise ACTIVE EDGE

beyond the military. Waking up to find the tents under snow tested the cadets' physical courage as they had to leave their beds and break camp in terrible conditions and then carry out another day hiking in the snow. Raising our morale was vital!

These activities may seem average, even leisurely to some of you, but I have intentionally left one of the greatest challenges and time-consuming activities until last. It would not be possible to give a fair summary of IOT Term One without mentioning inspections. From the very first day, the uniform and block inspections have been a focal point for most cadets. The regularity, with which the Directing Staff visit cadet's rooms, day after day, instils a sense of routine and discipline into the Squadron; as the term progressed and we improved, there were even signs of pride. It is this that I feel we will take to our future careers once the staff are no longer there to look over our shoulders. But not all inspections were a roaring success and we had to learn how to get things right first time. The additional development opportunities provided in the event of defaulting became a chance to regain lost pride for a flaw in inspection and in some notable cases we surpassed expectations. Standardization across the Squadron was difficult to master and often led to problems. Communication was crucial amongst the cadet body. Our initial Flight

meetings informing us of upcoming opportunities would last up to 40 minutes as we each attempted to express our own opinions and ideas concerning a specific problem. However, it is with a sense of pride that I say our meetings now last 5 to 10 minutes at the most and deal with everything essential for the days ahead. Hopefully, this shows that our Leadership training is having a positive influence on our ability to make decisions and our willingness to work as part of a team! Let this be a sign that our transition from civilian to military life is definitely taking place.

To sum up, throughout all the activities undertaken during the first term of Initial Officer Training, the encouragement has been there for us to excel. I believe that the greatest thing taken by many from this term is that it is important to be professional and assimilate, but also to remain human. The application of our own personal experiences to the lessons we are taught is how we become the most effective leaders of tomorrow. Furthermore, and I believe I speak for the whole Squadron when I say, the people we have met throughout our time so far, the friends we have made and the lessons we have learned, will be firmly embedded in our memories and will remain with us throughout our careers and beyond.



Inspections!

Journal Article 2011 - IOTC 22 Reflections (3)

IOT 22: Reflections of Term Two

Officer Cadet Hopkinson, Initial Officer Training Course No 22: B Squadron, OACTU

After the intensity of the 10 week militarisation phase that is Term One the sheer volume of examinations and tested elements of the course which lie in Term 2 makes the next 10 weeks seem an equally, if not more, challenging prospect. In this overview I will convey my experiences of Term 2.

After returning from a week's leave at the end of Term 1 the first week of Term 2 eases cadets back into things as they try to shake the luxury of their previous week away. However, the imminent prospect of deploying on Exercise MIL AID soon has everyone back in the swing of things and 'week one' is essentially geared towards preparing for this deployment.

Exercise MIL AID takes place during the second week of Term 2. It is an exercise designed to allow cadets to practise and hone their leadership skills. Where Force Protection is usually the vehicle used for this Ex MIL AID has cadets aiding the civil authority in handling situations as the milieu in which to use their training. For this Exercise we were transported by coach to Stanford Training Area (STANTA) where accommodation came in the form of a barn. The conditions were cold, with the bivvy night proving to be one of the warmer ones!

Ex MIL AID Briefing at the ICP



However, despite the worsening conditions, we thoroughly enjoyed this exercise and looking back, feel that it was the best I have been on during IOT to date.

The leads were more like those in Exercise DYNAMIC, but with little timing afforded for planning. There was also a large level of collaboration with other cadets on their leads being encouraged, something which many found beneficial. The highlight of this week, however, must be the highly competitive, 'Rocket Race' a points based race come inter-flight competition. Everyone gets swept along

Lynford Home Farm: Home for Ex MIL AID



Back to the classroom

in the intense rivalry and overwhelming desire to win and I am proud to say, my flight, B Flight, proved to be triumphant.

Once back from Exercise MIL AID we were straight into an academically focused few weeks, with the number of Air Power Studies (APS) lectures and Syndicate Room Discussions building up in preparation for the coming APS 2 Examination. We found these lectures more enjoyable than some of the earlier ones as they were now beginning to look at Case Studies which allowed us to apply what we had learnt about Air Power theory to specific historical scenarios rather than being purely theoretical. We also found, as in Term One, that we particularly enjoyed the Syndicate Room Discussions as they proved very stimulating, having an opportunity to voice our own opinions as well as hear and discuss those of other cadets. This academic phase concluded with the APS 2 examination, formatted in a similar manner to APS 1, taking place just before deployment on Ex DE.

Running parallel to this is the Bandar Essay. The Bandar Essay is a 1500 word essay written as part of the APS curriculum. Cadets are allowed to choose their essay subject from a series of options and the best essay of the calendar year is awarded the Bandar prize. The essay must be submitted by the Wednesday of week 5. I personally enjoyed writing my Bandar essay as, due to the number of choices available, I found a question which particularly appealed to me, 'Compare the leadership styles and key decisions of Napoleon and Wellington in the battle of Waterloo'.

Once we had made our way through this academic stretch we moved onto theory and practical Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) lessons. These lessons were both to teach us the importance of, and gain confidence in, the kit we would be using

CBRN Training



while working under CBRN conditions and also to prepare us for using it on Exercise DE. The lessons were a welcome return to the Regiment Training Flight (RTF) for a lot of the Squadron who enjoy the RTF staff's sense of humour and teaching style. These lessons culminated in a practical and theory examination.

The theory part of the CBRN exam was a multiple choice paper and the practical being two visits to the Respirator Training Facility. These visits were generally approached with trepidation, but did not prove as terrible as anticipated, albeit they were still unpleasant. In the first we were instructed to remove our respirators and provide the Regiment Sergeant with our name, service number and where we were from. This was to allow us to experience the affects of CS gas, to make us appreciate that our respirators did work and the benefit of carrying out good drills. The second test involved carrying out decontamination drills, eating drills and changing canister drills in the chamber. When these drills were carried out correctly the experience of CS was limited and the whole experience much less stressful.

After passing the necessary CBRN tests we were now ready to be deployed first to RAF Barkston Heath and then RAF Syerston on Ex DE. Our deployment to RAF Barkston Heath was for two days of pre-deployment training with the RTF to prepare us for Ex DE. Although it was becoming increasingly cold these were two largely enjoyable days where we re-capped on how to build sangers, set up razor wire, carry out combat manoeuvres and give accurate fire orders. We were also allowed an increased amount of down time which cadets took advantage of to gain sleep and finish cleaning their rifles and arranging their kit in preparation for our 18 hour working day on Ex DE. From here we set off to Deployed Operating Base (DOB) Syerston in 'Moltovia'.

Exercise DE is the tested leadership element of the IOT course. In the scenario we are an Expeditionary Air Wing being deployed as part of CADETFOR to DOB Syerston in Moltovia in a bid to secure peace and stabilise the situation between Moltovia and neighbouring Lovitzna. In real terms we are deploying to RAF Syerston where we will carry out two tested six hour leads (with a third available should we fail one) acting as either; Sector Adjutant, Guard Commander, Combined Incident Team Commander or Patrol Commander.

Sanger position in Sector 2



These leads are assessed by Directing Staff from all areas of OACTU. To pass the Exercise each cadet must pass two different leads being tested by two different instructors on John Adair's Action Centred Leadership model, balancing the requirements of the 'Task', with the development of the 'Team' and the needs of the 'Individual'.

Hoppo and Hudson stand-to



Unfortunately, I failed my first lead. I was Guard Commander on Sector One and I had not balanced the three areas of need to a satisfactory standard. I found this failure quite demoralising; however, as I look back the support and encouragement I received from both my peers and my own Squadron Directing Staff was immense. The work ethic among the cadets to do what they can for one another to try to ensure that everyone passes their leads is incredible and this, along with the training I have received to this point played no small part in me going on to pass my following two leads with an A and a B.

The adverse weather conditions we faced whilst on Ex DE added an extra element to the scenario. The cold and snow covered ground tested the limits of our mental and physical robustness. As a member of the B Sqn DS stated they were the worst weather conditions he had ever seen on Ex DE. However, when the 10 days were over we proudly marched away from DOB Syerston having accomplished a significant amount.

Now we are back from what seemed a lengthy, mentally and physically demanding part of the course, cadets are left feeling a certain amount of relief, a feeling that we have 'broken the back' of the course. However there is no time to rest on our laurels as we must now turn our attention to our Essential Service Knowledge exam and, subject to being found ready, to progress to Term 3 and



Journal Article 2011 - IOTC 21 Reflections (4)

IOT 21: Reflections of Term Three

Officer Cadet Dodgson, Initial Officer Training Course No 21: D Squadron, OACTU

It was the start of Term 3 for the cadets of Initial Officer Training Course (IOTC) 21. Twenty weeks had passed since 70 or so fresh faced individuals arrived at the main guardroom eager to begin their training. So far we had completed Terms 1 and 2 which had been hard work but extremely rewarding.

