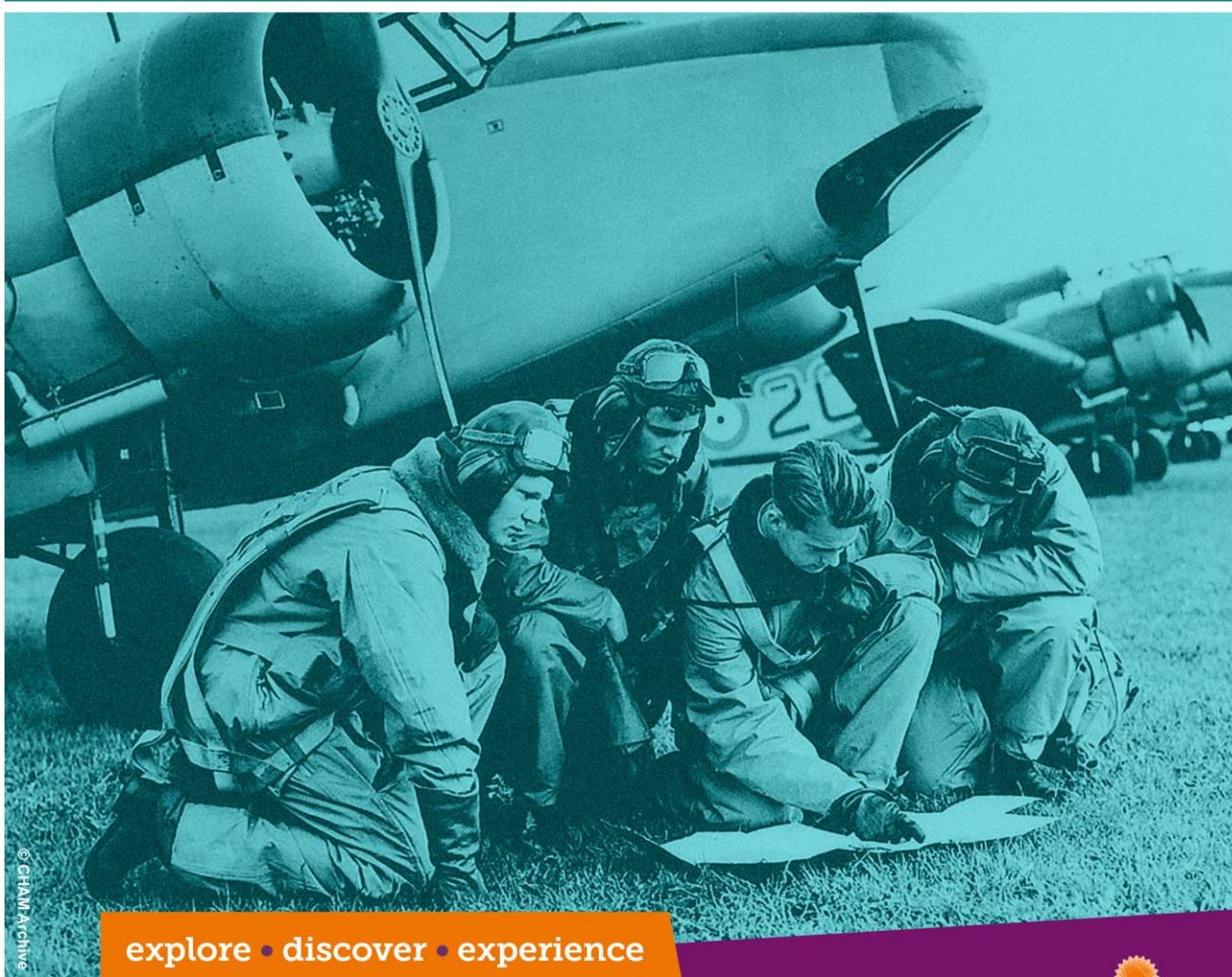


Discover More...



Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum Charlie visits 'BOOM' 100 Years On



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explore • discover • experience

BUT PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THIS FILE – IT IS HERE
FOR ALL OUR VISITORS TO ENJOY. THANK YOU.

discovernk
in the heart of Lincolnshire

Introduction

This file contains things which we hope you will find interesting and fun and to help you enjoy our exhibition 'BOOM' 100 years on here at Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum.

We hope you will discover more about the the 100th Birthday of RAF College Cranwell which we celebrated in 2020. You will find out about the people that played a part in the development of RAF College Cranwell, what the original College looked like and how it has changed over the years. You will read about the Cadets who were trained at the College and what became of them, how Cadet training has changed over the last 100 years and the Royal Family's association with RAF College Cranwell.

Lots of people helped us to create this exhibition and we would like to thank: the staff of the RAF College Cranwell Library, Mr Mike Credland, Mr Mike Cross and the RAF Museum.

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Contents

Page

RAF College Cranwell Opens	3
The First Commandant	4
Passing Out Term 15 August 1922	6
Camp Life	10
Passing Out Term – July 1931	13
The New College Building	15
The Man Who Designed It	17
Cadet Life 1930's	19
Passing Out Term – July 1935	21
The War Years	23
The College's Victoria Cross Winner	25
The Story of a Cranwell Graduate	27
The Jet Provost and a Royal Trainee	29
Modern Cadet Life	32
The Driving Force Behind It All	33

Heritage Centre

Heritage Centre

Heritage Centre

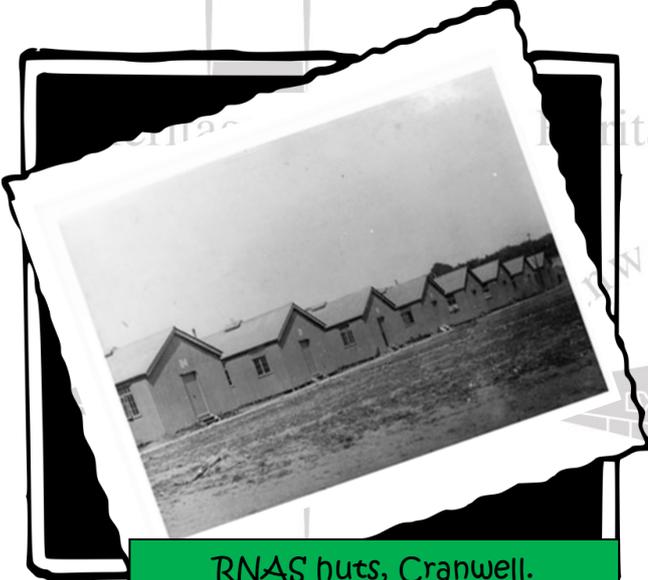
Heritage Centre

Heritage Centre

Heritage Centre

RAF College Cranwell Opens

In 1919, Sir Hugh Trenchard, Chief of the Air Staff, wanted to establish a College to train future Officers in the RAF. The Cadet College at Cranwell would use the existing wooden huts from Cranwell's time as a Royal Naval Air Service base. Each hut slept five and had toilets and a sitting area. The Cadets would be grouped in Squadrons, and the two year training course would cover a range of subjects, practical skills.



RNAS huts, Cranwell.
Image - CAHM Archive

The process for entry to the College was a written exam, an interview, and a full aircrew medical examination and the Cadets had to be aged between 17½ and 19. Their parents were charged £75 per year for their sons to attend the College, as well as £35 before their first term and £35 at the start of the second year towards the cost of books and uniform.

