

To - G. Pass Ed.

ARMY TECHNICAL SCHOOL. (BOYS) ARBORFIELD. BERKS.

In 1938 the mechanization of the Army proceeding at a very rapid pace, made ever increasing demands on the engineering side of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Those demands could not be met by the normal inflow of mechanics from civil life and in consequence of this shortage the Army Council decided to increase the facilities for training boy apprentices. With this view the Army Technical School (Boys), Arborfield, was constructed on the site of the old Army Remount Depot and commenced operations on the 1st May 1939.

OBJECT - The School was designed to accommodate and train 1020 boys in Engineering and other trades in the following proportions:-

Armourers	180	
Blacksmiths	40	
Coppersmiths	40	
Electricians	100	
Fitters (Equipment)	200	
Fitters (M.V.)	360	
Instrument Mechanics	40	
Turners	40	
Wheelers	20	1020

TERMS OF SERVICE - All Apprentice Tradesmen are enlisted for a term of 12 years commencing from the age of 18 years. Eight years are spent with the Colours and Four on the Reserve. In the case of boys enlisted for training as Armourers the whole of the 12 years is served with the Colours.

AGE ON ENTRY - To be between the ages of 14 - 15 years at date of examination.

METHOD OF ENTRY - Entrance to be as the result of competitive examination conducted by the Civil Service Commissioners. These examinations are usually held each half year i.e. March and September

DURATION OF TRAINING - Three years.

STANDARD OF PROFICIENCY - To train to the Third Class Army Standard in their respective trades.

PAY during training.

- During the First Year	-	11d per day.
- During the Second Year	-	11d to 1/3d per day
- During the third Year	-	1/1d to 1/7d per day.

TRADES RATE OF PAY - On attaining the age of 17½ years apprentices are trade tested and if successful graded as 3rd Class Mechanics and paid as follows:-  
 Group A Engineering Trades 5/3d. per day.  
 " B Armourers and Wheelers 3/- per day.

The above rates of pay are of course in addition to food, clothing, medical and dental treatment.

LEAVE - The School Year is divided into three terms and leave is granted as under:-

Easter	10 days
Mid-Summer	21 days
Christmas	14 days
<u>Total</u>	<u>45 days per year</u>

TRAVELLING FACILITIES - Each Apprentice tradesman receives two free railway warrants annually and any other leave is taken with half fare concession vouchers.

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ORGANIZATION -

For administrative purposes the School is divided into five Companies, each consisting of 204 boys. These companies are sub-divided into three wings, representing the year of training. The advantage of the system is that so far as numbers, ages, periods of training etc., are concerned each company is equal, thus games and competitions can be carried out within the School and on an even footing. The sketch Appendix "A" gives the organization of the Companies, and the staff.

BUILDINGS.

BARRACKS -

Housing accommodation is provided by means of 10 Barrack Blocks, two per company. Each block contains 6 huts, erected on the Spider principle and connected by means of corridors to a central lavatory and ablution block. Each Block contains six Shower Baths and hot water is always available. The total accommodation of the series of six huts is 96 boys, plus cubicles for six boy Non-Commissioned Officers. In the centre of each Block accommodation is provided for the Wing Commander, a Lance Sergeant from an Infantry Regiment.

COOK-HOUSE  
AND  
DINING ROOMS. -

A Central Cook-House with Dining Rooms either side, provides feeding facilities for the whole School at one sitting.

WORK

MILITARY  
TRAINING -

On entering the School each boy is medically and dentally inspected, clothed and equipped and then spends the first four weeks of his service on the square, in the Education class rooms and the Gymnasium. After the completion of this initial training only 3 hours per week is occupied with military duties.

TECHNICAL  
TRAINING -

All engineering apprentice tradesmen spend the next six months in the Fitting Shop where they learn to file etc., and to use the tools of their trades. The hours of work are from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and the allotment is as follows:-

Workshops	26½ hours
Technical Education	5 hours
General Education	5 hours
Physical Training	2 hours
Regimental " "	3 hours
Religious Instrn.	½ hour
Organized Games	4 hours

46 hours per week.

The technical training is accepted by all Trade Unions as an Apprenticeship, consequently the soldier trained in an Army Technical School is definitely a "craftsman" and on return to Civil life is capable of being employed in any Engineering Workshop.