Starting Term 3, morale was high. We had recently returned from Exercise DECISIVE EDGE (DE) which took place at RAF Syerston. For this exercise we had deployed as a Sqn to the fictional country of Moltovia to conduct peace keeping operations. During the exercise cadets are tested on their leadership in a number of roles, all leading a small team consisting of fellow cadets. Throughout the Exercise, the Sqn achieved excellent results and we were looking forward to the last 10 weeks before the long awaited finishing line - graduation.

Term 3 of IOT was a chance for the officer cadets to really prove that we were ready to become Officers in the Royal Air Force. Some changes in protocol made a big difference in feeling like you were really progressing towards becoming a junior officer. Cadets were able to walk smartly outside as opposed to marching and could remove their headdress when inside.

The Term consisted of some preliminary planning for Ex DE II, and then the cadets were split into 4 groups for the 4 week carousel phase of IOT. During this period, cadets alternated between 3 different activities.

The first activity was a 2 week Basic Air Warfare Course in Trenchard Hall at RAF Cranwell. There, we consolidated our learning about the basic principles of Air Power and the foundations of the RAF. The Course was based around the 4 fundamental air and space power roles, which was enhanced with the various means of delivering these operations in an effective manner. The Course culminated in a test of knowledge which all cadets passed thanks to the excellent tuition at the AWC.

The second activity was a week at the Force Development and Training Centre at Grantown-on-Spey in the beautiful Scottish Highlands. Cadets were given the opportunity to practice Mission

Command and responsibility in a real-time environment. Cadets had to plan a 3 day expedition in which they were to cover the greatest distance and/or height gain possible. The activities that were available included canoeing, mountain biking and hill walking. Being in Scotland in December meant that the weather at times was extremely cold which made the expeditions very challenging. Despite the conditions, the cadets persevered and endured the elements resulting in a very satisfying and enjoyable week.

The final week was split into two halves. Up until Wednesday cadets undertook a station visit at various locations around the UK. Each section visited various departments around the station to broaden their Service knowledge and learn about units on an operational RAF Station. On Wednesday cadets moved to Amporn House in Hampshire to complete a Care in Leadership Course. The 2 days were designed to educate the cadets in some of the issues they could face as future officers within the Royal Air Force; dealing with family bereavement or welfare problems. The Course finished on Friday morning with some actors coming in from London to give cadets the opportunity to use the techniques they had learned and understand the Emotional Intelligence required of a junior officer.

Once back at RAF Cranwell, cadets had one week to prepare for Ex DE II; the final major hurdle faced prior to the end of Course.

On a frosty Wednesday morning we collected our weapons from the armoury prior to deploying to RAF Syerston. As Term 3 cadets our main effort for our second visit to Moltovia was to run the Combined Operating Centre (COC) 24 hours a day until the end of the deployment.

The COC was a hive of activity and we quickly learned to multi-task whilst dealing with a myriad of issues. The planning time we had been allocated in the previous weeks helped immensely as real-time and exercise problems came flooding in for solutions to be found. This was a great opportunity to test all of the leadership, command and management tools that we had been given throughout the previous 27 weeks in a risk-free environment.



It does not matter how good you are at leadership, if you loose kit, Flight Sergeant Guthrie will take you to task

Each cadet spent 48 hours in the COC. It was an extremely tiring and challenging period, but overall it was an enjoyable 2 days of hard work, operating as part of a large team to achieve a common goal.

After our shifts in the COC, cadets carried out other duties such as guard, patrols or exercise support tasks. The Exercise was conducted during a cold snap which meant that we again had to endure sub-zero temperatures. This made our duties much more challenging, but all the more rewarding on completion and we can now look back with fond memories of a job well done despite the elements.

Having returned from Syerston, cadets had 2 days before the Progress Review Board. This was when we would find out if we had met the required standard to graduate from IOT and become Officers in the Royal Air Force.

After receiving the good news, the final week was mostly spent on the CHOM parade square, practising our graduation parade in front of the ever watchful eye of the College Warrant Officer.

IOT had been full of personal challenges, but thanks to the hard work of cadets and the support from the Directing Staff at OACTU we persevered and achieved our dreams.

After 30 weeks at IOT I understand a lot more about myself and other people and how to get the best from whomever I meet. At times we make mistakes but rectifying these and upholding the core values expected of Officers will make us credible individuals - something which needs to be earned and not just acquired.

IOT has been a very demanding but rewarding Course and has provided a solid foundation as we progress as junior officers. I, for one, am proud of what I have achieved as are my fellow cadets of IOTC 21.



Sector One and COC: What a difference 24 hours makes!



Journal Article 2011 - SERE 15 Reflections (5)

Attestation to Graduation: an Introspective Journey

Officer Cadet Cox, Special Entrant and Re-Entrant Course 15

The Special Entrant and Re-Entrant (SERE) course, not to be confused with Search Evade Resist and Extract training; is an 11 week, condensed, sleep deprived Officer Training marathon, designed for the life experienced and strong hearted professionals.

Whilst the pervading and historical myth suggests that SERE is merely an attendance course, I would like to dispel such derogatory notions. Officer Cadets on SERE have just 11 weeks to learn and assimilate the skills and military knowledge required to perform well as Officers in the Royal Air Force.

Great expectations...

SERE Officer Cadets can be an interesting cohort, often with vast life experience, professional experience and skills. There is generally a mixture of healthcare professionals, lawyers, chaplains and ex-servers, combining in varying proportions to provide a vocal confident cohort with a bottomless pit of dark humour. SERE 15 comprised 10 Doctors, 2 Nurses, 2 Physiotherapists, one Dentist and a Padre and was unusual in the disproportionately large number of young Doctors. Many of the Doctors have been sponsored through medical school by the RAF; therefore have approached SERE armed with more insight than others. Despite differing military exposure and experience our expectations of SERE Officer Training were quite similar.



We expected to be challenged and pushed to extremes, both physically and mentally. To be extracted from our comfort zones, placed under pressure and continuously assessed through close observation and overt testing. Academically we expected to learn about the culture and history of the RAF.

Having seen the documentaries about Officer Training we nervously anticipated 11 weeks of constant reprimanding, derogation, shouting and punishment (basically purgatory). Through hardship we expected to learn new ways of thinking and behaving; gaining not only military bearing and core skills but also an appreciation of personal management and leadership.



Ex DE: Pack light! SERE 15 start the one mile walk across the airfield

Lastly but by no means least, we hoped to enjoy (a proportion of) our time at RAF College Cranwell; to become part of the historic and awe inspiring club and during the process of training make friends for life.

Challenging Learning

One of the toughest challenges encountered during SERE is tiredness and fatigue; for the medical audience be prepared to feel worse than following 2 weeks of A & E nights. The fatigue is not due to intense physical training sessions, but due to the seemingly never ending days; every minute of the day is accounted for, leaving very little time to reflect, assimilate and consolidate on knowledge and no time for personal administration. The continuous bombardment with new skills and information make the course mentally exhausting. The evenings are consumed by mass ironing and bullying corridor parties. The mornings begin with inhalational breakfast followed by buddy-buddy checks, burning of loose threads and hiding of toggles to ensure uniformity, prior to the daily ritual of inspection!

For some, the prospect of physical fitness is the most dreaded curricular item, dependent upon baseline. However, physical training sessions become revered lessons providing a welcome break from the classroom and respite from thought, in addition to the elation of endorphin release. The high physical intensity of SERE combined with the lack of time to recover can unfortunately predispose to unsatisfactory performance and injury. On most SERE courses a team member or more may be re-coursed as a result of fitness and injury. This is disappointing and sad for the individual and the whole team; it is hard to know what to say to offer comfort when internally the thought process is selfishly thinking "that could be me".



Throughout SERE and leadership training, we are provided with continuous constructive criticism and peer group critiques, in addition to this we utilise the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI) tool all of which raise self awareness. Through self recognition SERE offers techniques and skills to alter our approach to a situation.

Militarisation

During SERE you learn about military technique and RAF culture and in so doing, develop a group of civilian professionals into the semblance of a team of military personnel. Uniform worn from day one is a visible sign to external observers of military status, much like a stethoscope or cassock and surplice are tangible signs that signify to the world of one's vocation.

