



Serial No. 34101

AIR MINISTRY PASS (K.R. 1073)
(which must be given up at the Station
Guardroom on termination of the visit)

To: The Commanding Officer,
Royal Air Force Station,

Watchet

Mr. *Representative*

Pathe News

(Address) *133 Oxford St. W. 1*

is hereby granted permission to visit *the station*

in order to *film R.A.F. Regiment L.A.A. Training*

Period of Validity *Monday/Tuesday 9th/10th June 1952*

D.R. Hill
for Chief Information Officer.

NOTES (i) This pass is valid only for the specific facilities stated above. No further facilities should be provided without obtaining the approval of Inf. 2 (b) Facilities, Air Ministry.

(ii) Flying facilities are not to be offered unless specifically authorised above, in which event a Form of Indemnity as in Appendix XXIII of K.R. & A.C.I. (as amended by A.M.O. A.24/1947) must be completed prior to the flight.

X Please travel on 3.30 p.m. train from Paddington to Watchet on Monday.

W. Cummins:

We can only send

silent C-man - no sound available

OK? - 75.

TRAFalgar 8811
Extns 6151
or 6154

INFORMATION DIVISION,
AIR MINISTRY,
WHITEHALL,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Yes possible
H

4th June, 1952.

Dear Sir,

The general expansion of the Royal Air Force brings additional commitments to the Royal Air Force Regiment. Perhaps one of the most important of these would be the defence of airfields and vital installations in forward areas against possible air attack by low level high speed jet bombers. The responsibility for the defence of these installations will rest with the Light Anti-Aircraft Squadrons of the Royal Air Force Regiment equipped with 40 mm Bofors guns. All officers, N.C.O.'s and airmen, allocated for duties with L.A.A. Squadrons are trained at the Royal Air Force L.A.A. Gunnery School, Watchet, Somerset.

This school, in addition to the training of Regular and National Service officers for gunnery and gunnery instruction duties, also trains N.C.O.'s as assistant gunnery instructors and airmen as gunners. The instruction includes live firing and special deployment exercises covering all spheres of L.A.A. work..

In order that the press may see something of the training programme in the gunnery school, a press visit has been arranged for next Tuesday June 10. The visit, which will be attended by the Commandant General of the Royal Air Force Regiment, Air Vice-Marshal S.C. Strafford, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C., will include a demonstration of National Service airmen man-handling guns over obstacles and an "A.A. Flight in Defence" when jet aircraft will carry out rocket and bomb attacks on six guns which will fire break-up shot.

The six guns will be manned by detachments drawn from every type of course at present under training at Watchet. The press will also be able to see an Auxiliary Squadron at summer camp; the Portobel Dome Teacher and other sections of the camp, including the technical servicing of weapons.

It is suggested that correspondents should travel on the 3.30 p.m. train from Paddington to Watchet where transport will meet the train at 6.50 p.m.

Limited accommodation will be available in the officers' mess.

I shall be grateful if you will let me know on the above extensions if you wish to be represented.

Yours faithfully,

R. [Signature]

for Chief Information Officer

3.30
Pudd/Walder

The Editor

VISIT TO R.A.F. STATION, WATCHET
10TH JUNE, 1952.

Introduction

The second fighting arm of the Royal Air Force - the Royal Air Force Regiment - has during the past twelve months been enlarged in line with the rapid expansion of the Royal Air Force.

The R.A.F. Regiment is a specially selected and highly trained force. Regiment personnel provide the reconnaissance and counter-attack troops and the light anti-aircraft gun detachments protection for the most advanced and certain vulnerable jet fighter airfields and vital radar stations in forward areas. Their job is to deal instantly with infiltrating enemy ground forces, airborne troops or guerrillas, and low level air attacks.

The Regiment is made up of Rifle Squadrons, Armoured Car Squadrons and Light Anti-Aircraft Squadrons, grouped as required in Wings. In addition it provides officers and N.C.Os. for the locally raised ground forces of the Royal Air Force in Iraq, the Adon Protectorate and Malaya - (the Iraq Levies, the Adon Protectorate Levies and the R.A.F. Regiment, Malaya, respectively). In addition Regiment officers and N.C.Os are responsible for training personnel of the R.A.F. for ground combat duties under the "hodgehog" defence plan.

At the present time the greater part of the R.A.F. Regiment is serving overseas.

The training of gunners for the Light Anti-Aircraft Squadrons responsible for the defence of airfields and radar installations in forward areas is carried out at the R.A.F. Regiment L.A.A. Gunnery School at Watchet (Somerset). At this Unit, officers, N.C.Os and airman, receive highly specialised training in dealing with possible attacks by high speed jet aircraft.

R.A.F. Station, Watchet

R.A.F. Station, Watchet, near Minthead, is the only Unit of its kind in the Royal Air Force, and all officers and airmen allocated for duties with L.A.A. Squadrons receive their training at this Unit. Courses are running simultaneously for both regular and National Service officers, for officer instructors, N.C.O. assistant instructors and for airman gunners.

The aim of the instructors' courses is to provide reliefs of instructors for the school and for operational squadrons, while the airmen's course is designed to fit young recruits, both regular and National Service, to take their place in operational squadrons. In addition, courses are run for officer cadets prior to their being sent to an Officer Cadet Training Unit. N.C.Os are also trained as assistant gunner instructors.

