

**THE ORIGINS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF THE ROYAL AIR  
FORCE**

**by**

**GROUP CAPTAIN FIN MONAHAN OBE DFC**

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY

School of History and Cultures

College of Arts and Law

The University of Birmingham

January 2018

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

## ABSTRACT

**Abstract.** The first independent air force, the Royal Air Force, was formed on 1 April 1918 during the First World War. It was a merger of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. Its leaders and personnel brought cultural predispositions with them from their former services. Unsurprisingly, many aspects of the new independent Service that they created were similar to those in the Royal Navy and British Army. Despite that, a distinctive RAF culture emerged within a short time frame. Many elements of that culture have subsequently been emulated by other nations as they formed their own independent air forces.

Those who serve or have served in the RAF intuitively know the power of its culture. RAF life is an immersive experience that evokes a range of assumptions, beliefs and emotions that can deeply affect combat performance. Despite this, little academic study of RAF culture has been conducted. This thesis will examine the history of the RAF from a new social angle. It will establish why its culture is so important and why RAF culture became so distinctive given its very traditional foundations.

## DEDICATION

To my family and the doctors and wingmen who have helped me 'slip the surly bonds of earth' and dance 'the skies on laughter-silvered wings'.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> John Gillespie Magee, 'High Flight', <https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/archive/75-years-of-high-flight-beloved-aviator-poems-75th-anniversary-celebrated-19082016>, accessed 24 Nov 2017.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis arose out of a desire to understand the culture and traditions of my organisation, the Royal Air Force. It was originally inspired by the enthusiasm of Air Commodore Doctor Neville Parton. It was pleasing that the Royal Air Force was also interested in my proposal and I am most grateful to the then Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, who agreed for me to be admitted to the CAS' Fellowship. I extend my thanks to Air Commodore Al Byford who arranged for me to be accepted onto the Fellowship at very short notice.

I have spent a great deal of time researching in various archives and I would like to thank all the staff who have helped make my time as efficient as possible both on site and while I have been researching from the other side of the world whilst on operations and exercises. In particular, I would like to thank the following generous professionals: Seb Cox, Head of the Air Historic Branch, who gave me advice, documents, cups of tea and endless RAF banter. Hazel Crozier, Curator at the RAF College Cranwell, who allowed me access to extremely valuable un-accessioned material. Min Larkin, Curator at the Trenchard Museum, RAF Halton, who welcomed me and allowed me free reign of similarly un-accessioned material. I am also much indebted to Dr Charles Kirke who provided me with valuable advice about the origins of his models and approaches towards military anthropology. He also proof read the model referencing in Chapter I. I am also very grateful to my brother-in-law, Bob Rutherford, who proof read my final copy.

I cannot sufficiently express my thanks in this small entry to Air Commodore (Retired) Doctor Peter Gray. This project has taken place during a most tumultuous and busy period of my life in command of two RAF units that have seen me deploy on operations and exercises that have spanned the Globe. Additionally, I have undergone two bone marrow transplants in the fight against the rather nasty cancer, Multiple Myeloma. Peter has been flexible, inspirational and caring throughout this period. He has used stick and carrot to manoeuvre me into a position that allows me to look back with pride at what I have managed to fit into the last few years. Peter's guidance has helped me navigate into some unknown territory and uncover a virtually untouched aspect of the history of the RAF.

Judith Cross, Jan Davies and Jane Curtis have also all helped me enormously in juggling the pressures of operating in command positions in the RAF whilst also researching.

I will forever be indebted to the staff at The Royal Marsden Hospital who have twice saved my life and allowed me to return to flying duties on both occasions. Multiple Myeloma is an unrelenting cancer and the care that has been extended to me has been phenomenal. In particular, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to Professor Gareth Morgan, Doctor Faith Davies, Doctor Kevin Boyd and Haematology Advanced Nurse Practitioner Sharon West. I would also like to thank the whole team in Bud Flanagan out patients and on the wards. I particularly enjoyed the dark humour and banter we have all shared during my predicament.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No
<b>PART I - BACKGROUND</b>	
Chapter I – Introduction.	1
Chapter II - The Aviator Identity and a Technical Mind-set.	43
<b>PART II - EARLY LEADERS</b>	57
Chapter III – Henderson - Father of The Royal Air Force?	59
Chapter IV – Sykes.	89
Chapter V – Trenchard.	118
<b>PART III – PROCESSES AND PRACTICES</b>	147
Chapter VI - Training the New Entrants: Apprentices and the RAF College.	148
Chapter VII - The Staff College.	199
Chapter VIII – Artefacts.	232
Chapter IX - Traditions, Customs and Rituals of the RAF.	266
Chapter X - RAF Architecture.	295
<b>PART IV – CONCLUSION</b>	322
Chapter XI – Conclusion.	322
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix I – Apprentice Graduation Rate.	332
Appendix II – RAF Halton Apprentice Daily Routine In 1927.	333
Appendix III - Suggestions for RAF Rank Nomenclature.	334
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
Bibliography.	336