You are taught the chain of command, much like a hospital or ministerial hierarchy, but respect and organisation is enforced with sanctions. The importance of timings becomes very apparent, particularly when, as course leader you are to ensure all cadets are marched from field to classroom with timely precision and vitally 5 minutes before schedule. This may sound incredibly simple; however, when you

put together a large number of vocal, intelligent people, a simple task becomes an arduous overcomplicated affair! Particularly when collective responsibility means negative sanctions applied to all SERE cadets for individual misdemeanours.

Uniformity and "attention to detail" become your daily mantras, as you work together to ensure each cadet's room is uniform, down to the position of identical notes on the notice board and the position of the plug in the sink. Throughout your training you will recognise that dust is your enemy and you must be vigilant at all times in order to combat this ruthless opponent.

The fundamental tool in survival is good teamwork. The intense environment of SERE fosters this from an early stage, strengths and weaknesses are highlighted and developed upon. For those who consider themselves "lone operators" patience can become an issue, however, living in such close quarters, sharing experiences and collective responsibility form a cohesive team and effective team players.

Standards

As immortalised by one of our female officer cadets wearing make up whilst on bivvy night, "it's all about standards". Standards are pivotal to the core values and the functioning of the RAF. From day one we have standards drilled into us; standards of dress



code, punctuality, fitness and uniformity to mention but a few. We have been taught how to iron all uniform items correctly; these lessons have been invaluable, even to those who believed their ironing skills to be above par; for in the RAF uniforms are designed for the sole purpose of showcasing the skill of or lack thereof ironing; particularly with sleeve box pleats, pleats of precision and the notorious female quadruple pleated blouse! We have been indoctrinated to strive for excellence in everything, causing widespread frustration,

and nearing some cadets to nervous disaster over attaining the sharpest well placed creases and the crispest shirts! To fall short of perfection has earned each of us Restrictions or more entertainingly Show Parades. For those ignorant of these negative sanctions, attend the parade square of College Hall Officers' Mess; and 3 times daily you may have the opportunity to witness the misery of those cadets on Restrictions Parade who have fallen short upon expected standards.

Have expectations been met?

Overall SERE has met the majority of our expectations, I am relieved to state that it has not been pure purgatory! Whilst it has not necessarily changed individuals, it has equipped us all with the tools, confidence and capacity to deal with situations more effectively, both as a leader and a follower. We have been pushed to extremes and learnt to focus under pressure. The majority have found SERE emotionally harder than expected, with the unremitting, relentless hard work coupled with a lack of personal space; resultantly cadets have improved upon their physical and mental stamina. SERE has been more fun than



expected, for many of the wrong reasons, we have been brought together by the ridiculousness of situations and inspections, with multiple in-house jokes. Some have struggled learning the military core skills, but all have gained new capabilities and confidence be that in their own capacity or in their issued respirators following CS chamber test! SERE has offered insight into the roles of our future comrades, patients and flock. We will all be able to take forward the discipline and leadership methods learnt into military or civilian environments.

TOP TIPS FOR SURVIVAL

Come with a positive attitude and try to get into the military mind set early, you will be taking orders from day zero and receiving feedback from all directions.

- Work as a team to help each other, develop a washing rota, pre inspection room inspection rota whatever it takes to keep morale up and achieve uniformity.
- Come with a decent level of physical fitness, mental stamina and a good supply of multivitamins!
- Enjoy a slice of CAKE... Concurrent Activity, Anticipation at all levels, Knowledge...the rest to follow.



... another journey almost over

Journal Article 2013 - IOTC 30 Reflections (1)

IOT – The Term 3 Perspective

Officer Cadet A I Gray, B Flight, D Squadron, Initial Officer Training Course 30, Officer & Aircrew Cadet Training Unit

The entirety of the third term of IOT is dedicated to transformation: transforming from a cadet to a junior officer; a change from a strict structure to one's own 'battle rhythm'; from transactional leadership to a transformational style in the very best cadets. Throughout this term, the cadets have been put in a variety of situations to instigate these changes, from visits to exercises, to physical and mental challenges – this article will detail their experiences and lessons learnt.

One of the most difficult aspects of Term 3 is moving from the thought process of a cadet, into the mindset of a junior officer. The freedom given can be daunting, as well as the constant reminder that in just 10 short weeks, one will hopefully commission. In the first 2 terms, cadets tend to take each day as they come, and try not to get into too much trouble, then all of a sudden you are shown a world outside RAF College Cranwell. The Basic Air Warfare Course was an excellent opportunity to take the 'blinkers' off and see the wider Air Force. Looking at how each of the cadets' branches fits into the wider context of the RAF, and how that fits into the bigger defence picture. Also, being able to defend the attributes of what air power can offer, and understand the difficulties that it faces means the cadets can feel prepared to defend the vital role the RAF plays. Promoting the RAF will be one of the most important tasks that a junior officer will have, and that promotion will not just be aimed at other services, but increasing the knowledge and understanding of airmen in the future. Understand this important element of the cadets' career is key in moving from cadet to junior officer. Making our own brews and carrying them to a classroom was also a real treat.

Visiting Ampert House was a sobering experience for all of the cadets. The realisation that you could be informing a family of a bereavement as a 'notifying officer' is a stark reminder of the responsibility that all of the cadets could soon hold. It puts into perspective not being about to 'bull' your shoes very well. In addition to this, role-playing various interview situations from bullying and harassment, to underperforming personnel, showed all cadets just a few of the myriad of complex topics that could be covered every day, alongside your primary role.

In contrast to these very charged topics, we followed a programme of visits in London, where all cadets were expected to delve into the RAF's identity, culture and history. The atmosphere and the facilities of the RAF Club were impressive, and the feeling imparted on the cadets by the end of the visit will ensure that the membership will swell in the aftermath of our graduation. Being a part of the impressive history and culture of the RAF means a great deal to all cadets. St. Clement Danes Church reinforced the depth of the RAF's short history, with every Squadron ever created, forming a part of the church, as well as all the names of those who have given their lives in service with the RAF. It made us all feel proud to be there, and passionate to move forward in to active service



as officers outside RAF Cranwell, conducting ourselves in a manner that does credit both to the fallen and the wider RAF. The lessons that are given throughout IOT regarding the importance of an officers' conduct, bearing and moral courage seemed to grow and become more visceral after the London visits.

Structuring our own workload and timeframes will be essential in the future careers of the cadets, and as such Ex DECISIVE EDGE preparation and planning was one of the biggest transformations for the cadets. Term 1 & Term 2 is a test of perseverance, leadership, concentration and hard work. There is, however, a great deal of emphasis on following a structure and timetable to the absolute minute. In Term 3, there is a significant amount of time which is allocated for planning. When seen through the eyes of the Intermediate Squadron, it appears that the Senior Squadron have little to do. The 'lost gazes' on the faces of the Term 3 cadets has far more to do with their puzzlement as to how to make a 25-hour day work, as opposed to wanting something better to do. Balancing the preparation for the final exercise of IOTC 30 with presentations, committees, social events or any other delightful treats unleashed by the Directing Staff, is an art at which the cadets of IOTC 30 became wholly proficient. The cliché-bound senior officer's favourite expression about crocodiles and canoes is particularly relevant on Term 3 of IOT.

Grantown-on-Spey was an opportunity to let the cadets loose with a map, compass, some excellent kit, and some seasoned Adventurous Training (AT) Instructors. Once again, this was a change from the previous AT timetable of strict periods of activity and training. The cadets were given parameters, and left to plan and deliver an expedition that covered the 3 major elements of 'risk, rigour and robustness'. Taking care of our own battle rhythm in this way, allowed us to make informed decisions on the routes and contingencies we had planned. This had 2 outcomes: firstly, a sense of freedom, with which the Squadron could explore its own leadership style; secondly, it offered a sense of trepidation and responsibility, as the decisions and the structure that the cadets put in place had real-time consequences in an unforgiving environment. It is fair to say that all cadets were stretched and learnt a great deal from the experience.

In the first 2 terms, the course taught us the principles of transactional leadership, how to supply a 'carrot' for a job well done, and a 'stick' for a poor performance. The focus of leadership in Term 3 moves towards Transformation. This is not to say that the lessons from the first 2 terms are disregarded, but the cadets are encouraged to utilise the most effective blend of these types of leadership to fulfil their potential. The change, however, is a big one. No longer could the cadets do a 'lead' then slip into the relative anonymity of a group within the scenario. From the very first day, the Squadron, were informed that, as the senior group, we would be looked at even more closely, to set the example to the other cadets at OACTU. Throughout the term, there were many opportunities to try out this style of leadership, and observe the results. The establishing of a Combined Operations Centre (COC) accommodation, washing facilities and storage areas at the scenario Deployed Operating Base (DOB) for Ex DECISIVE EDGE was a challenge that the Squadron completed successfully. Within the 12 hours of work during the set-up phase of our deployment, we achieved a great deal, not because we necessarily had to, but because the cadets wanted to give the Intermediate Squadron the best possible arrival 'in-theatre'. Showing what could be achieved in a relatively short space of time encouraged the Term 2 cadets to have a successful time 'on operations'.