Because the costs were expensive at the time, approval for awarding King's Cadetships to some of each Entry was given, allowing the King's Cadets to attend for free. The College's first Entries were paid 5 shillings (25p) a day, during term time which increased to 10 shillings (50p) a day during the second year of training.

I thought they'd dislike Cranwell to start with, but hoped that eventually they'd appreciate my intentions. Marooned in the wilderness, cut off from pastimes they could not organise for themselves, the cadets would find life cheaper, healthier "



Cadet accommodation RAF
College Cranwell.
Image - CAHM Archive

Whilst the Commander and 2nd in Command of each Squadron dealt with major disciplinary issues, routine matters were handled by the Cadets' themselves. Each Squadron had an Under-Officer, two Sergeants and two Corporals. It was their task to make sure of the correct behaviour and conduct of their fellow Cadets.

The First Commandant

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Charles Alexander Holcombe Longcroft, KCB, CMG, DSO, AFC was born in Wales in 1883. He was one of four children and went to school at Charterhouse, Surrey and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Longcroft then became an officer in the Welsh Regiment in May 1903.

After getting his pilots certificate on 5 March 1912, Longcroft volunteered for service with the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers. In August 1913, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) just after it was set up.

By the outbreak of World War One in 1914, Longcroft had been promoted to Major and was appointed Officer Commanding No. 1 Squadron, RFC. For the next year and a half, he continued to be a Squadron Commander in the RFC and by 1918 he had been promoted several times, finishing the World War One as General Officer Commanding III Brigade.

When the Royal Air Force was formed on 1 April 1918, Longcroft transferred to the new Service on a temporary basis and stopped being an Army officer, just over a year later in 1919. He immediately became a Group Captain and just four days later he was promoted to Air Commodore.

On 1 November 1919, Longcroft was appointed by Lord Trenchard as the first Commandant of the RAF Cadet College at Cranwell. The arrival of the first intake of Cadets in February 1920 coincided with his post being made Air Officer Commanding RAF Cranwell. It was his vision of what should be achieved at the first Military Air Academy that continues today.



Longcroft became Director-General of Personal Services in 1923 and Air Officer Commanding the Inland Area in 1926 before retiring from the RAF at his own request on 2 November 1929.

On 24 April 1953, Longcroft presented No 1 Squadron with its Standard. He had been its first

Commanding Officer after the Unit changed from an airship to an aeroplane Squadron, it was the first award of a Standard to a Squadron in the RAF history

"You will have to work your hardest, both as cadets at the College and subsequently as officers, in order to be capable of guiding this great service".

Chief of the Air Staff

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Charles Alexander Holcombe Longcroft, KCB, CMG, DSO, AFC died on 20 February 1958.



Cranwell 23 Mar 1920 – HRH Duke of York, Air Commodore Longcroft, Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, Wing Commander Godman. Image – CAHM Archive

Charlies Fact. Since 1943 squadrons have had flags, called standards. If a squadron becomes non-operational the standard is sent to the College and hung in the rotunda until the squadron is either reformed or disbanded.

Passing Out Term 15 August 1922

On 15 August 1922, the first Cadets to enter the College graduated. Most were from the 1920 Entry.

The College's List of Graduates lists the final ranks of the graduating Cadets along with any honours and awards they received.

Rear Row Left to Right

MW Keey

WL Dawson

AGL Johnson

JC Charlton

CS Riccard

E Reid

BJ Winmill

C Guppy

Cpl CBR Pelly

The entry simply states Flight Lieutenant Keey "Deceased".

Air Chief Marshal Sir Walter Lloyd Dawson, KCB, CBE, DSO was the last RAF Commander in Palestine prior to the state of Israel being created. He retired from the RAF in 1960.

The entry simply states that Pilot Officer Johnson "Left the Service" with no date or reason given.

Going on to the Reserve List in 1923, Squadron Leader Charlton was active in the RAFVR from 1939 to 1942.

Group Captain Riccard, CBE retired from the RAF in 1951.

Flying Officer Reid was killed in a flying accident in 1924.

No details of this person's entry to RAF College Cranwell or subsequent service have been found in the List of Graduates.

Wing Commander Guppy retired from the RAF in 1945.

Centre Row Left to Right

Air Chief Marshal Sir Claude Bernard Raymond Pelly, GBE, KCB, MC, MID was appointed Aide-de-camp to HM the

Cpl V Bruce-Bennett

CH Ratcliffe

RRS Waller

GH Huxham

MC Hayter

SG Connolly

EB Forster

JES Caithness

RGA Vallance

Cpl CF Sealy

Queen in 1957 and retired from the RAF in 1959.

Air Commodore Victor Bruce Bennett, DFC, MID retired from the RAF in 1947. The entry states that Pilot Officer Ratcliffe "Resigned" with no further detail given.

Flying Officer Waller was killed in a flying accident in 1925.

Group Captain Huxham retired from the RAF in 1951.

Pilot Officer Hayter was killed in a flying accident in 1925.

Flight Lieutenant Connolly was killed in a flying accident (no date is given).

The entry simply states Flying Officer Forster "Deceased".

The entry simply states Pilot Officer Caithness "Reserves" with no date given.

Wing Commander Vallance retired from the RAF in 1949.

Group Captain Sealy retired from the RAF in 1954.

Front Row Left to Right

Cpl CHA Stevens

Cpl CBB Maturin

Sgt DLG Bett

Sgt LK Barnes

U/O D Macfadyen

Group Captain Stevens, OBE, MID retired from the RAF in 1948.

Resigning in 1924, Wing Commander Maturin was active in the RAFVR from 1939 to 1944.

The entry simply states Flight Lieutenant Bett "Deceased".

The entry simply states Air Commodore Barnes "Deceased". His entry on RAF Web states that Air Commodore Barnes, CBE, MBE, MID died in 1948.

Under Officer Macfadyen was the winner of the College's Sword of Honour. At the end of his career, Air Marshal Sir Douglas Macfadyen, KCB,

U/O EA Hodgson

Sgt N Vintcent

CBE, MID was appointed Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief at RAF Home Command from 1956 until his retirement in 1959.

Group Captain Hodgson, CBE, MID retired from the RAF in 1950.

In 1924, whilst flying a de Havilland 9A over Iraq, Pilot Officer Vintcent became the first graduate from RAF College Cranwell to be awarded the DFC.

“This officer, having been forced to land owing to tribesmen engine trouble, beat off an attack by hostile with great courage and determination”.
Extract from DFC Citation – London Gazette

The List of Graduates states that Flight Lieutenant Vintcent, DFC resigned his Commission.

Sgt AK Lewis

Cpl EA Healey

Cpl EC Keey

Group Captain King-Lewis retired from the RAF in 1948.

Group Captain Healey retired from the RAF in 1946.

Pilot Officer Keey was killed in a flying accident in 1923.

“We have to learn by experience how to organize and administer a great Service and you who are at present at the College in its first year, will, in future, be at the helm”.

Hugh Trenchard in the 1st copy of the College

Of those Cadets who passed out in August 1922, seven retired from the RAF as Group Captains, two as Air Commodores, one as an Air Marshal and two reaching the rank of Air Chief Marshal.



Trenchard inspecting Cadets at Cranwell.
Image - CAHM Archive

Charles Fact Did you know that Cadets received class awards just like you! The Sword of Honour is presented to the best all-round Flight Cadet.