## LIST OF DIAGRAMS AND PICTURES

	Page No
Fig 1 – Organisational Culture.	9
Fig 2 – Roundel Model of Organisational Culture.	13
Fig 3 – The Dynamic Nature of Culture.	16
Fig 4 – McDonald bed at Halton ‘made up’ for inspection in the morning.	158
Fig 5 – The Brass cube and steel block: Exercise Number One.	163
Fig 6 – RAF College Cranwell	295
Fig 7 – RAF Henlow Officers’ Mess	307
Fig 8 – RAF Henlow Officers’ Mess Wing with Faux Georgian Windows	307

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAF – Auxiliary Air Force  
AC2 – Aircraftman 2  
AFC – Air Force Cross  
AFM – Air Force Medal  
AP – Air Publication  
DCAS – Deputy Chief of Air Staff  
DFC – Distinguished Flying Cross  
DFM – Distinguished Flying Medal  
DS – Directing Staff  
CAS – Chief of Air Staff  
CBE – Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire  
CFS – Central Flying School  
BEF – British Expeditionary Force  
DSO – Distinguished Service Order  
GD Branch – General Duties Branch  
GOC – General Officer Commanding  
GPO – General Post Office  
HMSO – Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office  
HQ – Headquarters  
KCLMA Liddell Hart – King's College London Military Archives Liddell Hart.  
LAC – Leading Aircraftman  
LMF – Lack of Moral Fibre  
LofC – Line of Communication  
MOD – Ministry of Defence  
MW – Military Wing  
NAAFI – Navy Army and Air Force Institute  
NCO – Non-Commissioned Officer  
OR – Other Ranks  
POW – Prisoner of War  
PT – Physical Training  
RAF – Royal Air Force  
RAFM – RAF Museum  
RAFVR – Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve  
RFC – Royal Flying Corps  
RN – Royal Navy  
RNAS – Royal Naval Air Service  
RNVR – Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve  
RUSI – Royal United Services Institute  
SAC – Senior Aircraftman  
Sqn - Squadron  
TNA – The National Archive  
UK United Kingdom  
US – United States  
WO – Warrant Officer



## **PART I - BACKGROUND**

### **CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION**

Coming into existence as a war-time expedient on 1 April 1918 as the first independent air force in the world, the RAF was an amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). Its personnel came from military and naval backgrounds and had previously been acculturated into their parent services. With them, they brought their own cultural assumptions and predispositions. Moreover, the RAF formed against the cultural backdrop of highly codified British class based society. The leaders of the new Service represented a fairly narrow cross-section of that society and the way they set up the RAF was indicative of that. They developed a fully functioning system of orders, regulations, doctrine, tactics and flying standards underpinned by a functional structure that laid out, for their personnel, the way to behave, fly and fight. A range of artefacts was introduced including a new uniform, badges, coats of arms, memorials and an Ensign. Many of the artefacts, processes, practices, traditions, rituals and customs that were instituted were, like their leaders, representative of a traditional military organisation of its era. However, despite that largely traditional framework, this thesis will argue that a very distinctive RAF culture emerged within a short time frame. The RAF model and many aspects of its culture were subsequently adopted by other nations as they formed their own independent air forces. Those who have served, or been associated with the RAF, intuitively know the power of its culture. Service in the RAF is an immersive experience that evokes a range of deeply held assumptions, beliefs and emotions that are both positive and negative in nature and effect. However, despite the obvious importance and impact of RAF culture, there is

a surprising lacuna of academic material that examines this important social aspect of RAF history that this thesis will address.