Throughout Ex DECISIVE EDGE, it was obvious to all the D Sqn cadets that being able to remain almost constantly upbeat, alert and enthusiastic

Directing Staff discussing the upcoming night training serials during Ex DECISIVE EDGE, March 13.



D Sqn digging into new mental depths to find extra power and commitment during 'Ultimate Challenge' – the faces say it all.

(Flt Lt Jim Smith) throughout IOT, tasted variously throughout the course by the cadets, and then brought to life on that one historic morning from the depths of the cadets' character and endurance.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'Transformation' is a marked change in nature, form or appearance. All of this is true when applied to the cadets completing Term 3 of IOTC 30. The natural thing to do when you are tired is to sit; the natural thing to do when you are unhappy is to look sad, and finally the natural thing to do when you are fed up and you have had enough is to give up. It is fair to say that all of these 'natural' things have changed for the cadets after Term 3. They are prepared and aware of how to 'over-ride' these instincts and continue to deliver strong leadership at the lowest of points. The form for the cadets in their first 2 terms

would inspire the other cadets, who were having a tough time with very little sleep, in extremely cold conditions. The same standard was applied at the breaking of the camp, where a small group of cadets cleared much of the base between the hours of 0100-0630, with constant rain and wind. When the sleeping cadets awoke the next day, their unanimous response was to be impressed, but also to get involved as soon as possible with the collapse of the base, in the same efficient manner as their overnight counterparts.

is to be the best cadet they can be. The form in Term 3 is to transform from a cadet with potential, into a junior officer with promise. Finally, in terms of appearance, the cadets all seem that little bit taller towards the end of Term 3, holding their heads high with pride at what has been achieved, and with a spring in their step as they look forward to what can be achieved in their futures with the RAF.

Being able to practice and offer transformational leadership even in this small way was an important lesson; one that was applied to the gruelling 'Ultimate Challenge' – a morning of physical activity which will never leave our memories. What would the cadets gain from winning the prestigious 'Golden Boot – Money? Food? A day off? None of the above, but by pushing themselves to the absolute limit of their physical endurance and mental stamina, the cadets of Term 3 learned invaluable lessons. Offering a vision is a key aspect of transformational leadership, and 'Ultimate Challenge' revealed to us the biggest attribute of Transformation; that you can get your people to go further and longer than they thought possible by chasing the vision that you give them. For D Sqn, it was the 'victory or death' attitude of B Flt that saw them prevail; the vision of success seeded by the Flt Cdr



B Flt, IOTC 30 - victors of Ultimate Challenge.



The Graduating Officers of Initial Officer Training Course 30 – 'Hic Sunt Dracones!'

Journal Article 2012 - IOTC 27 Reflections (2)

Robustness, Readiness And Rising To The Challenge

Officer Cadet V H Garrad, D Squadron, Initial Officer Training Course 27, OACTU

Arriving at RAF College Cranwell on day one, I knew that the weeks that lay ahead would be testing. The physical challenge however, was what I relished most and, over the first few weeks, the IOT programme did not disappoint. D Squadron was marched from place to place, undertook military drill lessons, completed physical training (PT) and testing, and developed their fitness and robustness on exercise. D Squadron's constant activity and exposures to the rigours of military life has meant that each member has become fitter, stronger, more competitive and, in line with our Squadron motto, 'Determined' to succeed.

To enable us to cope with the relentless pace at the College, PT is part of D Squadron's daily routine. The programme is varied and has something that everyone can enjoy and excel at, from swimming circuits to cross country running, and for those who prefer training with a more military emphasis, Battle PT.

From the first day, the Physical Education (PEd) staff have taught us to push hard in order to get the best out of ourselves and to leave the gym, pool or field with a sense of achievement. For many, PT provides a release after a period of focused academic study. That is not to say that it does not have its own areas of focus and challenge. Every session has a military bearing and staff expect cadets to adhere to the strictest standards, especially when completing drill 'with a jump', or catching breath after an effort.

Hands on hips will almost certainly lead to twenty press ups for the entire Squadron and cadets must thank the offending individual in unison, who is required to reply "you're welcome D Squadron!"

There are numerous opportunities for cadets to test their physical development throughout term one. After the first few weeks of PT, D Squadron was able to partake in the Inter-Squadron Sports afternoon and pitch their sporting talents against those of the C Squadron cadets. Following tradition, the intermediate Squadron carefully planned and selected their strongest sports – volleyball, swimming, the Orange Dash, cross country and superstars. With an all inclusive attitude, every member of D Squadron took part in the quest to beat the intermediate Squadron, but unfortunately, despite some impressive efforts in each sport, all out success was not to be and C Squadron took the victory.

The silver lining, however, was that D Squadron were able to claim the cross country trophy meaning that C Squadron could not celebrate a clean sweep.



The Superstars competition forms a crucial part of the Inter Squadron games.

Soon afterwards, cadets competed against those from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth at the Inter-Collegiate Games. The Army and Royal Navy cadets proved to be challenging competitors but overall victory was seized by the Royal Air Force cadets. All cadets showed support for their representative competitors throughout the day. The volume of the chants and claps from the side of the volleyball court belied the small crowd, and cadets and staff alike were animatedly cheering throughout the Orange Dash. The physical challenge of beating the Army and Royal Navy brought the RAF cadets from each term closer together, a point proven later in the bar as all cadets enthusiastically talked over the day's events and got to know each other better.

Physical challenges throughout term one have not only been present in the form of PT and sports days, but also in other areas of training. For those without any previous military experience, Exercise First Step was a short but nonetheless testing introduction to life in the field. D Squadron were formed up outside the block on a cold and wet October morning before first light, each individual waiting with anticipation for their meticulously packed Bergen to be inspected. Formed in a hollow square, each flight was instructed to empty their Bergen quickly, lining each item up in accordance with a photograph of ideal kit arrangement. The RAF Regiment staff gave the Squadron an insight into the standards expected of us over the coming days, and when we were not quick enough to remove our kit from our Bergen, we were required to re-pack them then re-empty them until the standard was met. By the time we were finished, daylight had crept in and the coach was ready to take us to Beckingham training area, where we were to undertake the Exercise.

The next 2 days would be D Squadron's opportunity to put into practice the skills that the RAF Regiment staff had taught us over the previous weeks, from weapons handling to land navigation. Without delay we began a one mile march to our base which set the pace for the rest of the day, and although difficult, each cadet worked hard not to lose the pace. The RAF Regiment staff had meticulously planned a variety of lessons to develop our military skills. With good humour, they taught us skills such as leopard crawling with our weapon, patrol formations, and how to camouflage ourselves and our kit. Covered in camouflage paint and pumped

RAF Cadets compete against cadets from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst at the Intercollegiate Games.

with excitement, we completed a course in the woods in which we patrolled and took cover to fire when commanded to do so. It proved easy for cadets to get into scenario and by the end of the course, cadets were ferociously shouting commands at one another. Many of D Squadron had already experienced spending the night in a bivouac (bivvy), but for those who had not, Exercise First Step provided them with an opportunity to do so and to manage themselves in the field. After a tough day of physical exertion, cadets enjoyed preparing their ration pack meals and cleaning kit for the following day before climbing into their sleeping bags alongside their rifle.

Cadets were able to experience a slight change of pace when they were tasked with completing Adventure Training at the RAF Force Development Training Centre at Fairbourne in Wales.

For many, the activities undertaken provided huge mental and physical challenges, but nonetheless, the team had fun and were brought closer together through shared experience. Cadets were provided with the opportunity to go down into a mine and in complete darkness, locate one another before completing a realistic scenario in which they located and rescued a casualty.

Their initial inexperience with such tasks and methods used to locate one another provided much amusement for the instructors. Perhaps the most challenging training undertaken at Fairbourne was a two day expedition in which cadets navigated a route they had pre-planned, and scrambled, waded and walked over technically difficult terrain. The physical robustness of some cadets was put to the test when navigational inexperience led to them becoming lost in darkness and fog, and using head torches for visibility, struggling to locate the camping area where another team waited. After several hours of cautiously scrambling up and down crags through the harsh weather conditions, the site was reached and the team battled the elements to construct their tents. The following morning, a huge sense of achievement was felt when broad daylight on the crags demonstrated the difficulty of the terrain the group had taken on.