Camp Life

Although life at RAF College Cranwell focused on flight it was not all that happened on the base.



Barrack Blocks RAF Cranwell 1922
Image - CAHM Archive

"an officer trained in the RAF Cadet College' may achieve victory at small cost if he remembers the true sequence - Flying First, Engineering Second - then the Rest".
An early Commandant's Annual Report website

To achieve this other people lived and worked at RAF Cranwell, some of which were civilian. Two Professors and three Lecturers were employed to deliver *"the rest"*.

Living conditions were basic to say the least, wooden barrack blocks with water supplied from water towers, and a NAAFI that was a horse drawn vehicle.



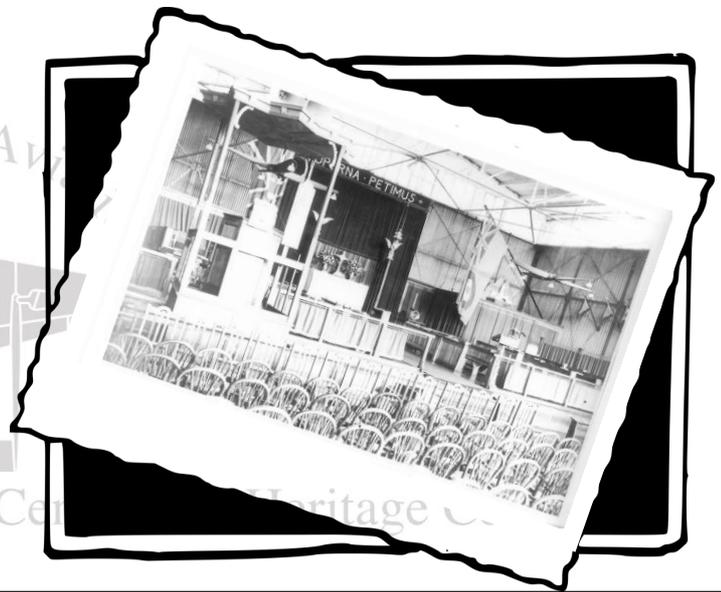
RAF Cranwell - Water Towers circa 1920.
Image - CAHM Archive



Airmen stood by horse drawn canteen vehicle
1926
Image - CAHM Archive



Barrack block interior RAF Cranwell 1922
Image - CAHM Archive



The Hanger Church RAF Cranwell 1920
Image - CAHM Archive

The wooden buildings posed a risk of fire, so an onsite 'fire brigade' was created to deal with any outbreaks. In 1922, the training of personnel to be Aircraft Handler/ Fire fighters started at RAF Cranwell, and the London Fire Brigade provided instructors to deliver the firefighting training.

RAF Cranwell's Church in the 1920's was equally at risk of fire. 'The Hanger Church' was dedicated during November 1921 and was the second to bear the name St Michael & All Angels. It was situated on the north side of the main camp and was originally a hanger used as a workshop.



Fire Engine & Crew, RAF Cranwell West Camp
circa 1927.
Image - CAHM Archive



Exercising Cranwell's fire crews.
Image - CAHM Archive

Flying accidents were a common occurrence during the early days of RAF Cranwell, but so were motorbike crashes which resulted in more injuries.

"A skittish motor bike with a touch of blood in it is better than all the riding animals on earth".
Aircraftman Shaw
(Lawrence of Arabia)



Crashed Siskin IIIa – RAF Cranwell 1933.
Image - CAHM Archive

Towards the end of the 1920's Flight Cadet Douglas Bader was notorious around the Cranwell area for his dangerous escapades on a motorbike.

However, not all the riders of motorbikes at RAF Cranwell were using them for pleasure. The men of the Motor Transport Section used various vehicles including motorbikes, without exposing themselves to the risks experienced by their more famous colleagues.

Charlies Fact

Did you know water contains oxygen so can sometimes make fire worse. So we have to use foam to stop the air and fire mixing.



MT Section RAF Cranwell
Image - CAHM Archive

Passing Out Term – July 1931

In July 1931, 30 Cadets passed out from the College. The College Commandant, Air Vice-Marshal Longmore, prepared a report for the Inspecting Officer which covered several areas including:

Strength. The College strength had increased to 126 from 118 over the previous year.

Discipline. Conduct of the Cadets was assessed as being very good. One Cadet was however severely disciplined for performing forbidden aerobatics which resulted in his aircraft breaking up in mid-air.

Aircraft. By this time, the College had a Flight of Armstrong Whitworth Siskins and two Flights of Armstrong Whitworth Atlas. Each Flight comprised eight aircraft.

Flying Training. 29 of the 30 graduating Cadets had completed their flying training.



Armstrong Whitworth Siskin.
Image - CAHM Archive



Armstrong Whitworth Atlas.
Image - CAHM Archive

Those to be assigned to Fighter Squadrons had qualified on Siskins, the remainder on Atlas'. In addition, some of the Cadets had received experience in the Fairey Fox two-seat bomber.

Removed from Flying Training. Five Cadets had been withdrawn from training due to their:

The Commandant recommended that parents of prospective Flight Cadets arrange some private flying training for their sons to assess their flying aptitude prior to them entering the College.

inability to learn to fly".

Flying Accidents. The Commandant reported that one Cadet had been killed in a flying accident that year.



Cadet on motorbike.
Image - CAHM Archive

"the keeping of motor-cycles will have to be reconsidered if this continues".

Health. Four Cadets had been admitted to hospital that year due to flying accidents and eight as a result of motorbike accidents. The Commandant expressed his concern that the number of motorbike accidents was impacting badly on flying training.

Awards. Prizes were awarded to the following graduating Cadets:

The prize for getting the highest marks in Humanistic Subjects was awarded jointly to Flight Cadet Sergeant AC Johnstone and Flight Cadet Sergeant HWA Chesterman.

The prize for highest marks in Aeronautical Engineering was awarded to Flight Cadet NCS Rutter.

The Abdy Gerrard Fellowes Memorial Prize for obtaining the highest marks in Mathematics and Sciences was awarded to Flight Cadet WE Oulton.

The J.A. Chance Memorial Prize for obtaining the highest marks Service Subjects was awarded to Flight Cadet Corporal AD Messenger.

The R.M Groves Memorial Prize for the senior term's best all-round pilot was awarded to Flight Cadet GJL Read.

The Sword of Honour presented to the best all-round Flight Cadet was awarded to Flight Cadet Under-Officer CWM Ling.

The New College Building

From its early days the new College was to be housed in a purpose built building equal to its Naval and Army counterparts. Early estimates suggested the building would cost in the region of £300,000 (13½ million). Approval for a new College was given in 1928 and the task of its design was passed to HM Office of Works.

The new College Hall was to be sited to the north of the public road running through Cranwell and the three large water towers in that area would need to be demolished. Local firms were awarded the task of excavating the foundations and building the College. The foundation stone for the new College was laid by Lady Maude Hoare, Wife of the Secretary of State for Air during a ceremony in April 1929.



Foundation stone ceremony for the new College building. Lady Maude Hoare pictured in centre.
Image - CAHM Archive



Steel framework of the College's central tower.
Image - CAHM Archive



Under construction 1931.
Image - CAHM Archive

Construction of College Hall was completed in September 1933. The final cost was £321,000 (14½ million). On 11 October 1934, HRH The Prince of Wales, later to be King Edward VIII opened the new building and said the following:

The new College Hall's facilities included lecture rooms, library, laboratories, recreation rooms and a Mess.