## **The Importance of Military Culture**

Schein highlighted the power of organisational culture:

Culture is an abstraction, yet forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of those forces, we become victims to them.<sup>1</sup>

This powerful force plays a role in any organisation that involves human interaction including commercial organisations, the public sector, NGOs, religions, sects, clubs, societies and even non-state, terrorist and outlawed organisations. According to business theorists Kilmann, Sexton and Serpa: 'culture is the invisible force behind the tangibles and observables in any organisation, a social energy that moves people to act'.<sup>2</sup>

Military operations frequently rely upon co-ordinating large bodies of often geographically split personnel across a range of diverse functions in a timely manner whilst engaged in combat that could result in the loss of life of members of the organisation. The prospect of ultimate sacrifice for the greater good greatly increases the stakes of membership of a military organisation for its members compared with membership of corporate organisations usually examined by organisational cultural theorists. Aspects of culture that help inculcate the sense of belonging and mutual trust required to achieve success in this high-stake military context is highly visible. The political scientist, Kier, wrote:

---

<sup>1</sup> Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass 2004), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Kilmann Ralf, Saxton Mary, Serpa Roy and associates editors, *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985), p.ix. See also Kenneth Desson and Joseph Clouthier, 'Organizational Culture - Why Does it Matter', paper presented to Symposium on International Safeguards International Atomic Energy Agency Vienna, Austria (November 3, 2010), pp.1-2.

Organizations' perceptions of their world frame their decisions; this is particularly true of "total" institutions like the military. Few organizations devote as many resources to the assimilation of their members. The emphasis on ceremony and tradition, and the development of a common language and esprit de corps, testify to the strength of the military's organizational culture.<sup>3</sup>

Murray, Professor of Military History at the US Army War College, wrote that 'military culture may be the most important factor not only in military effectiveness, but also in the processes involved in military innovation, which is essential to preparing military organizations for the next war'.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, an effective military culture enhances cohesion, which is vital to success on the battlefield. English, wrote that:

Culture, described as the "bedrock of military effectiveness,"... can help explain the "motivations, aspirations, norms and rules of conduct" – what might be called the essence of the...military. History has shown that even when military forces have had access to the same technology, whether they developed the doctrine to use that technology effectively or not was largely a function of each force's culture.<sup>5</sup>

Surprisingly, despite the obvious investment by military organisations referred to by Kier, military culture remains an area that has not been extensively explored. Of military culture and sub-cultures, English wrote that: 'many of these areas have received very little attention from either the academic or professional military communities'.<sup>6</sup>

Without an understanding of how culture affects an institution, well-meaning attempts at change often give rise to unintentional or unwelcome second and third order effects which can render the adaptive process much more difficult than

---

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Kier, 'Culture and Military Doctrine. France Between the Wars', *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Spring, 1995), p.69.

<sup>4</sup> Williamson Murray. 'Does Military Culture Matter', *Orbis*, Vol 43, Issue 1 (Winter 1999), p.134.

<sup>5</sup> Allan English, *Understanding Military Culture. A Canadian Perspective*, (Montreal, Kingston & London: McGill-Queen's University Press, Ithaca, 2004), p.5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

perhaps it needs to be. Kirke suggested that:

Riding existing culture into the future in the face of change is better than confronting it. A key weapon in improving the efficiency of any organisation, therefore, is the understanding of its current culture, especially before it is plunged into major change.<sup>7</sup>

Harnessing the body of evidence on culture would appear to be a logical step in assisting RAF leaders to understand their people and organisation better, thereby increasing modern combat effectiveness, yet RAF culture has received almost no academic attention. That which has been conducted has been thematically narrow and no baseline study of RAF culture has been established. Whilst the RAF may, intuitively, invest in its culture, the level of academic reflection about what that culture means is quite lacking. This thesis aims to address that; it is thematically, rather than temporally bound; however, it will predominantly concentrate on the era in which RNAS, RFC and RAF cultures emerged and matured between 1912 and the inter-war years. The thesis will be broken down into four parts in order to address this question:

Part I: Introduction including models, literature review and an analysis of the aviator identity and the technical mind-set of the RAF.

Part II: Early Leaders

Part III: Processes and Practices: artefacts, training, architecture ritual, traditions and customs.

Part IV: Conclusion.

---

<sup>7</sup> Charles Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – the Unexpected Force', *Journal of Battlefield Technology*, Vol 7, No 2 (2004), pp.11-15. Charles Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition: A Key Internal Factor For MOD', *RUSI Defence Systems*, Vol.13 No.1 (June 2010), pp.97-99.

Charles Kirke, 'Organisational Culture: A Key Internal Factor', paper presented at RUSI 29-30 (Sep 2009).

While the research is an historical work, it will also provide social scientists with a valuable case study of the emergence of an organisation for which early records are well preserved unlike most private sector organisations. Histories of the latter usually only begin to be recorded as organisations becomes successful. By contrast, the RAF's history was being collated even prior to its formation. This thesis will, therefore, make a significant contribution to Organisational Cultural theory by providing an analysis of the emergence of an organisation based upon rich archival records. It will also be of practical use for RAF personnel; it will provide an academic lens through which to view their culture. This introduction will now define culture and organisational culture; it will also examine the methodology behind the systematic analysis of RAF activity that allowed cultural deductions to be made. Finally, a literature review will demonstrate that RAF culture is a virtually untouched area of academic research.