EDUCATI  
General  
Technica -

Three Huts each sub-divided into four rooms give facilities for general education for 360 Students at one time and instruction is continued until the First Class Army Certificate is reached.

Technical instruction in Machine Drawing, Workshop practise and electricity is afforded by means of two additional huts sub-divided into three rooms each, and a further hut equipped as an electricians laboratory.

RELIGIOUS  
INSTRUCTION -

Each Apprentice Tradesman receives ½ an hour's religious instruction weekly and the establishment of the School allows for resident Chaplains in the following faiths:-

1. Church of England.
2. Non-Conformists (Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist).
3. Roman Catholics.

WORKSHOPS

- The School possesses seven large workshops, each measuring 210 feet by 73 ft. giving a total capacity of over 107,500 square feet. These shops possess excellent lighting both natural and artificial and are centrally heated. The lay out is as follows:-

- Pitters Shop (Bench Work).
- Machine Shop (Lathes etc).
- Electricians.
- Blacksmiths (including Welders and Coppersmiths).
- Armourers.
- Wheelers.
- M.T. Shop (Production).

In each workshop provision is made for an expense store and a class room for instructional lectures.

SPORTS AND AMUSEMENTS

CINEMA ETC.

- The Camp Hall, provides seating accommodation for 1,200 people and fulfills three functions i.e.

1. Gymnasium.
2. Cinema and Concerts.
3. Sunday Church services.

The School possess its own 35 m.m. projector and exhibits talking pictures on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Concert Parties are provided each Thursday by the Companies in turn and Band Concerts are supplied by School Band.

REGIMENTAL  
INSTITUTE

- The N.A.A.F.I. provides a well furnished canteen in which light refreshments can be obtained.

The billiard room is equipped with three full size billiard tables and in addition ping pong tables are provided in the Games Room, together with Draughts, Chess and Dominoes .

SPORTS

- The grounds of the School are fairly extensive and provision has been made for Football (rugby and Association) Hockey, Cricket and Net Ball. Boxing is exceedingly popular and the School possesses an up to date Boxing Ring. Many Apprentices are in possession of the Royal Society's Medals and certificates for life Saving but the absence of a Swimming Bath makes this very necessary sport rather an expensive one from the financial point of view.

LIBRARY

- The School possesses two libraries, technical and fiction, and excellent use is made of both.

HOBBIES

- The School provides facilities for the undermentioned spare time hobbies:-

- (a) Model Aeroplane making.
- (b) Photographic Society.
- (c) Stamp Collecting Club.
- (d) Rover Scouts Group.
- (e) Cycling Club.
- (f) Rambling Club.
- (g) Chess and Draughts.

Visits are arranged to various places of historic interest and during the past summer many famous gardens have been inspected in addition to organized trips on the River Thames.

No charge for admission is made for any School function or game and the expenses are met by a voluntary contribution of threepence per week from each boy.

VOLUNTARY STUDIES.

In order that Apprentice Trainees shall make the greatest possible use of their time in the School, facilities are given for voluntary studies and in this connection classes are conducted weekly in preparation for the examinations for Student Membership of the Institution of Mechanical and Electrical Engineers. These classes are well attended.

A very large number of Technical Films are exhibited in the School Cinema.

OUTPUT.

Since the formation of the School on the 1st May 1939 approximately 566 apprentice trainees have successfully passed the Third Class Standard Trade test and been posted to A.D.G.B. Units. Details of these postings are shown in Appendix "B".

Every encouragement is given to ex-apprentices to continue their studies after leaving the School and in this connection the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Anti-Aircraft Corps has instructed R.A.O.C. Divisional Workshop Corps, to centralise in each division all ex-apprentices and to provide facilities for continuation classes, in technical subjects. At the request of the G.O.C. a suggested syllabus has been provided. Appendix "C".

PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents or Guardians of Trainees are furnished with detailed reports of the progress of their sons or wards, twice yearly i.e. Christmas and Mid-Summer and it is obvious that in the majority of cases these reports are treated seriously.

A specimen record which is maintained for each Apprentice is attached. Appendix "D".

HOSPITAL.

The School possesses an excellent Hospital with accommodation for 72 patients. Medical Officers and Nursing Sisters are always available.

SAVINGS GROUP.

The School possesses a War Savings Group and practically all the Apprentice Tradesmen contribute one shilling per week to the Fund. The Certificates are held by the School until the boys leave on completion of training.