"I think the architecture is very impressive. It reminds me of the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, where I spent two years as a cadet. The architect, Mr West is to be congratulated".



The College library circa 1935.
Image - CAHM Archive



The College Mess dining room circa 1935.
Image - CAHM Archive



Reading and Writing Room on the first floor of the Main Block at the RAF College.
Image - CAHM Archive

A planned fourth wing was finally added in 1960 constructed to blend in with the remainder of the building.

The two avenues of lime trees at the front of the College today were presented by Sir Samuel and Lady Hoare.

The Man Who Designed It

James Grey West was born in Cardiff, Wales in 1885 and was one of three children. He went to school at Cardiff High School and became an apprentice at the office of Edgar Down in Cardiff in 1900.

West joined the government Office of Works as a temporary draughtsman in 1904, and became an assistant architect in 1911. In 1930 he was awarded the OBE and eventually became chief architect in 1934.

During his career, West worked on many projects including: in 1933, the Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast and the Duveen Wing of the National Portrait Gallery and the Consulate General, Alexandria, Egypt and the Catafalque at Westminster Hall for the lying in state of King George V. From 1929 to 1933, he was the designer of RAF College, Cranwell.

West's design for the new College building used the best materials. The building had to accommodate very complex needs, and his first design was rejected by the Secretary of State for Air, Sir Samuel Hoare for being a design of:

"bureaucratic conservatism' and based on the pseudo-Gothic of St Pancras Station and diversified by the influences of a Scottish hydro".

Secretary of State for Air,
Sir Samuel Hoare



The Royal Hospital Chelsea.
Image Wikimedia Commons – Public Domain

The graceful lines of RAF College Cranwell were arrived at after Hoare took James West on a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea

Sir Samuel Hoare took a strong interest in West's design, advocating strongly that:

The finished college building can be compared with any major institution of its era, and reflects “the pride of the service in its presentation”.

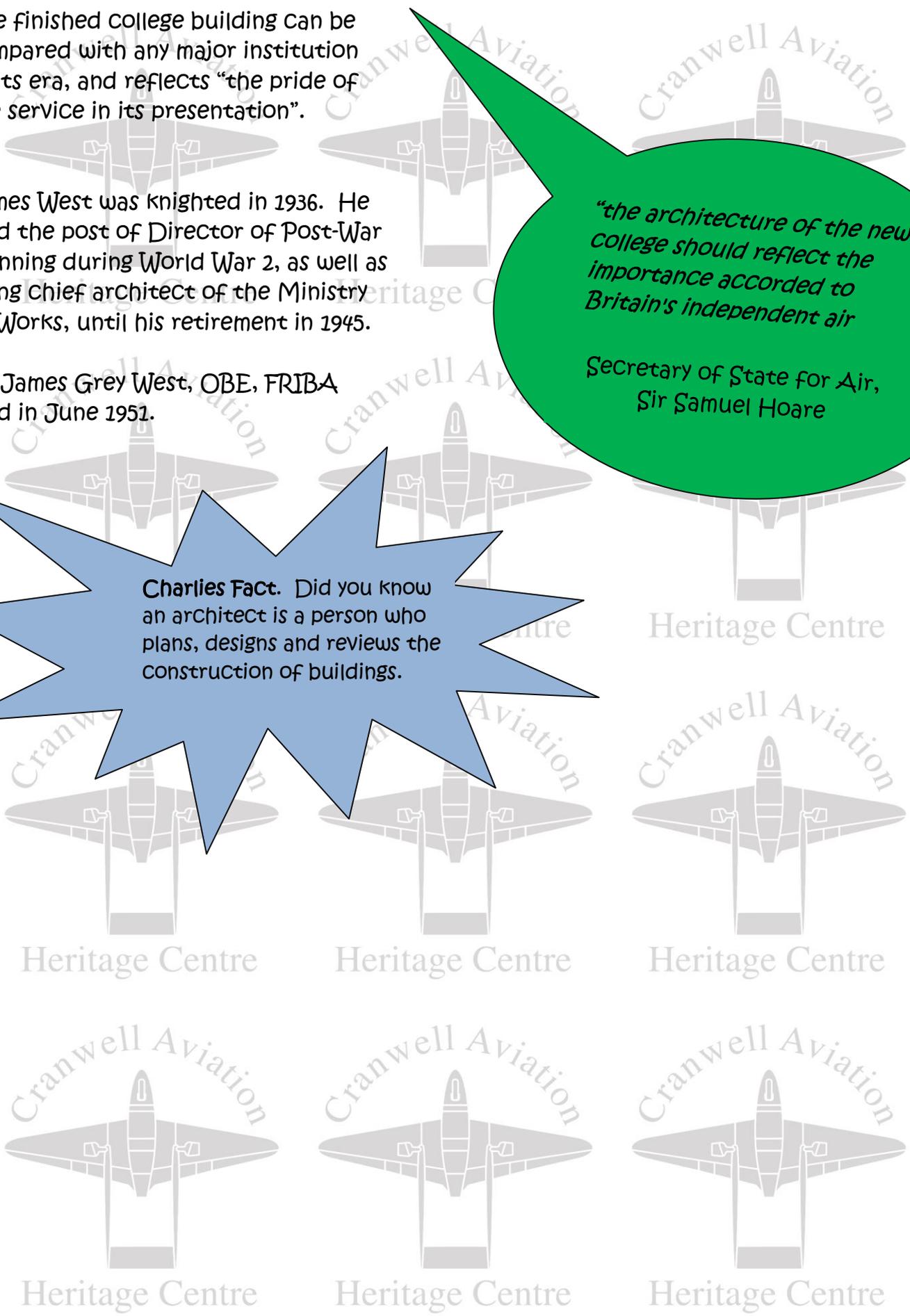
James West was knighted in 1936. He held the post of Director of Post-War Planning during World War 2, as well as being chief architect of the Ministry of Works, until his retirement in 1945.

Sir James Grey West, OBE, FRIBA died in June 1951.

“the architecture of the new college should reflect the importance accorded to Britain's independent air

Secretary of State for Air,
Sir Samuel Hoare

Charlies Fact. Did you know an architect is a person who plans, designs and reviews the construction of buildings.



Heritage Centre

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Cadet Life 1930's



A Flight Cadet's quarters in the new College building.
Image – CAHM Archive

The new College had two intakes in January and September. The building could accommodate up to 150 Cadets, who remained for a two year course in the Cadet Wing. Cadets were posted to one of three Squadrons, each commanded by a Squadron Leader or Flight Lieutenant.

The Cadets paid to go to Cranwell in the 1930's. The cost for a Flight Cadet was £100 (£6,579) per year, plus £100 (£6,579) paid towards the cost of uniform and £100 (£6,579) for books - £300 (£19,737) in all. However the Cadets were paid a daily rate of 6s. 6d. (33p).

On entering the College, Flight Cadets were given an instructor and taken flying as a passenger and continued on dual instruction until competent to fly solo. After every two and a-half hours of solo flying, Cadets reverted to dual instruction, to remove any developing faults, and this routine continued to the end of the course.