The etymological derivation of culture provided by the Concise Oxford Dictionary indicates that it originates from Latin '*cultura*' implying growth or cultivation.<sup>8</sup> This conveys the constantly evolving nature of culture but this does not sufficiently explain the word culture. It is often used loosely and has a variety of interpretations in everyday language as well as in academe. Given its importance across many academic fields including anthropology, psychology, sociology, human geography, history as well as what can be broadly termed the Business School, it is unsurprising that it is a highly contested area of study.<sup>9</sup> English wrote that:

---

<sup>8</sup> *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 10th Edition, 1999), p.348.

<sup>9</sup> Spencer-Oatey examined a number of different and pertinent viewpoints of culture. Helen Spencer-Oatey, 'What is Culture?' *GlobalPAD Core Concepts*, 2012, [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/global\\_pad\\_-\\_what\\_is\\_culture.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/global_pad_-_what_is_culture.pdf), accessed 17 April 2017. English also provided an analysis of culture

'commentators acknowledge that no generally accepted definition of culture, let alone organizational culture, exists'.<sup>10</sup> Alvesson, meanwhile, wrote that culture:

...is a tricky concept as it is easily used to cover everything and consequently nothing...Many people referring to culture seem to do so in a very vague way and it is important to use the concept without losing focus, direction and interpretive depth.<sup>11</sup>

In his seminal work, the leading anthropologist Geertz highlighted how contested and complex an area of study culture is: 'the conceptual morass into which the Tyrolean kind of pot-au-feu theorizing about culture can lead, is evident in what is still one of the better general introductions to anthropology, Clyde Kluckhohn's *Mirror for Man*'.<sup>12</sup> He noted that in his twenty-seven pages on the concept of culture, Kluckhohn provided eleven different definitions.<sup>13</sup> Geertz' semiotic view of culture described it in a manner that serves this study of RAF culture particularly well both in terms of its vivid description but, more importantly, in terms of the aim of the analysis of culture. He wrote in line with the Weberian view that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be one of those webs, and the analysis of it is, therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning'.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, throughout this research, wherever possible, aspects of RAF culture were analysed for their meaning. This author has, in the course of this research, developed a model to use as a tool to make analysis of the data as

---

and how it relates to organisational culture of the military. English, *Understanding Military Culture*, pp.10-38.

<sup>10</sup> English, *Understanding Military Culture*, p.15-16

<sup>11</sup> Mats Alvesson, *Understanding Organisational Culture* (London: Sage, 2002), p.3

<sup>12</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books Inc, 1973), p.4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.5.

systematic as possible.<sup>15</sup> However, given that culture is such a contested subject, it was important to choose a definition in order to set a clear basis of reference for the thesis. Spencer-Oatey's definition of culture proved the most apt:

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour.<sup>16</sup>

This definition fits with Geertz' interpretive approach but is also a reminder of the need to be cautious with modelling. The word 'fuzzy' is not of academic register yet it conveys an important aspect of culture rarely found in other definitions that attempt to provide overly optimistic clear-cut explanations. The 'fuzziness' of culture explains why it is so hard to understand or explain and also, perhaps, why there are so few academic works relating to RAF culture. However, as with most definitions, it does not provide quite enough guidance to understanding culture. Kirke provided some other useful principles that complemented Spencer-Oatey's definition and, given his work was focussed on the British Army, they are pertinent to the British military context:

Culture does not have a separate existence. It exists only between the ears of the people in its group...It is always the property of the people.

It gives us attitudes expectations and assumptions which are played out in behaviour.

---

<sup>15</sup> The RAF Roundel Model is explained from pp.13-17.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Spencer-Oatey, *Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory* (London: Continuum 2008), p.3. Gibson used Spencer-Oatey's definition emphasising that 'individuals are influenced by the cultures of any number of other groups to which they belong'. Barbara Gibson, 'Intercultural Competency and Global CEO', paper presented at SIETAR Europa 2015 in 'Refreshing the Cultural Paradigm', eds Barbara Covarrubias Venegas, Merlinda Dalipi, Fidel Leon Darder, *SIETAR Europa* (2015), pp.9-19. See also Barbara Gibson, 'Intercultural Competencies needed by Global CEOs' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2014), p.16.

It is instinctive...This makes it very insidious – a force informing our behaviour that we do not see.

It is massive – culture enters every part of our lives and has an effect on everything we think or see or do....

