

## WINGS OVER THE WALLOPS

### Army Air Corps Day

Middle Wallop Air Station, near Andover  
PM Sat, 23 July 1960

#### Points of Interest

1. This is the first public display by the Army Air Corps which was formed in September 1957 from those RAF units which provided air observation and light liaison for the Army and whose aircraft were flown by Army pilots.

2. Some 60 mums and dads and brothers and sisters of the men who wear the sky-blue beret (headgear of the Army Air Corps and attached personnel) will be staying the night in barracks after the show. Note: "attached personnel" includes Women's Royal Army Corps who think the beret very becoming.

3. Two unusual aircraft are due to appear in the flying demonstration:

(a) The Wallis-Benson Autogyro - a pint-sized aeroplane, first cousin to a helicopter, which we gather was built in a backyard. It performs remarkable evolutions, powered by a small two-stroke engine.

(b) The Flying Li-Lo, properly known as the inflatable-wing aircraft. This machine consists principally of an engine and a mass of rubberised fabric envelope which is pumped up to resemble an elephantine aeroplane.

Neither of these machines is, strictly speaking, an Army Air Corps type, but they are included because their owners are good friends and neighbours of the people at Middle Wallop, and they add to the gaiety of aviation.

4. The flying display, a continuous performance from 2.30 pm, also includes:

(a) Formation flying by fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft of the Army Air Corps.

(b) Competition flying by A.A.C. students.

/ A dummy shoot .....

## Army Air Corps Day (2)

- (c) A dummy shoot by guns of 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, controlled by a spotter aircraft of 651 Air Observation Flight, Army Air Corps.
  - (d) A demonstration by a 1918 Bristol Fighter
  - (e) Glider aerobatics by the RAF Gliding Club
5. The flying display will be followed by the ceremony of beating Retreat by the bands and drums of the 1st Bn and 3rd Bn, The Parachute Regiment.
6. An all ranks' dance is to take place in the event. The families mentioned in para 1 will be present, and so will many nurses from local hospitals. The response from the hospitals to the invitation to the dance has been so overwhelming that we wonder who is going to care for the patients.
7. General Sir Hugh Stockwell, Colonel Commandant of the Army Air Corps, is to be there for the Day. And so will the GOC-in-C Southern Command, Lieut-General Sir Nigel Poett, who is a former parachutist.

### PRESS CONTACT

8. Your contact at Middle Wallop, if you are going there direct, is Captain Mike Naish who can be found in or near the Control Tower.
9. We hope you will join us at Busigny Barracks, Perham Down, Tidworth, in the morning when the Queen Mother will be visiting the 9th Lancers, and then have luncheon with us and come along to Middle Wallop afterwards. If you cannot make the morning event, Middle Wallop is five miles south-west of Andover on the A.343 - the Andover - Salisbury road.

Over: Notes on Middle Wallop Air Station

## Notes on Middle Wallop Air Station

This is an extract from a foreword to the Army Air Corps Day programme by General Sir Hugh Stockwell, Colonel-Commandant of the Army Air Corps:

"In its short history this airfield has seen many changes and many uniforms. Completed in May, 1940, it played a conspicuous part in the Battle of Britain and was later a night fighter station responsible for a great number of kills, many credited to Group Captain Cunningham - probably the best-known night fighter pilot of the war. At later dates it became in turn both a United States and a Naval Air Station before reverting once again to the R.A.F.

"In September, 1957, the Army Air Corps was officially formed, based on the Air Observation Post Squadrons and the Light Liaison Flights which, though R.A.F. units, were operated by pilots of the Royal Artillery and of the Glider Pilot Regiment. Thus the youngest corps of the British Army was created, and the airfield was taken over in September, 1958, by yet a fourth service in its short history. It now houses the Army Air Corps Centre, which trains the pilots drawn from all arms of the service; the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who, together with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps service and maintain the Corps aircraft; Number 651 Light Aircraft Squadron, who support the 3rd Division and the Parachute Brigade; and Number 6 Liaison Flight which is responsible for Army communication flying duties in the United Kingdom. The non-technical backing for the Corps is provided by the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

"The Modern Army is entering a new and interesting phase in which reliance on the use of the air, both tactically and logistically, will inevitably play a bigger and increasingly important part. The introduction and development of vertical lift aircraft is in the main responsible for this. At present this is confined to aircraft of the helicopter type. In the future we may see an increasing demand for "cushion" vehicles of the Hovercraft type, "Converter" planes on the Rotodyne principle and aircraft using ducted fans.