Before receiving their wings, each Cadet must have achieved a minimum of 70 hours in both dual and solo flying and must have passed four cross-country flights, forced-landing tests, height tests, instrument flying, aerobatics, and carrying a passenger. Although flying training was the most popular activity at Cranwell, academic subjects were also taught. The Cadets studied humanistic subjects, aeronautical science, aeronautical engineering, General Service subjects, flying and aeronautics, drill and physical training.

Aeronautical engineering was largely practical work encompassing engine fitting and aeroplane rigging. Aeronautical science included applied mathematics, mechanical drawing, elementary physics and aerodynamics.

The General Service course included the organisation and employment of the RAF, Air Force law, armament, meteorology and signals. Finally, the education of the mind and culture. In the last part of the fourth term, every Cadet wrote an essay on a part of general history which aimed to develop a power of original thought, inquiry, and criticism.



The College Football team.
Image – CAHM Archive

Physical fitness was also important for RAF Officers. All the popular games were played including: Cricket, Rugby, Football and Hockey, and the chief matches were against Woolwich and Sandhurst.

When Cadets passed out, they received permanent Commissions in the RAF. In the 1930's permanent Commissions were only



11 Cadets in Mess Dress onboard an Austin 7 convertible.
Image – CAHM Archive

given to Cadets from Cranwell and people entering the Service from Universities. The remaining Officers only received Short Service Commissions for six years.

The Air Ministry believed that there were only enough senior posts for those entering the service via the Cranwell route, therefore Cranwell's Cadets could look forward to steady promotion up the ranks.

Charlies Fact.
By 1935 Cadets were issued gas masks. Why do you think this happened? What do you think the RAF were preparing for?

Passing Out Term – July 1935

By 1935, several types of aircraft were used in training at Cranwell. These included: Avro Tutor, Hawker Hart, Bristol Bulldog and Hawker Audax.



Avro Tutor. In service at Cranwell 1933 – 1939.
Image – CAHM Archive



Bristol Bulldog. In service at Cranwell 1933 – 1936.
Image – CAHM Archive

The College Commandant, Air Vice-Marshal Cave-Browne-Cave's, wrote a report for the Inspecting Officer on July 1935's Passing Out Term. It did not mention the total number of Cadets passing out, but did mention:

Strength. At that time, there were 114 Flight Cadets at the College and including those currently passing out, a total of 757 Flight Cadets had graduated since the College was founded.

Flying Training. 29 Cadets had completed their flying training that term. Of those, ten were to be assigned to Fighter Squadrons, four to Day Bomber Squadrons, three to Night Bomber Squadrons, four to Army Co-operation Squadrons, four to Flying Boat Squadrons and two to Torpedo Bomber Squadrons.

Flying Accidents. The Commandant reported that there had been two flying accidents. In the first, a Cadet "failed to recover from a voluntary vertical spin". He bailed out and sustained minor injuries. In the other, a Cadet misjudging his landing approach and flew into a wall. He too only sustained minor injuries. In both incidents the aircraft were total write offs.

Uniform. Cadets of IV Term had been issued with blue shirts and a new style of uniform hat. The Commandant assessed that both items were proving to be popular with the Cadets.

Gas Masks. Anti-gas training had been introduced into the training syllabus that term and Cadets had been issued with gas masks.



Officer Cadets train on Vickers Type K machine gun.

Image – CAHM Archive



An instructor demonstrates attaching bombs to the wing racks of a Hawker Audax.

Image – CAHM Archive

Awards. Prizes were awarded to the following graduating Cadets:

His Majesty the King's Medal for getting the highest aggregate marks in all subjects was awarded to Flight Cadet Sergeant AJ Mason.

The Air Ministry Prize for getting the highest marks in English and History was awarded to Flight Cadet AJW Clark.

The Air Ministry Prize for highest marks in Aeronautical Engineering was awarded to Flight Cadet Sergeant AJ Mason.

The Abdy Gerrard Fellowes Memorial Prize for obtaining the highest marks in Mathematics and Sciences was awarded to Flight Cadet Sergeant AJ Mason.

The J.A. Chance Memorial Prize for obtaining the highest marks Service Subjects was awarded to Flight Cadet Sergeant AJ Mason.

The R.M Groves Memorial Prize for the senior term's best all-round pilot was awarded to Flight Cadet Sergeant PT Philpott.

The Sword of Honour presented to the best all-round Flight Cadet was awarded to Flight Cadet Under-Officer HEC Boxer.

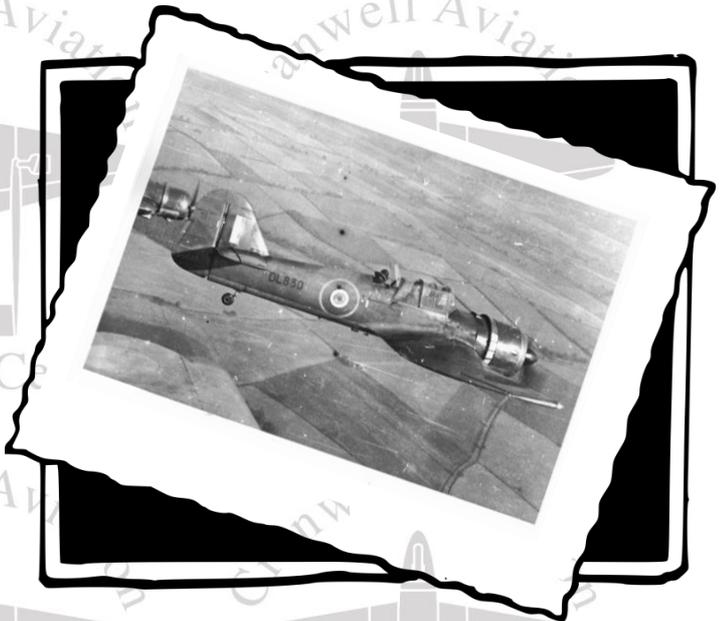
The War Years

With the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, RAF College Cranwell ceased to exist as a college until the end of the war. Instead it became a Service Flying Training School that trained many trades in the RAF as well as pilots. The pilots were trained up to a basic standard, ready for advanced tuition elsewhere. The flying course originally lasted six months, but the urgent need for pilots reduced it to three months.

Aircraft used in training at Cranwell during WW2 included the Airspeed Oxford and the Miles Master.



Airspeed Oxford
Image - CAHM Archive

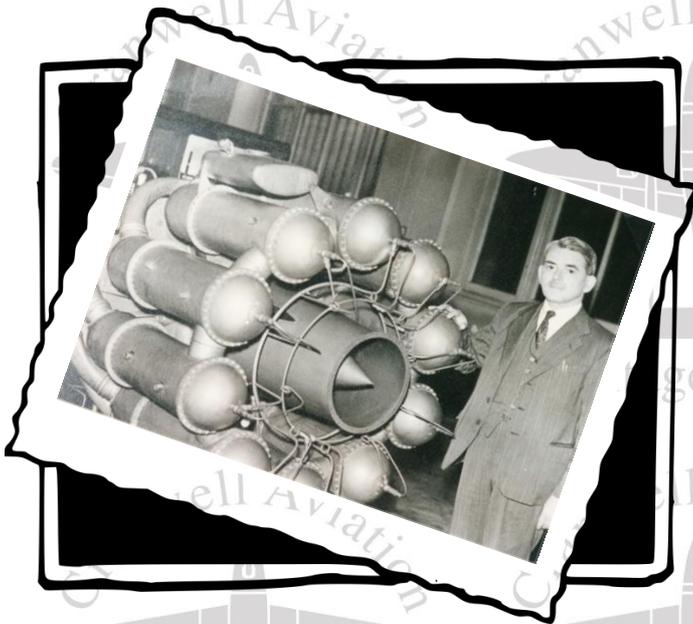


Miles Magister
Image - CAHM Archive

The first German air attack on RAF Cranwell happened on the 6 June 1941. This was followed by random attacks throughout the war. They caused little damage with most of the bombs dropping in surrounding fields. Rumour has it that Hermann Goering the commander of the German Luftwaffe ordered his pilots not to bomb the College as he wanted to use it as his headquarters when Germany won the war!