We all belong to a vast array of different groups, each with its own culture, so we are always trimming our behaviour to fit in with the culture of different groups at different times.<sup>17</sup>

Kirke's last point is particularly apposite. The RAF developed very distinctive sub-cultures, referred to as silos by Gray, which will be considered in Part III.<sup>18</sup>

Organisational Culture is a theoretical branch of study that provided an ordered framework for examining RAF culture; it lies in the post-modernist era of Organisational Theory. A brief examination of the concept of Organisational Culture will help demonstrate that it has a solid academic foundation and that it has validity for use as a tool to enable a considered evaluation of the history of the emergence of RAF culture. This generally accepts that organisations are complex entities and that viewing an organisation as a culture is one way of understanding it.

Brown noted that organisational culture is both 'a radical departure from the mainstream of contemporary organisational behaviour studies, and a continuation and elaboration of long established traditions'.<sup>19</sup>

---

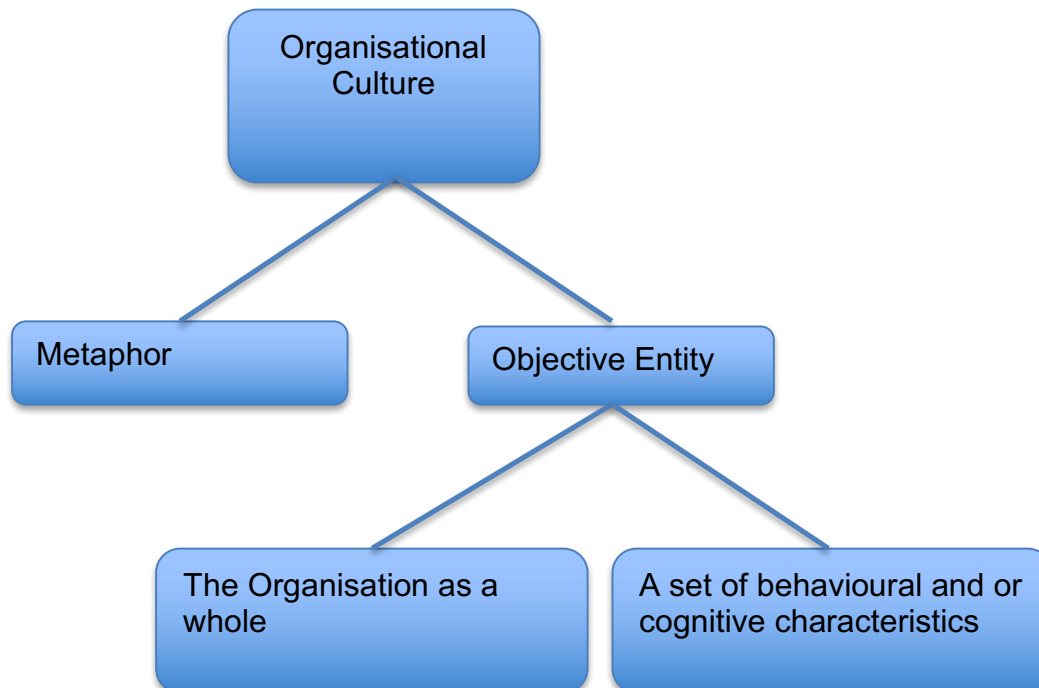
<sup>17</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Gray, 'The Strategic Leadership and Direction of The Royal Air Force Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany from Inception to 1945' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham,2009), p.3. Seabright provided a valuable insight into the importance of sub-cultures in the modern RAF, Squadron Leader Anthony J Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Air Power Review*, Vol 7 No 1 (2004), pp.98-101.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Brown A, *Organisational Culture* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 1998 [1995]), p.5.



## Modelling Organisational Culture



**Fig 1 - Organisational Culture – Andrew Brown<sup>20</sup>**

Brown's representation of organisational cultural theories, at Fig 1, broke it down into two major groupings, the first defined it as a metaphor, the second as an objective entity. The latter was further subdivided with organisational culture representing the organisation as a whole and a second category that defined the culture as a set of behavioural or cognitive characteristics. It was this final subgroup, based upon the work of Schein, that proved to be the most useful modelling and also gave the best interpretive explanation of RAF culture for this thesis.<sup>21</sup> Ott, an organisational theorist, wrote that:

Schein's three level model provides the most useful TYPOLOGY [emphasis in original] published to date for classifying elements of Organizational Culture into usable groupings. Separating Level 1 into Level 1A (artifacts)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.5. and p.9.

<sup>21</sup> Edgar Schein, 'How Culture Forms, Develops and Changes' in *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture*, eds Ralf Kilmann, