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FROM Mr. Turner

DATE 10th. July, 1956.

TO News Editors.

Mr. Stockwell

Queen and Duke visit Marham R.A.F. Station
July 23rd.

The programme is as follows:

The Queen arrives by air at 11.30 a.m. and is met by Lord Lieutenant and Air V.I.P.s.

She then drives to parade ground to present new Squadron Standard to No. 207 Squadron. This takes the usual form of such parades, e.g. inspection, speeches and March Past.

The Queen then enters a Land Rover and drives past one Victor, one Vulcan, one Valiant and twenty-six Canberras, after which she enters a Hangar to inspect a Valiant.

Luncheon follows.

In the afternoon, the Queen sees a Valiant Flight Simulator and then goes to a secret part of the Camp.

There follows a visit to the Airmen's Married Quarters and she is to meet a Flight Sergeant who has three children, one of whom is with Sadlers Wells'.

At 3.30 p.m. she drives to the airfield and watches a Fly Past of 72 Canberras and 20 Valiants.

At 4 p.m. she inspects a Guard of Honour and departs by air.

Facilities:

A Sound Unit is required and a contact is being arranged for its position on Friday, 20th, July. It will be able to film the Queen's speech, the Presentation of Colours, and the Fly Past.

I will be able to film the arrival and some shots of the Colours Ceremony. There is also a facility for me to ride in the vehicle which will lead the Queen's Land Rover round the Aircraft Inspection, to enable me to film the whole inspection. I will also be in the Hangar for the inspection of the Valiant (There may be some security restrictions there.)

In the afternoon I will film the Simulator and the Queen watching the Fly Past. There may be some difficulty in filming the Airmens Quarters (if required) because of moving from there in time for the Fly Past.

P. J. Turner.

NOTES FOR THE PRESS

VISIT OF H.M. THE QUEEN TO R.A.F. MARHAM, JULY 23, 1956

R.A.F. Station, Marham was first opened in 1916 as a home defence airfield. It closed at the end of the first world war and re-opened in 1937 as a bomber station. At the outbreak of the second war it housed two Wellington bomber squadrons, which were engaged initially on daylight attacks against German naval targets. Later the Marham squadrons took part in night raids on Western Germany. In 1942 it was the base for the first two Mosquito bomber squadrons, which specialised in low-level precision attacks on important targets. In 1943 it became a station of the Pathfinder Group, housing squadrons of Mosquitos equipped with "Oboe", a very accurate target-marking device. After the war Marham accommodated the Central Bomber Establishment as well as bomber squadrons. Today it is the base of No. 214 Squadron, (Commanded by Wing Commander L.H. Trent, V.C., D.F.C. No. 207 Squadron, (Wing Commander D.D. Haig, D.S.O., D.F.C.), equipped with Vickers Valiants, and several squadrons of Canberras.

It is a typical station of R.A.F. Bomber Command, commanded by a group captain (Group Captain L.M. Hodges, D.S.O., O.B.E., D.F.C.) with wing commanders in charge of the Flying (Wing Commander J.R. Musgrave), Administrative (Wing Commander B. Spray) and Technical (Wing Commander A. Murray) Wings.

There are some 1,400 officers and airmen on the station, about 35 per cent. of the latter doing their two-year term of service as National Service airmen.

The station has a large pig and arable farm which contributes to the feeding of the station personnel. There is a main sports field, with rugby and association football, hockey and cricket pitches, and other football fields adjoining the airfield. Marham has its own cinema and many flourishing recreational clubs, one of the most active being the arts clubs catering for painting, sculpture, pottery etc. There are other clubs for carpentry, photography, drama, aircraft modelling and motor cycling, also a Married Families' and a Ladies' Club. The station has Church of England, Roman Catholic and Nonconformist churches.

The Vickers Valiant, powered by four Rolls-Royce Avon turbojets, represents a considerable advance in the design of bomber aircraft. It is the most powerful, costly and complex aircraft ever to enter R.A.F. service. Designed to carry nuclear weapons, one Valiant can possess hitting power greater than the whole of Bomber Command at its peak strength during the war when it was commonplace for well over a thousand heavy bombers to attack enemy targets in a single night. It will be followed in service by the four-engined Avro Vulcan and the Handley Page Victor, which will have more advanced performance in speed, height, range and load capacity.

At present Nos. 138, 214, 543 and 207 Squadrons are among those equipped with Valiants.

The Valiant is 108 feet 3 inches long and has a wing span of 114 feet 4 inches. Because of its clean lines it looks deceptively small, and its size is best appreciated when standing below the tail fin, which towers 32 feet 2 inches high.

A feature of the Valiant is the extensive use of electricity to operate the various services - undercarriage, powered controls, flaps, air brakes, bomb doors, variable incidence tail-plane, trim tabs, fuel pumps and other items. There are 38 miles of wiring in the aircraft. Power is supplied by four generators, and there are 85 electrical motors and actuators and 225 electrical relays of 49 different types.