1941 - A College Graduate Returns

In 1941, RAF College graduate Frank Whittle returned to RAF Cranwell for the maiden flight of Britain's first jet-engined aircraft, the Gloster E.28/39. Air Apprentice Whittle had joined the RAF in 1923 and three years later entered RAF College Cranwell as a Flight Cadet. On graduating, Pilot Officer Whittle was awarded the Abdy Gerrard Fellowes Memorial Prize for obtaining the highest marks in Mathematics and Sciences.



Frank Whittle stood next to W1 jet engine.
Image – CAHM Archive

In 1929, he developed his ideas of using a gas turbine to produce jet thrust, and formed his company Power Jets Ltd. In 1936 with the agreement of the RAF.



Gloster E.28/39.
Image – CAHM Archive

The Gloster E.28/39 powered by a turbojet engine produced by Power Jets Ltd. made its maiden flight on 15 May 1941 and was piloted by Gerry Sayer. The aircraft took off from Cranwell at 7.40 pm and flew for 17 minutes reaching a maximum speed of approximately 340 mph (547kph).

1942 – Tragedy at the College

On 18 March 1942, an Armstrong Whitworth Whitley V bomber on approach to Cranwell, crashed into the tower of 'A' Wing of the College. It fell in to a room being used as a dormitory. Fuel from the aircraft's tanks ignited, into a major blaze. The water used by the firemen caused further damage to the College roof which underwent temporary repairs. Permanent repairs were carried out in 1951. The Whitley's three man crew, Pilot Officer JM Strachan, aged 23, Sergeant DJS Balfour, aged 19 and Sergeant RJ Randall, aged 21 were killed. Fortunately most of the dormitory's occupants were at the cinema at the time of the crash and only three were hurt.

Charles Fact

Did you know the E.28/39 achieved a speed of 340 mph on its first flight. The Typhoon in service with the RAF today can fly at Mach 1.8 (1380 mph), approximately four times faster.

The College's Victoria Cross Winner



HG Malcolm.
Image Wikimedia Commons – Public Domain

Born in Dundee, Hugh Malcolm went to school at Craigflower Preparatory School followed by Trinity College, Perthshire. He decided on a career in the RAF, entering RAF College, Cranwell as a Cadet in January 1936 and graduated in December 1937. To date, Hugh Malcolm is the only Cranwell College graduate to be awarded a Victoria Cross.

Malcolm was initially posted to a squadron at Catterick, where he flew Westland Lysanders and joined in joint training exercises with the Army.

In May 1939, his career as a pilot nearly ended when his Lysander crashed. Malcolm sustained serious injuries including a fractured skull and it was four months

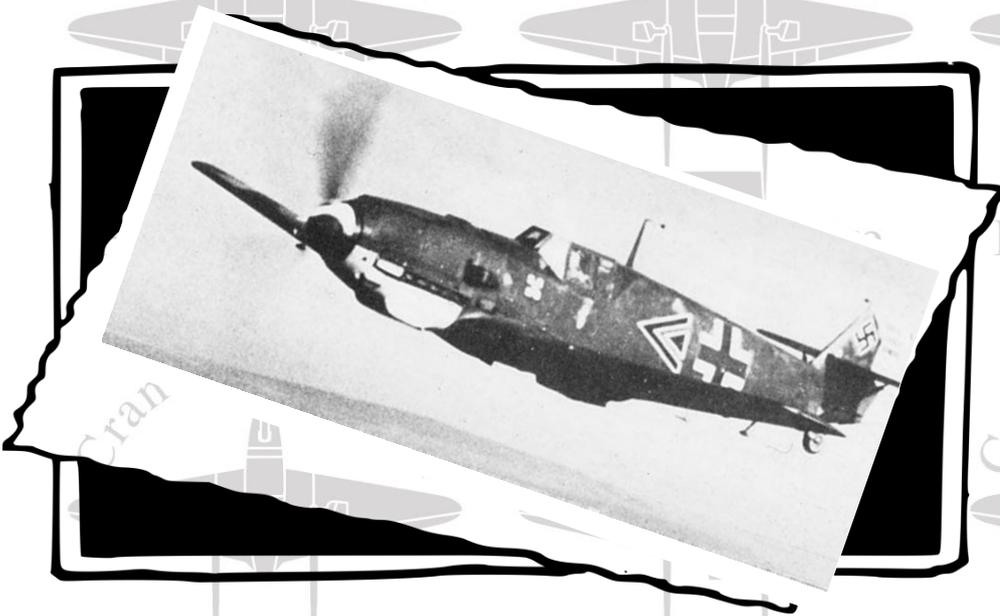
before he was declared fit to fly again.

In July 1940, Malcolm was posted to, Linton-on-Ouse, followed by a posting to Scotland in September 1940 as a Flight Lieutenant operating Lysanders. In 1941, Malcolm received two promotions ending with promotion to Squadron Leader flying Blenheim IV bombers at No. 18. Squadron, Wattisham.

In August 1942, the Squadron was stood down from operational flying to prepare for service in North Africa and was re-equipped with Blenheim V bombers. Malcolm now an Acting Wing Commander became the Squadron's Commander. Prior to moving overseas, his squadron along with three others formed 326 Wing and moved to Blida, Algeria.

On 4 December 1942, eleven Blenheim Vs from the Wing flew to a forward landing ground at Souk-el-Arba. At 0915 hours that morning, six Blenheim Vs led by Malcolm took off in search of suitable targets, finding an enemy landing strip they successfully attacked it and returned home to re-fuel.

Within an hour of landing, Malcolm received an urgent request from the Army to provide close support in the area he had just attacked. This would mean a daylight raid over a fiercely defended battle zone without the benefit of fighter cover. Aware of the risk



Messerschmitt 109.
Image – CAHM Archive

and also his duty to support the hard pressed 1st Army, Malcolm agreed to carry out the mission.

At 1515 hours that afternoon, Malcolm along with all available Blenheims took off. They flew in formation, as defence against fighter attack. When they reached the target area they circled to identify the target and began to bomb. They were attacked by an

overwhelming force of Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters and the battle became a massacre.

One by one, the Blenheims were shot down. Malcolm's was the last aircraft to be destroyed and he and his two crewmen were killed. Hugh Malcolm's determination to complete this ill-fated mission was recognised with the award of a posthumous Victoria Cross on 27 April 1943.

"Wing Commander Malcolm's last exploit was the finest example of the valour and unswerving devotion to duty which he constantly displayed."

Extract from VC citation
The London Gazette,
27 April 1943.

Story of a Cranwell Graduate Group Captain Mike Cross, OBE, FRGS

Mike Cross joined the RAF in 1959 and was one of the first intake at RAF College Cranwell to have the opportunity to study for a degree.