D Squadron Cadets canoeing at Fairbourne.

As we neared the end of term one, D Squadron could reflect and see that the physical challenge had been difficult but varied. The challenges laid out before each cadet had demonstrated what we as individuals are capable of achieving, but perhaps more importantly, how much more we are capable of achieving when acting as one strong unit. Mental and physical tasks are inextricably linked and, as a Squadron, we learnt that there is definite truth in the phrase, 'mind over matter'. Difficulties during physical tasks have inevitably brought us closer together, allowing an insight into the team spirit that the Royal Air Force fosters outside the training environment. During term one, the D Squadron cadets developed a sense of achievement and pride which will need to be carried through to term 2 in order for us to face the tasks and challenges ahead - and each cadet very much looks forward to doing so.



Cadets stretch off on the Orange.

Journal Article 2012 - IOTC 26 Reflections (3)

Term 2 Reflections

Officer Cadet M A S Deri, C Squadron, Initial Officer Training Course 26, OACTU

Term one flew by. Even though I was there for 20 weeks due to injury it seemed to pass in a flash. Setting my sights on term 2 and the privileges that came with it, a room in College Hall, wearing "blues" and the permission not to march in the corridors in Whittle Hall seemed an unachievable goal, but now they were upon me and it felt good, a real feeling of progression.

The term started quickly. Having been fortunate enough to have 2 weeks at home, getting back up to speed had to be done fast, and the Directing Staff (DS) ensured that happened. Daily inspections, not all of which were announced in advance, were the norm and we jumped straight into preparing for deployment on Exercise Military Aid (Ex MILAID).

Ex MILAID was held at the Stanford Training Area (STANTA) and was very different from all of the other exercises that we had experienced up to that point. From the outset we were put into scenario receiving a briefing from the Chief Inspector of the Norfolk Constabulary. This role, played by a member of the DS, demonstrated that the enthusiasm and effort put in by the staff was going to be second to none. The Chief Inspector informed us that two (fictitious) local schoolgirls had gone missing and we were to be drafted in to help with the search. To reinforce the brief we were shown some BBC news footage that reported the story. From that point in, Ex MILAID had my full buy-in.

On the bus ride to STANTA I truly felt as if I was going to help the two girls and this helped me to conduct my lead successfully. I was appointed Bronze Commander, the overall commander to the cadet force. Unlike the previous exercises, Ex MILAID had no set timetable. We were not told when to eat, when to be ready to move and when the leader of any given section would change. As a result, I wasn't surprised to find that I'd clocked up 9 hours as Bronze Commander before the team was called in to review my performance. This type of lead had intrinsic advantages in that there was no forced leadership, what the DS saw was my natural leadership style coming through, enhanced by term one's 10 weeks of leadership tuition. By the end of Ex MILAID it was agreed by all of the cadets that this had been the best exercise by far and, although it had its lows - a covert Observation Point at 2am at minus 1°C springs to mind - it had also had its highs and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Academics feature highly in term 2 and the information comes thick and fast. Defence Writing (DW) and Essential Service Knowledge (ESK) take up a lot of time and Air Power Studies (APS) lectures are delivered daily, in preparation for the second APS exam. Lecture topics range from terrorism to ethics and there are a number of case studies covering the Battle of Britain right through to Gulf War 1. This worked out nicely for me, as the information in one of the case studies on the Falkland Islands helped me to write my Bandar essay. The Bandar essay is a 1500 word piece of academic writing that has to be submitted exactly half way through term 2. Having already served a number of years in the as a Junior Rank, I had just come off the Basic Engineer Scheme at DCAE Cosford where I'd had some exposure to writing this style of essay. For this I was very grateful as it was a new experience to some of the cadets on the squadron.

The intensity of the Physical Training (PT) increased too. I always thought of myself as having a respectable level of fitness having always achieved a good pass in my RAF Fitness tests. However, the PT staff really put us through our paces here. Some minor side effects may include tired legs, a bright red face and the loss of a stone or two in weight! With all of this hard work comes reward and just after submission of the Bandar essay came our partners' day, which was an opportunity to show our friends, family and loved ones what we had learnt during IOT and how far we had come in 15 weeks. This felt really worthwhile as the pressures experienced during the course can't always be translated to the people around you, over the phone or on a weekend.

Unfortunately in life, we are always assessed, and RAF Cranwell is no exception to that rule. In a very short period during the term, multiple

exams, assessments and tests are set in order to determine the amount of information you can assimilate. As mentioned above, the APS and ESK lessons were daily, but now the tests begin. Add to that the most pivotal exercise, Operation MUCRONIS, which looms ever closer testing your time management and prioritisation skills as much as anything else.

The culmination of all the leadership lessons and practical exercises are tested over a 10 day period during which you deploy on Operation MUCRONIS 1, set in the fictitious country of Moltovia. The exercise is designed to be as realistic as possible and, having served on multiple operations as an Airman, I can honestly say it succeeded in its task. The basis of the exercise is to test your leadership over 2 six-hour shifts, or leads, during which you will command a patrol, guard shift, the Combined Incident Team (CIT) or the hub of the sector, the Adjutant role. I had to wait 3 days before my first lead came up. This had its blessings as well as its negatives. On one hand, it would have been great to just dive in and get

one 'under my belt'; however, it was really beneficial to get the lie of the land and settle in to the exercise before being assessed. I was appointed Guard Commander and, in nearly freezing temperatures, with up to 7 of my troops out on the Control of Entry points around the base I had my work cut out looking after the needs of the guards, whilst maintaining focus on the task and my commander's intent. After six hours of running around, planning and generally being in charge, the shift was over and my fate awaited me. The DS who had been testing me approached and I was asked to step over to somewhere a little quieter, this did my nerves no good whatsoever! Thankfully though, it appears the DS just wanted some peace and quiet because he started to read "Deri has produced a good performance and is awarded a pass." If I am quite honest, the relief started washing over me and the rest of the report didn't sink in at all. Luckily, I was due one of the 4 enforced meals per 24 hour period and this gave me time to read over the rest of the report.

I didn't have to wait long for my next lead, this time I was Patrol Commander. I saw this as a real opportunity to shine as we'd been given chance to have a go at this role before in a previous exercise. The lead went well, with the team managing to rescue a casualty, find an

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and keep Dimitri, our host nation EOD expert, safe. All told, a typical 6 hours in Moltovia. Luckily I was again awarded a pass and for the first time in the 10 days, the pressure really felt as if it had lifted. Of course I still had to put in the effort as a follower for my fellow cadets' leads, so there was no time to relax in Moltovia. Towards the end of the exercise, I was offered the chance to take a third lead, completely un-assessed, so that I could further hone my leadership skills. I jumped at the chance and, to my surprise, I was offered the role of adjutant. I really enjoyed my time as the "Adj"; I'd even go as far as saying it was fun!

During this shift, one of the DS informed me that we had a scenario where we had to rehearse leaving the sector via helicopter. This was not a drill; a Chinook was due in 20 minutes and we would all get a flight. We transited to RAF Cranwell, practiced disembarking the aircraft, then re-boarded to fly back to Moltovia. As the DS said afterwards, "it's what we do, it's what the RAF is all about," and despite that fact I'd already flown in a Chinook during my previous service, it was a really good way to end an extremely good exercise.



Planning in the Field.

Journal Article 2013 - IOTC 32 Reflections (1)

IOT – The Term 1 Perspective

Officer Cadet M J Pickford - A Flight, C Squadron, Initial Officer Training Course 32, Officer & Aircrew Cadet Training Unit



Marching down a snow-laden Queens Avenue, from Number 1 Mess towards College Hall.

uniform completely covered in snow. Following completion of a long day, the squadron would trundle back past the illuminated grandeur of College Hall, towards an eagerly anticipated dinner in the more humble surroundings of No. 1 Mess; the College representing an inspirational reminder of things yet to come. Relaxation did not begin here however, as immediately after dinner, the Mess would empty as the Squadron filed off to begin the nightly ritual of ironing, cleaning and preparing for the following day's activities, long into the early hours.

By the 3rd and 4th weeks of the course, the physically demanding nature of the training, combined with long hours and little sleep began to take their toll on the Squadron, both physically and mentally. Staying awake and alert during lectures soon became a real challenge and I frequently had to make the decision to stand at

the back of the lecture theatre, not trusting my sleep-deprived body to stay awake. I was not alone in the battle to remain conscious with some cadets outright losing the fight and suffering the indignity and embarrassment of being caught by staff, having nodded off during the lesson. Others' minds switched off during other routine tasks. My neighbour in the block spent 2 days confined to quarters due to severe blisters from spilling a boiling flask of tea over his bare foot whilst ironing. Also, whilst stencilling our names onto the front of our PT kits in large white letters, one cadet unwittingly spelt his own name wrong, much to the amusement of the rest of the Squadron when it was noticed the following day. However, a more serious and sobering toll was felt when we lost 3 cadets from our Squadron to injury and failed fitness tests, no doubt the gruelling nature of the course being a major contributing factor in this. Entering the Royal Air Force as a Graduate Direct Entrant with a nonexistent military background, I did find this initial phase of training a complete shock to the system. However despite the negative effects of cumulative fatigue and constant pressure, my motivation and that of those around me remained steadfast. The journey to IOT for me began a long time ago and to just be here is a culmination of years of hard work. The daily march down Queens Avenue towards College Hall surrounded by snow is a sight that cannot help but inspire you and put your hard work into context.

The long days of training and lessons during this first month of IOT are designed to prepare us for the 4 main Exercises of Term One. It was these Exercises that gave the experience a real edge, taking us away from our usual daily routine and outside our comfort zone. The first was these was Ex FIRST STEP, in which classroom-taught principles of land navigation, weapons handling and fieldcraft were given practical emphasis, with 2 days spent on the Beckingham Ranges away from our Flight Staff, in the hands of the Regiment Instructors. We had field-based lessons in camouflage and concealment, battlefield movement and targeting, land navigation and fieldcraft. Two days of actions such Leopard-crawling through muddy fields intersected by cooking our dinner from 24-hour ration packs over a 'hexi-stove' and sleeping out in the elements with nothing but a sleeping bag and bivvy sheet on a cold January weekend, came as a welcome shock from the routine life at the College and gave us much needed time to practice lessons learned over the first few weeks.

On our return from Ex FIRST STEP, our time with the Regiment Training Instructors began to decrease and a noticeable shift began from basic

militarisation toward the underlining reason we are all going through IOT; development our leadership potential. This was first really tested on Ex KINETIC EDGE, where classroom-based leadership theories and styles were put into practise in the familiar surroundings of the OASC hangar. Every cadet going through IOT had been through the stress and pressure of performing in that hangar, desperately trying to impress the selection board with leadership potential. To be back there months later was a very surreal experience and as I walked around the different tasks, the memories of nerves and pressure I had felt during selection came rushing back. However this time, the experience proved a thoroughly more enjoyable and rewarding experience. My chance to lead the group came and as in my lead at OASC, I was unable to complete the task in the allotted time; rather than having to wait a tense 3 weeks to find out if this had affected my chances of selection, I was immediately debriefed with constructive criticism and advice from my team. It was very rewarding to see how the time spent at Cranwell had already impacted on my own self-confidence and leadership style from OASC only a few months previous, and it gave me a real boost of confidence moving into the second half of Term One.

Lessons drawn from mistakes made during Ex KINETIC EDGE had to be learnt very quickly, as the following week the Squadron swapped the relative luxuries of Mess life for the not so distant windswept North Airfield of Cranwell for 3 days of leadership tasks as part of Ex SHARP EDGE. The lead times were tripled from the previous exercise and were made far more realistic, physically demanding and mentally challenging than anything we had come up against previously. Over the 3 days we each had a turn at leading our section of 9 cadets in a scenario briefed to us by a member of the Directing Staff. This was followed by half an

hour of careful planning and briefing the team before setting off to execute the task. I was given the task of setting up a camera calibration zone for a fictitious overflying UAV. As new information was picked up, I soon had my team running down the airfield at double-time in a race to reach the co-ordinates and gather essential equipment. Despite the watchful eye of the Leadership Instructor being ever present, I found myself completely buying into the exercise and leading my team as though the scenario was genuinely happening. After a long day of charging around the airfield with equipment in tow, we moved into the nearby woods to set up our familiar temporary homes of bivvy sheets stretched between trees. As I sat under my hastily constructed bivvy sheet, trying to get warm by creeping ever closer to my hexi-stove as it cooked my rations, I felt a real sense of accomplishment. Everything we had learnt in a demanding 6 weeks at Cranwell had been put to use on the airfield. The leads had incorporated and tested everything from fieldcraft, navigation, teamwork and followership, fitness and more importantly leadership. It was very satisfying to realise how the sometimes long and tiring lessons had all been done to prepare ourselves to that point.

At the time of writing, 6 weeks of IOT have passed and we face far more challenging times ahead in Term One alone. Following an upcoming week of Adventurous Training in Fairbourne, my Squadron will sit academic exams in Air Power Studies and face a week in the field, further testing our leadership and military skills on Ex ACTIVE EDGE. However, as I look upon my personal development and recognise the development of those around me and how the squadron has bonded together in just 6 weeks, I look forward not with nervous anticipation but with eagerness and excitement to the challenges thrown down by RAF College Cranwell.



Cadets practice their battlefield manoeuvres during Ex FIRST STEP.

As the flight marches through Queens Gate and off towards Whittle Hall to begin an afternoon of training, a formation of red arrows, twisting and turning, soars a few hundred feet overhead. A fellow Officer Cadet turns to me and whispers; "We must have the best job". As I survey the scene around me, with College Hall shining grandly in the winter sun, I couldn't help but agree.

The first 4 weeks of life at RAF Cranwell flew by in a blur of frenetic activity. A typical day would begin by rising in the dark to administer ourselves and clean the block, before making our way over to No. 1 Mess, to frantically wolf down breakfast, in time to race back and stand in anticipation by our beds awaiting inspection by the Squadron Flight Sergeants. The rush for time led to new personal bests being set for how fast one could enter the Mess, polish off cereal, a fried breakfast and toast before rushing out of the door. Some cadets claimed to have completed the feat in under 3 minutes; hardly civilised officer behaviour, but nonetheless a necessity in those first weeks.

The pace did not let up during the day. Following the early morning inspections were hours of classroom-based learning primarily taken by the Force Protection Training Squadron, in lessons ranging from weapons handling, first-aid, skill-at-arms and land navigation. Lessons were broken up around sessions with the PT staff. Being quite a fit and sporty person before joining the RAF, I looked forward to challenging myself with the PT on offer and hoped to reach new levels of fitness. The PT sessions did not disappoint. Despite a thick covering of snow and ice blanketing the sports fields, a gruelling PT schedule pushed ahead undeterred. In our first OACTU Fitness Assessment (OFA), the squadron ran the 1.5miles through thick snow; trying not to slip around the corners of the route added an interesting and unwelcome element to an already daunting assessment. Daily PT sessions outside in the snow followed and ranged from sprint sessions to carrying simulated casualties in Battle PT, all made more difficult and demanding by the freezing conditions.

The snow also added an extra level of difficulty to the long hours spent on the drill square, as the embarrassment and frustration of 'tick-tocking' and marching out of step was combined with constant slips and skids on the ice and snow. This, however, did provide moments of much needed light relief when marching up and down a frozen drill square; on one occasion as the squad slammed to a halt, a cadet in front of me lost his footing and slipped onto his backside, his carefully washed and pressed

Journal Article 2013 - IOTC 31 Impressions (2)

IOT – The Term 2 Perspective

Officer Cadet A C Williams - B Flight, B Squadron, Initial Officer Training Course 31, Officer & Aircrew Cadet Training Unit

Officer Cadets on B Sqn were welcomed into Term 2 with a bang. After 10 long weeks (and in some cases more) of eager anticipation, we were finally in the plush surroundings of College Hall Officers' Mess. We had had a brief interlude in the early days of Term One due to a heating malfunction, but now we had earned our place in CHOM. We no longer had to go outside to reach our bar and we had earned our Term 2 privileges such as having quilts on our beds and being able to wear our blue uniform during the working week.

Our first weekend of term was spent on a Force Development exercise in Nottingham: Ex OUTLAW. The purpose of this Ex was to develop our teamwork and bargaining skills as well as individual initiative by completing a series of tasks in and around the city centre. These included getting airborne, getting waterborne, sitting in the most expensive seat and, bearing in mind the city's Robin Hood connections, take from the rich and give to the poor! The Ex was thoroughly enjoyable and it was good to have the opportunity to practice our leadership and teamwork skills in a non-military environment. The next day we had to present our adventures to the rest of the course. The team with the best presentation and the most completed tasks were rewarded with a small token of chocolate - this went to the team that managed to get themselves a flight at the local airport as well as test-drive a brand new car around town.