For any aircraft the size and speed of the Valiant, power operated controls are essential. The forces transmitted to the control columns are

heavy and there must be mechanical means of reducing them so that the aircraft may be flown comfortably. In the Valiant the control surfaces operate through electrically-driven hydraulic pumps.

There are two degrees of pressurisation, one giving a cabin equivalent to a fairly low altitude - to increase crew comfort during routine training flights - and the other for "combat" conditions, giving a lower degree of pressurisation and a cabin equivalent of a greater height.

The two pilots are seated side by side, with full dual controls. The two navigators and the air electronics officer are seated on a lower level, facing the rear of the aircraft before a console carrying a large array of instruments. The bomb aimer's position is below the pilots' seats.

The Valiant is pleasant and easy to fly. The placing of the engines in pairs close together on either side of the fuselage means that there is little difference in handling when one engine is out of action. The aircraft can take off on three engines without difficulty.

The English Electric Canberra, powered by two Rolls-Royce Avon turbojets is the standard light bomber of the R.A.F. It has been in service since the latter part of 1951. Apart from the B.2 and B.6 Canberras used for bombing, there are also photographic reconnaissance versions of the aircraft. The latest Canberra is the B.8 - in production for squadrons of the 2nd Tactical Air Force in Germany - which can be used both for high-altitude bombing and ground attack duties. It carries four 20 m.m. guns under the fuselage.

At present Canberras hold no fewer than 18 official world records. Some of these were established by the Royal Air Force and others by pilots of the British aircraft industry. Outstanding among the R.A.F. records was the flight from London to New Zealand (11,796 miles) in 23 hours, 50 minutes, in 1953 by Flight Lieutenant R.L.E. Burton. A Canberra powered by two Bristol Olympus engines holds the world altitude record of 65,889 feet (20,083 metres).

During the past few years Canberras of the R.A.F. have been seen in many parts of the world. In October-December, 1952 four aircraft, led by Air Chief Marshal Sir Dermot Boyle, Chief of the Air Staff, (then, Air Vice-Marshal, Air Officer Commanding, No. 1 Group) made a 24,000-mile tour of Latin America, covering the distance in a flying time of 50 hours at an average speed of 479 m.p.h. More recently other Canberra squadrons have made training and good-will visits to Mediterranean capitals, Canada, the Caribbean and West Africa. As a normal part of Bomber Command training, Canberra squadrons are regularly detached for training exercises in the Mediterranean and Middle East areas.

The Canberra is built for the United States Air Force under licence by the Glenn L. Martin Company, of Baltimore. Its U.S.A.F. designation is the B.57. It is also built in Australia.

The Valiant Flight Simulator. The flight simulator is an exact replica of the Valiant control cabin, which faithfully reproduces all conditions of flight, down to the noise made by the tyres meeting the runway on landing. Pilots spend 16 hours in the simulator, before actually flying the Valiant, and a total of 22½ hours simulator "flying" altogether. The simulator enables pilots to familiarise themselves with the essentials of Valiant flying without using an expensive aircraft which may be needed for advanced instruction. It also permits various emergency procedures to be demonstrated on the ground which could not be shown in the air. The cost of operating the simulator is approximately one-tenth of that of flying a Valiant.

The operator's control desk is in the space normally occupied by the navigators. The instructor - who is a qualified Valiant pilot - sits behind

the two pilots where he can observe their actions. The operator's "console" has a multiplicity of switches which can reproduce on the pilots' instrument panels between 20 and 30 emergency situations in various combinations, from a simple indicator failure to more serious matters such as an engine fire or undercarriage failure. It is possible to feed in a series of "defects" so that the situation gets progressively worse to end in a crash unless the pilot corrects matters.

The only flight sensation not reproduced is "g" (the effects of gravity) but this is no real disadvantage. In actual flight the rate of "g" would indicate to the pilot something unusual in the attitude of the aircraft. In the simulator he has no such warning and must rely on the readings of the instruments.

Apart from basic instruction in handling, the simulator is also used for practising instrument landing approaches and cross-country flights. In the latter case the track flown by the pilot is superimposed on the exercise track drawn on a map.

Biographical Notes

Group Captain L.M. Hodges D.S.O., O.B.E., D.F.C., (aged 38) was Chief Instructor at a Valiant bomber training unit before being appointed to Command R.A.F. Station, Marham earlier this year. Much of his operational flying during the war was with "Special Duties" squadrons, firstly concerned with parachuting agents, and landing to pick up important persons, in France, among them M. Auriol, later to become the President of France. Later he commanded a squadron in the Far East, which dropped supplies to guerrilla fighters in Malaya and Burma. In 1953 he commanded the R.A.F. team entered for the London to New Zealand air race. After establishing a new record for the flight from London to Ceylon he was delayed by mechanical troubles and was placed fourth. A member of his team won the race.