"To man the Army Air Corps we primarily require trained Army Officers and N.C.O.s who are capable of carrying out their normal duties in this new medium. Thus the fun and enjoyment of flying is now open to all branches of the Army. I have no doubt that it will attract many young men of spirit."

## Formation of the Army Air Corps

After many years of discussion, December 1938 saw the start of actual trials with aircraft at Larkhill designed to discover if it was possible to observe fire from a low altitude and from behind the front line, and to see whether light aircraft flown by the observer himself were practicable for the job. The encouraging results led to the formation of "D" Flight under the School of Army Co-operation, Old Sarum.

"D" Flight (Air OP) R.A.F. was thus the first Air Observation Post Unit to be formed. It consisted of six officers, thirty-two other ranks and four aeroplanes (three 90 h.p. Taylorcraft and one Stinson 105). Formed on 1st February 1940, the Flight flew to France on 19th April 1940 and after trials at a French Army Artillery Practice Camp was ordered to move into action on the Saar front on 10th May for the essential trials against a real enemy. But the German offensive, launched on 10th May, upset the plans and the unit was recalled to England. It flew home on 20th May.

In June 1940 "D" Flight came under the command of Headquarters 22 Group RAF and later formed the nucleus of 651 Air O.P Squadron R.A.F. which was the first squadron into action (in North Africa).

In all, twelve Air OP Squadrons were formed during the war. The pilots were all Gunners, while the Adjutant and Equipment Officers were R.A.F. The R.A.F. also supplied the personnel to service the aircraft. Non-technical personnel - drivers and signallers - were drawn from the Royal Artillery..

After the war a number of squadrons were disbanded and others converted into Auxiliary Squadrons, which in their turn were also disbanded at the same time as all other Royal Air Force Auxiliary Squadrons.

The Air OP Squadrons were called upon to do a great many jobs in addition to observation of fire - photographic reconnaissance, liaison flying, message and supply dropping, casualty evacuation. It was decided therefore, in the early 1950s, to form Liaison Flights and No.1 Independent Squadron. The Glider Pilot Regiment moved to Middle Wallop and undertook this task. A number of war-time glider pilots came back to help, the remaining pilots being drawn from all arms of the service.

Pilots for all these units were volunteers and did a three-year tour after their initial training, afterwards returning again to regimental duty.

In September 1957 the Army Air Corps was formed, Squadrons were re-named Light Aircraft Squadrons, Army Air Corps, and Flights designated Reece or Liaison according to their role. A small permanent cadre of Army Air Corps pilots was formed, the remaining pilots still being drawn from volunteers from all arms as before.

/With the formation .....

With the formation of the Army Air Corps, R.E.M.E. took over all first and second line servicing responsibility from the R.A.F. whose personnel were phased out as R.E.M.E. became trained. This process is now nearly completed.

A very strong liaison is still maintained with the R.A.F. who continue to give as much of our technical backing and to train our flying instructors.

The Army Air Corps at the moment consists of the Army Air Corps Centre, one Wing Headquarters, five Squadron Headquarters and twenty Flights, of which four are independent.

ARMY AIR CORPS DAY

FLYING PROGRAMME

ROLL 1  
100' AIR  
TO AIR.

- X — 1. Formation Flying.
2. Introduction to Army Aircraft.
3. Formation Landings.
4. Air Observed Shoot.
5. Chipmunk Aerobatics.
6. Inflatable Wing.
7. Height and Speed Judging Competition.
- X — 10. Demonstration of Load carrying by Alouette Helicopter.
11. Auster Aiglet.
- X — 12. Glider Aerobatics.
- X — 13. Bristol Fighter.
14. Balloon Bursting.
15. Gnome Wasp and Skeeter Helicopters.
- X — 16. Helicopter Formation Flying.
- X — 17. Auster Handling Demonstration.
18. Alouette Handling Demonstration.
19. Wallis Benson Autogyro.
20. Wessex and Westminster Helicopters.
- X — 21. Chipmunk Formation Flying.
22. Chipmunk Instructor/Student Demonstration.
- X — 23. Static Line and Free Fall Parachuting.
24. Finale.

ROLL  
2

400'