However, Monday morning was just around the corner and waiting to greet us with fresh academic pressures. We were faced with Air Power Studies lectures almost every day about the various Air Power campaigns ranging from WWI to the Kosovo Crisis, and beyond to contemporary conflicts. These lectures were enthusiastically received by many cadets who were glad to have moved on from some of the heavier, theory-based lectures of Term One. Cadets had the opportunity to let their passion and enthusiasm for certain battles or eras shine through both in lectures and in Syndicate Room Discussions (SRD), which were now witnessing more lively debates on a regular basis. These SRDs were hosted several times throughout the week by the Academic staff at OACTU, who are now working in conjunction with Portsmouth Business School. Cadets

were put through their academic paces towards the middle of Term 2, with exams on Essential Service Knowledge (ESK), Defence Writing (DW) and Air Power Studies (APS) to pass. On top of this, the infamous Bandar essay was also due in Week 5, a pass / fail element of the course, set in the latter part of Term One. The 1,500 word essay can be written about a number of different military or leadership topics, as well as Air Power campaigns from WWI onwards. The best essay of the year is awarded the Bandar Essay Prize so the pressure was on to win!

Shortly before our deployment on the first exercise of term, Exercise MIL-AID, a number of cadets were selected to represent RAFC Cranwell in the Inter-Collegiate games against Officer Cadets at the French Air Force Academy, in Salon de Provence. We competed against our French counterparts in Athletics, Cross Country, Swimming, Rugby, Volleyball and Superstars. Overall, it was a 4-2 victory to France but term 2 cadets made a great contribution to the efforts. Whilst not enjoying a victory over the French, Term 2 cadets were able to enjoy the local town of Provence and learn about the French military training system via our French hosts.

Before we knew it, Ex MILAID was upon us. The UK was covered in a thick layer of snow and the Stanford Training Area (STANTA) was no exception. Cadets were deployed for 5 days as Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA), assisting in the search for 2 missing girls from the Thetford area in Norfolk. This Ex was our last real opportunity to practice our fundamental leadership skills, or in some cases refine them, before the big test of Ex DECISIVE EDGE later in Term 2. All our leadership tuition from the past 15 weeks at OACTU was in the forefront of everyone's mind as we were faced with a fresh challenge every 3 hours throughout the day. It was a busy week for deployed cadets, with various situations to deal with such as media coverage of the search, working in a joint environment, aircraft crashes, search & recovery and road traffic accidents. The Ex finishes off with a 'Rocket Race'; 4 Sections racing across STANTA, in what can only be described as an epic game of hide-and-seek. This was a competition between the 2 flights and each was determined to win the ultimate prize, the B Squadron Tiger mascot.

Officer Cadets establishing a base of operations in the snow during Ex MIL-AID.



The Officer Cadets test their fitness against the RAF standard.

If Term 2 wasn't challenging enough, a PE'd session almost every day appeared in our timetable to keep us on our toes. On top of this, a small group took on the extra challenge of '24x24x24' - a 24-hour endurance event with 24 cadets completing 24 RAF Fitness Tests every hour for 24 consecutive hours. This charity event was put on to raise money and awareness for Home Start UK, which is a charity organisation that supports families and children in times of crisis, bereavement or illness. B Squadron set themselves a fundraising target of £1,000, and 71 donations later, the total amount raised had surpassed our target and stood at £1,500! After a few gruelling weeks of Aero Runs and Battle PT in the snow, the sporting event that all of B Squadron had been waiting for - the Inter-Sqn sports competition - finally arrived. Our opponents were C Sqn cadets in Term One, who were very confident of an impending victory if their cheering at the opening ceremony was anything to go by. However, after going head-to-head in Netball, Volleyball, the Orange Dash, Uni-hockey and the infamous 'Superstars', B Squadron came away with a 5-0 win under their belts. It was a brilliant feeling, especially after our 3-2 defeat the previous term to the undefeatable D Squadron.

The weekend following Inter-Squadron Sports was 'Partners' Day'. This was our first opportunity to demonstrate to our friends, families and loved ones everything we had learned and achieved over the past 15 weeks. Not only was this an opportunity to show them around the College and give them an insight into daily life at IOT, but we were able to entertain our guests in our first practice Mess function, with top-table complete with the PMC and Mr. Vice. This was highly entertaining and enjoyable for all, and built up excitement for future Mess functions to come.

With the ESK, DW and APS exams completed, as well as the Bandar essay handed in, preparation for our deployment on Ex DECISIVE EDGE became our primary focus. Term 3 cadets, who organise and run the Exercise, were sending a mountain of information our way by e-mail or in briefings squeezed around our busy timetable. The operation is set in the fictitious country of Moltovia in Eastern Europe, and simulates the early stages of a deployed operation, in particular the austere conditions of such a deployment. Cadets have to build, sustain and protect an operating base over a period of 10 days, 24 hours per day. The day was broken down into 6-hour shifts, with 4 meals per day provided by the Field Kitchen punctuating the end of each shift. As well as cleaning our rifles and boots, we had to eat 2 meals, administrate ourselves and get some sleep in the one 6-hour shift we had off per day. It was fair to say that sleep deprivation had set in by day 3, never mind by day 10, but this operation was designed to be as realistic as possible for Term 2 cadets - this was the culmination of all our leadership and Force Protection (FP) lessons in one long assessment period. Our leadership abilities were tested over 2 separate 6-hour shifts, during which we could be faced with the leadership challenge of taking on the role of Guard Commander, Patrol Commander, running the Combined Incident Team (CIT) or being the base Adjutant. To pass this assessment, cadets had to demonstrate their leadership abilities alongside FP skills to be awarded a pass from the Directing Staff (DS). Overall, the realism of what actually happens on ops was highlighted by many of our operationally-experienced DS and it reinforced the changing nature of the RAF - from enduring ops to an expeditionary force - to all B Squadron cadets.

Journal Article 2016 - Flying First Impressions (1)

ELEMENTARY FLYING TRAINING – A STUDENT’S EXPERIENCE

by Flying Officer Jamie Bunting MEng RAF

After completing a gruelling nine months of Initial Officer Training (IOT) at RAF College Cranwell trainee pilots are thrust into the world of flying training. Selected to join either 57(R) Sqn or 16(R) Sqn they must first complete Groundschool and Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction (SERE) training before being allowed near an aircraft. After completing Elementary Flying Training (EFT) they are streamed Fast Jet, Rotary or Multi-Engine and move on to the next stage of their flying career.

WHERE’S MY AIRCRAFT?!

Not all of flying training takes place in the cockpit; SERE training prepares pilots for the less desirable times when they have had to abandon the aircraft. The highly qualified instructors at Aircrew SERE Training Centre (ASTC) at RAF Cranwell teach students the physical and psychological skills needed to preserve life, improve their condition and facilitate recovery. The first week is classroom and site-based. Students are taught how to build their own shelters: these can then be customised with heat reflectors and drying racks; however, interior decoration is strictly limited to what can be found on the forest floor. A highlight of the first week is the day in the environmental pool: students learn how to enter water from height and set up life rafts, all while being buffeted around in complete darkness, driving rain,

gale force winds and sea state six. Fortunately, sea sickness tablets are handed out at the beginning.

SQUIRREL À LA CARTE

The second week is the field phase - Ex MOORTREK. Students have their new knowledge put to the test demonstrating they can build shelter, signal for help, collect water and make fires. Psychologically, the hardest part is doing without three meals at the Mess every day. Culinary skills learnt include: how to make infusions and teas from various plants, preparing rabbit and making squirrel jerky. Some skills are more transferrable to the kitchen than others!

BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

The students gladly return to their warm beds and regular meals during the six weeks of Groundschool where they learn the academic side of aviation. Those who have had some previous flying experience with a University Air Squadron have a familiarity with the flight instruments and navigation; however, *ab-initio* students need to learn the ‘lingo’ and the inner workings of devices they have never seen before. Fortunately, each experienced instructor is more than willing to pause the teaching for a tale “when I was flying...”, which helps keep things interesting. After weeks of learning, revising and testing the students are glad to slip the bonds of groundschool,

Journal Article 2016 - Flying First Impressions (2)

don flying suits and join either 57(R) Squadron at RAF Cranwell, or 16(R) Squadron at RAF Wittering.

GETTING WHEELS OFF THE GROUND

Once at Rauceby Lane the students meet their instructors and quickly settle into a life of mass briefs, studying, flying and debriefing. It is here that all of the knowledge from groundschool is put to the test. It is often said that once the helmet is put on, half of the student's brain is left on the ground so it is extra important to learn those checks! The pressure is on and the pace never lets up: students start with effects of controls and basic handling. At the same time they are expected to remember how to get to and from Cranwell, do the checks, work the radios, fix the aircraft's position both visually and using the radio aids and look out for other aircraft!