Wing Commander W.H. Trent, V.C., D.F.C., (42). The C.O. of No. 214 (Valiant) Squadron was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1946 for pressing home a daylight attack on the heavily defended power station at Amsterdam in May 1943, after all the other Venturas of his Squadron had been shot down. His aircraft was hit after dropping its bombs and he was taken prisoner. Born at Nelson, New Zealand we transferred from the R.N.Z.A.F. to the R.A.F. in 1938. During the Battle of France, flying Blenheims of No. 15 Squadron, he made many attacks on German troop columns and received the D.F.C. in July, 1940. Since the war he has been mainly on training duties and before taking a Valiant conversion course was Chief Flying Instructor at the Advanced Flying School at Oakington.

Wing Commander D.D. Haig, D.S.O., D.F.C. The C.O. of No. 207 Squadron, was Wing Commander Flying at R.A.F. Wittering, the first base for Valiant Squadrons from December, 1954, until posted to No. 207 Squadron at Marham last May. Born at Brentford, Middlesex, and educated at Maidenhead College School and Rendcomb College, near Cirencester, he became a flight cadet at the R.A.F. College Cranwell, in January, 1939. He flew on operations for most of the war with Bomber Command, on Hampdens, Wellingtons and Lancasters, being awarded the D.F.C. and Bar and the D.S.O. In 1950 he took the first course at the R.A.F. Flying College, Manby, and subsequently was Wing Commander Flying at Deversoir in the Canal Zone, where three Vampire squadrons were based.

/No. 207 Squadron

No. 207 Squadron

Today saw the first occasion on which a reigning Sovereign presented a Standard to a regular Royal Air Force squadron - fittingly No. 207.

The present unit derived its parentage from No. 7 Squadron, Royal Naval Air Service - the initial heavy night bomber squadron formed in British air services and in effect the fore-runner of the present day Bomber Command - being given its present identity in April, 1918, when the Royal Air Force came into being. Certainly it has more than lived up to the stipulations laid down by King George VI when he signified his intention of marking the 25th anniversary of the Service by awarding squadron standards.

These were that operational squadrons should have completed 25 years of existence, or earned His Majesty's appreciation by especially outstanding operations.

Already their predecessors had built up a reputation for themselves as a striking force, firstly with Caudrons and Short Bombers and later Handley Page aircraft, and '207' continued this offensive spirit right up to the end of World War I.

After a period with the Army of Occupation, the Unit was disbanded at Uxbridge on January 20, 1920, only to be reformed within a fortnight as a regular service squadron.

Two years later they went on detachment to Turkey, returning to Eastchurch in 1923, at this point in their history taking part in bombing trials against the radio-controlled battleship, H.M.S. Agamemnon. The 1930's saw conversion to three other types of aircraft - Fairey Gordons, then Wellesleys and finally Fairey Battles.

By the outbreak of the second World War No. 207 Squadron had become a training ground for operational crews, and another year was to pass before it returned to its task proper - the bombing of enemy targets. 1940 saw them taking an active part in raids over Germany, the squadron by this time having Manchesters.

Like their sister units in the Command they operated against industrial targets in the Ruhr, enemy held seaports, and many other objectives decided upon by staff chiefs.

Certainly Italian centres felt the weight of their bomb loads, and 1942 - by which time they had Lancasters - saw crews regularly operating 'shuttle' raids in this theatre from bases in England and North Africa.

In July, 1944 '207's' main objectives were the flying bomb launching sites. During this month the gunner of one crew shot a V-1 down while it was in flight. Crews took part also in the extremely successful attack on the Dortmund Ems canal, breaching its banks and thus breaking one of the main enemy lines of communication at a time when the Allies were pressing on towards Germany. Next year they played a big role in the softening up of the German resistance at Wessel, a main Allied crossing point on the Rhine.

For their operations against the enemy, which culminated in the attack on Hitler's Headquarters at Berchtesgaden, fliers of No. 207 Squadron were awarded seven D.S.O.'s, 115 D.F.C.'s, 92 D.F.M.'s and ten Mentions in Despatches.

Early post-war years - after being disbanded for twelve months beginning in 1950 - brought a change of aircraft, this time Washingtons. These remained with the unit until 1954 when the squadron was re-equipped with Canberras.

/Twelve

Twelve months later the unit was again disbanded, to be reformed this year - at its present station - with Valiants. The first pilot to arrive was its present 'A' Flight Commander, Squadron Leader P.H. Gibbs, a former Commanding Officer in 1955 under whom the squadron gained first place in the No. 3 Group Operational Efficiency 'Ladder'.

The first occasion on which the Queen presented a standard to a Squadron was at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in June, last year, when this award was made to No. 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, of which Her Majesty is the Honorary Air Commodore.

The Battle Honours selected by the squadron to be embroidered on the Standard are:- Ypres, 1917; Somme, 1918; Hindenburg Line; German Ports, 1941-1945; Berlin, 1941-1945; Ruhr, 1941-1945; France and Germany, 1944-1945; Normandy, 1944.

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