Mike's father had flown in World War Two, and kept a keen interest in aviation, and Mike's subsequent visits to Farnborough Air Shows planted the seed of an idea. Turning his back on a career in medicine, he announced one night that he intended to join the RAF, much to his mother's dismay.

Mike and his fellow Flight Cadets in 81 Entry arrived at the College in the autumn of 1959 and were soon into a daily routine of bulling up boots, drill, sports, lectures, inspections.

It would not be long before Flight Cadet Cross was invited to attend formal dining in nights, often with local dignitaries present, when knowledge of using the correct knife and fork was essential. Less than gentlemanly conduct would however take place at later such events, jousting might break out in the College Hall corridor using bikes, flying helmets and mops as lances!

Mike's entry was the first Entry to undergo all-through jet training. He and his fellow Flight Cadets mastered, basic aircraft handling, landing and stalling, aerobatics and formation. Pilot Officer Cross graduated from RAF College Cranwell in 1962.



Pilot Officer Cross.
Image courtesy of Mike Cross

After finishing his advanced training at RAF Oakington, Cambridgeshire, Mike joined 215 Squadron, flying the Armstrong Whitworth Argosy transport aircraft based in Singapore, and flew, as a co-pilot, on supply missions for the SAS and Gurkhas over the jungles of

Borneo. It was around this time that Mike realised his calling as an adventurer, trekking into the jungle and climbing the region's highest mountain, Mount Kinabalu.

Over the next 25 years, Mike became an excellent pilot, earning the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air. He repeatedly served at Cranwell as an Instructor before eventually becoming Chief Flying Instructor in the 1980s.

In between flying duties, Mike was posted to the Foreign Office, and represented the UK as a Defence Attaché in Saudi Arabia and then India, where he acted as Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty the Queen during her visit for the Commonwealth Conference. Later in his career, Mike served in Algeria political tension.

After a short spell at Strike Command HQ, High Wycombe, and a tour in the Ministry of Defence, London as a Director of Training Policy, Mike was posted to HQ Air Cadets as Senior Air Staff Officer, initially based at RAF Newton and then at RAF Cranwell, where he became Chief of Staff.

Mike retired from the RAF in 1997, but stayed on as the Air Cadets' COS as a Retired Officer until 2007.



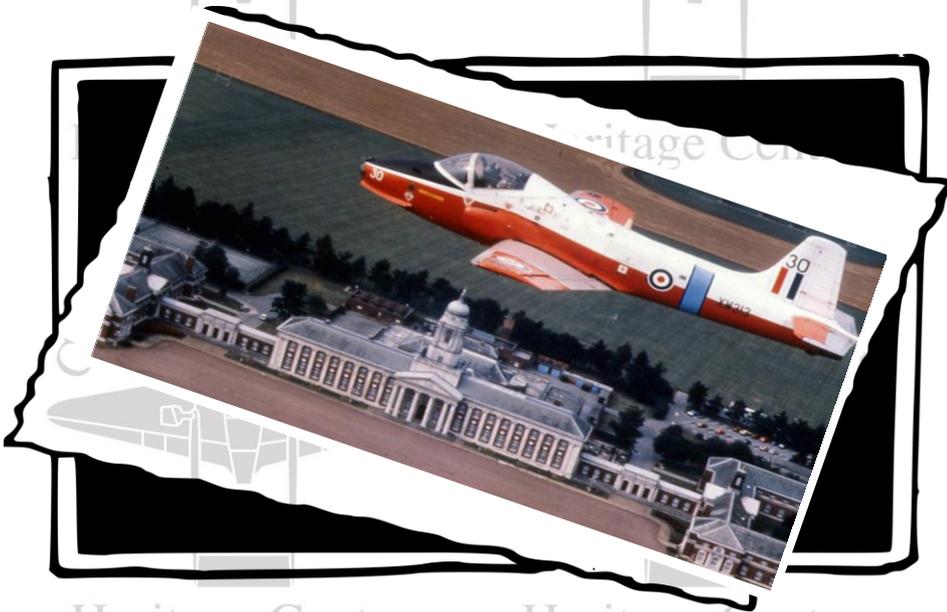
Mike Cross at Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum.



Wing Commander Cross with HM Queen Elizabeth II during Royal visit to New Delhi. Image courtesy of Mike Cross

Following his retirement from the RAF, Mike continued to be actively involved with the Air Cadets leading expeditions around the World, helping to inspire and shape the Officers of the future.

The Jet Provost and a Royal Trainee



Flying training became all jet at Cranwell with the introduction in 1960 of the Jet Provost to replace the earlier piston-engined version of the aircraft, the Percival Provost.

The Jet Provost was designed to have similar features to operational jet fighters of the time, but be simple to handle.

Jet Provost T.5 over RAF College Cranwell.
Image – CAHM Archive

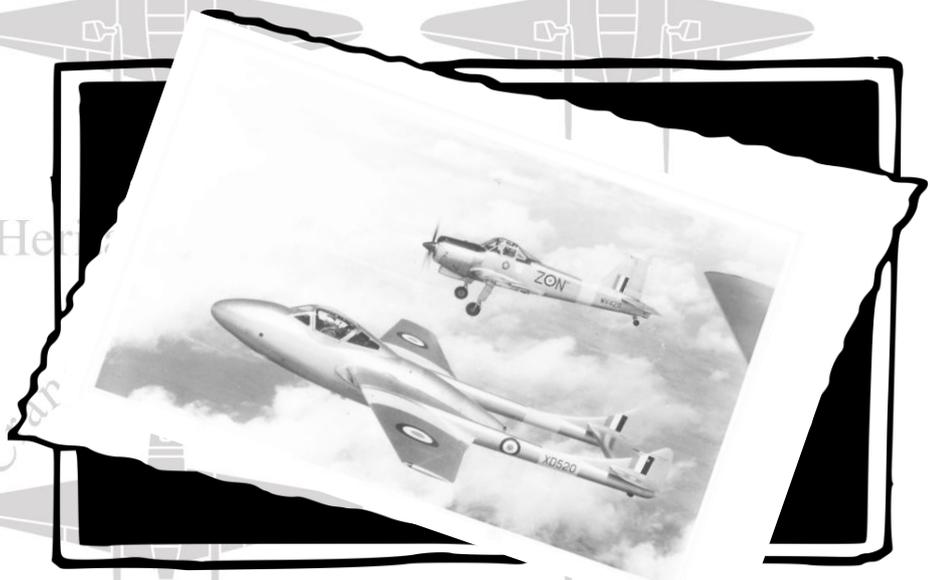
The following types of the Jet Provost have operated at RAF Cranwell:

Jet Provost T.1
January 1960 to 1961

Jet Provost T.3
July 1960 to November 1979

Jet Provost T.4
December 1961 to November 1971

Jet Provost T.5/T.5A
January 1971 to the early 1990s



Jet Provost T.5 over RAF College Cranwell.
Image – CAHM Archive



Jet Provosts in formation over RAF College Cranwell for a passing out ceremony in 1968.
Image – CAHM Archive



Jet Provost T.5.
Image – CAHM Archive

After several incarnations and homes the last Jet Provost display team was based at RAFC Cranwell. It consisted of four T.4 aircraft, and first flew in the 1965 season as a successor to the De Havilland Vampire team. At that point the team had the name "Cranwell Poachers", which had been sourced from a folk song entitled "The Lincolnshire Poacher." In 1971, the team dropped Cranwell from their name, and were known from then on as "The Poachers" and re-equipped with T.5 Jet Provosts, continuing aircraft displays for the next five years. At the end of the 1976 air show season, the Ministry of Defence ordered the disbandment of all Jet Provost teams as a money saving measure.