“BUT THE INSTRUCTOR WILL STILL BE NEXT TO YOU!”

In a shorter time than it takes some people to pass their driving test, EFT students are sent solo on trip 13. A memorable experience in any pilot's life: before the trip a slightly anxious mother asked her son “although you are ‘going solo’ will the instructor still be sitting next to you?” In some cases it is hard to tell who is more nervous: a parent, the instructor or the student. Nevertheless being able to enjoy a peaceful flight in the circuit without any interjections from the left hand seat is definitely one of the highlights. Once all of the course members have completed their solo sorties they are entitled to wear a ‘solo badge’. As it is a cause for celebration, the students go head-to-head against their

instructor on some kind of inflatable assault course in order to ‘win’ their ‘solo badge’ and wear it with pride.

GENERAL HANDLING PHASE

The first half of the course is General Handling and this is the foundation upon which the Applied Phases are built. It is all about learning how to control the aircraft when it is doing what you ask of it and also when it is not! As soon as the student thinks they have it under control another “Emergency” will crop up and before they know it they are doing a Precautionary Forced Landing into a large farmer's field. Many sorties are spent doing circuit consolidation where the students quickly collect two more hours solo time. Once out of the circuit and into the local area the instructor and student push the aircraft to its limits performing spins and aerobatics. No matter how dynamic the manoeuvre it is still the student's responsibility to quickly perform the next “aero” in the sequence all whilst monitoring fuel consumption, looking out for other aircraft and planning their recovery to Cranwell. The most enjoyable sortie in the General Handling phase is sortie 29 – Solo Aeros. Once they have mastered their sequence they have one hour of solo time to refine their display pilot skills and brush up on techniques before the Initial Handling Test.

FAST EYES, SLOW HANDS

Race horses have ‘blinkers’ and student pilots have an ‘instrument visor’ for the Instrument Flying Phase. The instructor has the luxury of normal vision; however, the student's vision is restricted to inside the cockpit to focus on the instrument panel. Used to practice

flight in cloud, it is all about having “fast eyes and slow hands”. It is easy to let the aircraft get away from you but by using known power settings and attitudes the pilot can maintain straight and level flight while his eyes are darting around the cockpit monitoring attitude, heading, speed, height and everything else.

NEVER LOST – ONLY GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPLACED

Every EFT student's abiding memory of the Navigation Phase is the hours spent pouring over maps searching all over Lincolnshire for suitable turning points and fixes. It is a battle between man and paper using the folding techniques to compress the map to a usable size. The first Navigation sorties are flown at Medium Level around 3,000ft and Low Level at 500ft. Navigating an aircraft consists of measuring the bearing and distance from A to B, adding the magnetic variation to produce the ‘track’ and using mental arithmetic to calculate the time at point B. However, no plan ever survives first contact with the enemy and in this case the enemy is the weather – or more specifically the wind! Pilots use ‘fixes’ to keep on track and the wind is rarely as forecast so use a variety of methods to regain track and update their estimated time of arrival.

THE MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE WITH YOUR TROUSERS ON

The four formation sorties are a welcomed change for the students – no maps necessary. This time it is all “stick and rudder” to stay on the primary references of the lead aircraft – pure flying. Doing 45° banked turns in close formation over Lincolnshire is a great way to spend an afternoon. On the fourth formation trip students get to fly solo and there is no better feeling than looking the short distance across to the other aircraft to see a fellow student with a face that shows total concentration and enjoyment simultaneously. The course comes to a close with the Composite Phase; six trips in which anything can happen. By this time the students are totally independent in the planning and preparation required for each sortie. They plan a route and what to include in the profile. The instructors push each student to the limit in order to test their airmanship and mental flexibility. Each gruelling composite flight will have multiple emergencies, which may

lead to precautionary forced landings; it is down to the pilot to show he can prioritise and deal with each problem while keeping a cool head. The flying culminates in the Final Handling Test where each pilot gets to prove his worth and finish the course – 56 flying hours under his belt.

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY?

Of course not! With Army and Navy EFT Squadrons at RAF Cranwell there are plenty of opportunities for Dining-in nights celebrating each Service's aviation victories. Taranto Night, hosted by the Navy, was particularly memorable as it contained historically (in)accurate re-enactments, including very dodgy accents and exploding model ships. With the constant assessments it is easy to become caught up in the ‘EFT bubble’ especially as everyone has a day when things don't quite go to plan and the social events are the best way to let off steam. The first milestone of EFT is ‘going solo’ and once each course member has achieved this they celebrate with a ‘solo barrel’; a barrel of locally produced ale is bought for the students to enjoy responsibly at the bar. After completing the course the students have their ‘streaming’ night; normally in the style of a game-show the students must complete a series of entertaining challenges to win their ‘prize’ which is finding out onto which aircraft type they will progress.

WHERE NEXT?

The ‘streaming’ night is an emotional rollercoaster. After six months of living and socialising together it is time to find out who goes Fast Jet, Rotary or Multi-Engine. Students submit their preferences but spaces are dictated according to Service requirement. Whilst some celebrate being awarded their first choice, the disappointment of getting their second or third choice is a necessity with which they have to deal. Those selected for Fast Jet move to RAF Linton-on-Ouse to fly the Tucano for 29 weeks before progressing to RAF Valley for Advanced Training. Rotary pilots move to RAF Shawbury to fly the Squirrel and Griffin Helicopters. Multi-Engine pilots remain at RAF Cranwell to fly the King Air. Wherever they go each student shares the experience of EFT and all of its ‘highs’ and ‘lows’. Whilst there were times when it seemed less than enjoyable, looking back on it as one's foundation in military flying, it is unforgettable.



Graduation Parades



College March

At the front of the College building is a unique parade square, known colloquially as the Orange. This is where the cadets learn to march in readiness for a variety of parades: the Queen's Birthday; Remembrance Day; Battle of Britain Day; the College's Founders Day; of course, the one parade they all look forward to, their own Graduation Parade.

Whilst the formats of each parade differ, there are some common themes. For example, the Squadron's march on to the 'College March'. The Colour Party marches onto the 'Lincolnshire Poacher', and you will find in the library formal permission granted by the Colonel of the Lincolnshire Regiment for the College to adopt the tune for marching on the Queen's Colour.

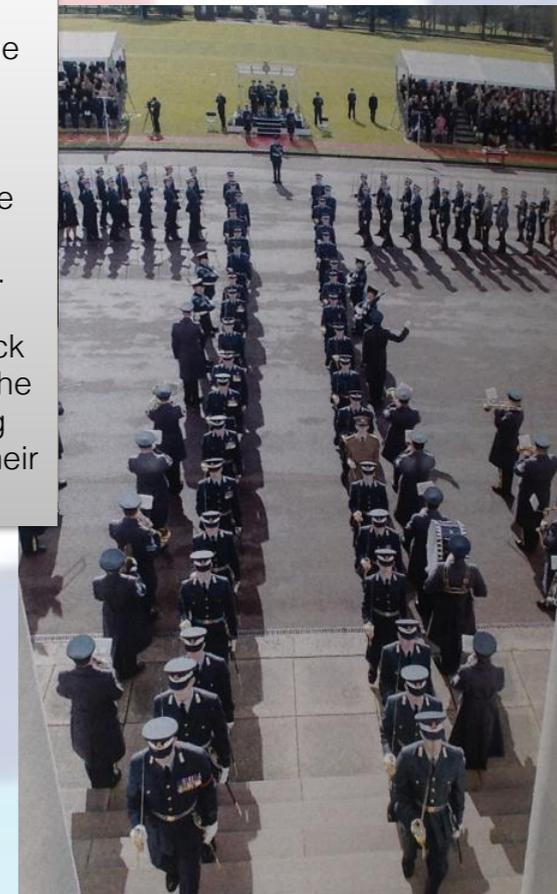
At Graduation Parades, the squadrons will march past the Reviewing Officer in slow and quick time, the former to the evocative strains of Aida's 'March of the Pharoes'. But the pinnacle of the Graduation Parade is when the Graduating Squadron marches off in slow time to 'Auld Lang Syne' - the first time that the cadets are permitted to pass through the front doors, signifying their rite of passage into the RAF as commissioned officers. Hoorah!



Lincolnshire Poacher



AIDA slow march



Auld Lang Syne

Graduation Parades



College March



Lincolnshire Poacher



AIDA slow march

Auld Lang Syne