All courses receive as much practical training as possible and fire the standard weapon of the L.A.A. Squadrons - the 40 mm. Bofors Gun - from ground-to-air and ground-to-sea. In addition practical mobile deployment exercises are staged at which the pupils carry out training as realistically as possible. These exercises, which last up to 48 hours, entail the pupils laying all communications, mounting observation posts and arranging suitable camouflage. In addition, the guns are attacked by both jet and piston engined aircraft in order that pupils can gain as much practical experience of "laying" guns on aircraft at various speeds. Courses also undertake various gun drills, and the standard time of bringing guns "into action" and "out of action" is 90 seconds.

Training is also given in a Dome Tachar.

History

The present school has its origin at the Isle of Man when, prior to the formation of the R.A.F. Regiment, Royal Air Force ground defence personnel received training at Ronaldsway on what was then called the "Two gun course". The school

later became a Training Wing at Hummanby Moor and remained there until 1945 when it moved to Nethertown in Cumberland. In 1947 the present camp was taken over from the Army and became the permanent L.A.A. Gunnery School of the Royal Air Force Regiment.

During World War II R.A.F. Regiment L.A.A. Squadrons landed on D-Day and also took their part alongside the Army against the flying bomb attacks. In addition Squadrons served in both the Far and Middle East theatres.

Armament

The main armament of the L.A.A. Squadrons - the 40 mm. Bofors gun - was introduced into the Regiment in 1942. It is designed primarily for the destruction of low-flying aircraft, but is also adaptable as an anti-tank weapon or as light support artillery. The gun detachments in addition are equipped with light automatic weapons and can, if necessary, take on the role of infantry.

The main characteristics of the Bofors gun are:

Lightness and ease of handling: The gun, which weighs $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons, is fully mobile and can be towed by a standard 3-ton R.A.F. vehicle. It is manned by a detachment consisting of an N.C.O. detachment commander and six airmen, and can be brought into action from the travelling position in less than 90 seconds. In addition to the detachment required to fire and maintain the gun, there is a driver and signaller.

Speed of Traverse: The gun can be traversed at a maximum rate of 50° per second. The maximum effective speed of traverse when laying is 15° per second. The rate of traverse is $13^{\circ} 7\frac{1}{2}$ minutes per turn of the traversing hand wheel.

High rate of fire: An essential requirement in the engagement of low flying aircraft is a high rate of fire. The 40 mm. Bofors has two rates of fire, from 60-90 rounds per minute "single shot" and 120 rounds per minute "automatic".

High Muzzle Velocity: The muzzle velocity for a new gun, using a flashless non-hygroscopic propellant charge is between 2762 and 2862 feet per second.

Continuity of fire: The gun is not normally subject to mechanical stoppages.

Cooling system: The gun has no artificial cooling system. The mechanism is air cooled, and barrels are changed after 50-60 rounds of automatic fire.

Method of fire control: The gun employs two methods of sighting: one by means of the correctional sights and the other by the use of a cartwheel foresight. When the correctional sight is used, the assessed aim-off speed is set on the sights by means of an aim-off speed scale which moves the sights to the required amounts of deflection through the medium of a linkage. The action of laying the sights on the target gives the required amount of deflection. When the cartwheel foresight is used the sights are locked, and aim-off is applied by means of speed rings on the foresight.

Ammunition: The 40 mm. equipment fires both high explosives and armour piercing shot. The high explosive shells are self-destructing and are fitted with a direct action fuse. In its anti-tank role, using A.P. shot, the shell can pierce 84 mm. of armour at 400 yards and 67 mm. of armour at 1,000 yards.

Communication with gun: The gun is in direct communication with the L.A.A. control centre, by field telephone or by wireless. Information of an operational nature is passed to the signaller on duty at the gun.

Technical Services

The mobility of L.A.A. Squadrons with a large number of vehicles and guns to maintain, is the responsibility of the Chief Technical Officer, and the work is

/carried

carried out by R.A.F. tradesmen and Regiment gunner-armourers. All the major inspections and overhauls of guns and equipment are completed at Watchot.

Station Commander

The present Station Commander is Wing Commander E. J. P. Finney, whose home is at 41, Rockloigh Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. Born at Goodmayes, Essex, and educated at Goodmayes Council School and Ilford County High School, Wing Commander Finney joined the Royal Air Force on a direct commission in December, 1941. Now holding a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force Regiment he was, prior to his present appointment, serving in the Royal Air Force delegation to Greece, where he was advisor to the Royal Hellenic Air Force Regiment. Prior to his Royal Air Force service, Wing Commander Finney was a wholesale textile buyer, and served as a head warden in Ilford in 1938 and later as an officer in the Home Guard.

In addition to his appointment as Station Commander, he is the Senior Training Officer and is responsible for the instigation of training policy.

Chief instructor at the School is Squadron Leader H. H. Wood Glover, M.B.E., who is a former Senior Ground Defence Staff Officer at H.Q. No. 2 Group, 2nd Tactical Air Force in Germany.

Air Ministry Information Officer,
Ruskin Chambers,
191, Corporation Street,
BIRMINGHAM, 4.

June, 1952.