The Jet Provost was retired from service with the RAF during the early 1990s and was replaced by the turboprop powered Tucano T1.

A Royal Trainee

In 1970, HM The Queen and HRH Prince Phillip visited Cranwell for the College's Golden Jubilee. By this time it had been decided that their son HRH The Prince of Wales would undergo training on the Jet Provost at Cranwell the following year.

In preparation for Prince Charles' training, a flight of three aircraft, the Golden Eagle Flight was formed and Prince Charles who already held a Private Pilot's Licence underwent flying training at Cranwell between March and July 1971

.The Chief Flying Instructor's report on Prince Charles' final Handling Test stated that it was

On 20 August 1971, at the passing out parade of No 1 Graduate Entry at the RAF College, Flight Lieutenant The Prince of Wales was presented with his wings.

"An Above Average performance".



Portrait of Prince Charles at Cranwell.
Image – CAHM Archive

A painting by Mara McGregor of Prince Charles with the College behind him and a Jet Provost overhead was presented to the RAF College by the Old Cranwellian Association in November 1971.

Tradition has it that only the Commandant's vehicle is permitted to park on the parade ground at the front of College Hall. However, the exception to this was an Aston Martin belonging to Prince Charles, who whilst undertaking flight training at the College lodged in A Wing of College Hall. Prince Charles returned to Cranwell for further training on the Jet Provost T.5 in 1972 and refresher training in 1977.

In 2008 after three months of training, HRH Prince William was presented with his RAF wings at Cranwell by his father, Prince Charles.

Charles Fact
Did you know aerobatic flying is the practice of maneuvers that are not used in normal flight. Aerobatic training aids the ability to recover from unusual flight

Modern Cadet Life

The Officer and Aircrew Cadet Training Unit comprises four Cadet Squadrons. 'A' Squadron delivers courses for specialists such as medical and legal professionals and Warrant Officers who have been selected for commissioning. The other Squadrons train Officer Cadets. A Wing Commander commands the Unit and each Squadron has 120 Cadets and is commanded by a Squadron Leader. The Officer Cadet Squadrons are subdivided into Flights which has a Flight Lieutenant and a Flight Sergeant in charge of it.



College Standard being paraded at Graduation Parade June 1999.
Image - CAHM Archive

Initial Officer Training is a 24 week course comprising three, 8-week terms. **Term one** is the switch from civilian to Service life and includes the issue of uniforms, medical assessments, drill and inspections of dress, equipment and living quarters. This term also includes team building, an intensive fitness programme, military skills that culminate in an end-of-term exercise that presents academic elements of the course. The Cadets will also commence elements of Leadership, the Beliefs, Values and Principals programme, Essential Service Knowledge and Customs, Etiquette and Social Responsibilities courses. If the Cadet meets the standard they then progress to term two. **Term two** focuses on leadership, beginning with a week of practical leadership

experiences followed by an advanced practical leadership exercise, followed by Air Power Studies which aims to educate the Cadet on military doctrine, the ethics of warfare and critical analysis and culminates in an end-of-term exam and the submission of an air power related essay. At the end of term two, if Cadets meet the required standards, they will progress to term three.

Term three develops the Officer Cadet into a Junior Officer. The term includes Basic Air Warfare, Care in Leadership and Force Development and culminates with a leadership exercise. At the end of term three, a Performance Review Board will decide whether the Cadet has reached the standard expected to graduate and, if successful, a recommendation to graduate will be confirmed. Then an intensive period of graduation preparation begins.

The Driving Force Behind It



Marshal of the RAF Lord Trenchard.
Image Wikimedia Commons – Public Domain

Hugh Montague Trenchard was born in Taunton, Somerset in 1873 and was the third child of a military family. During his early years Trenchard was not academic, only just receiving a Commission in the Royal Scots Fusiliers. In March 1893, Second Lieutenant Trenchard was posted to India until October 1899 when he volunteered for active service in South Africa.

In October 1900, Trenchard led an attack and received wounds which caused partial paralysis. On medical advice, he recuperated in Switzerland and following a bob sleigh accident on the Cresta Run, the paralysis ceased. Trenchard returned to active service in July 1901.

On 31 July 1912, Trenchard, now a senior ranked Officer, received his pilot's certificate. At the age of 39 he was just eligible for admission as a student at the Central Flying School, Upavon, and when he arrived bad weather prevented his initial assessment. This allowed the Commandant, Captain Godfrey Paine RN to appoint Trenchard to the permanent staff.

His new duties included those of Central Flying School examiner. Although Trenchard was not a particularly gifted pilot, he set himself an exam paper, sat and marked it, and duly awarded himself his 'wings'.

It was during his time at the Central Flying School that Trenchard got his nickname



RNAS Cranwell Staff under Commodore Paine – 1916.
Image – CAHM Archive

'Boom' for his thunderous words and low rumbling voice. In September 1913, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed Assistant Commandant of the Central Flying School.

By 1916, Commodore Paine RN was the Commanding Officer of the Royal Naval Air Service base at Cranwell. During World War One, Trenchard held several ranks with the Royal Flying Corps. He was promoted to Colonel in June 1915, followed swiftly by promotion to Brigadier and Officer Commanding the RFC's Units in France. In March 1916, he was promoted to Major General.

In 1917, Trenchard was appointed the first Chief of the Air Staff but resigned shortly afterwards following a dispute with the then Secretary of State for Air. In March 1919, when Winston Churchill became Secretary of State for Air, Trenchard became Chief of the Air Staff for the second time. The RAF needed to make drastic cut backs after the expense of the war.

Trenchard was however determined that regardless of the need to cut costs, the RAF should remain independent of the other two Services and convinced Churchill of this.

Trenchard went about his work with a passionate zeal, and received further promotions to Air Vice-Marshal and then Air Marshal. Trenchard steadfastly resisted pressure to use existing training facilities and founded the RAF College in



Inspecting Cadets at RAF College Cranwell.
Image Wikimedia Commons – Public Domain

Cranwell in 1920.

In the late 1920's, he secured funding to attempt to win the Schneider Trophy, and approved the purchase of two Supermarine S6 aircraft that eventually won the race in 1929.

In January 1927, Trenchard was promoted to Marshal of the RAF and offered his



Supermarine S6.
Image – CAHM Archive



RAF Cranwell 17 May 1966 – Trenchard Hall opening ceremony.
Image – CAHM Archive

resignation as Chief of Air Staff in 1928. This was put off 1930, when Trenchard was created Baron of Wolfeton.

On retirement from the RAF, Trenchard was offered the post of Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police twice. As Commissioner, Trenchard established the police training college at Hendon in 1934 and retired from the police force in November 1935 becoming Viscount Trenchard in 1936.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Hugh Montague Trenchard, 1st Viscount Trenchard, GCB, OM, GCMG, DSO died on 10 February 1956 aged 83.

In May 1966, Trenchard's son formally opened a new instructional building at RAF Cranwell – Trenchard Hall.

Charles Fact
The Schneider Trophy was a series of speed races for seaplanes. The racing series ended in 1931 after the English entry won three times consecutively.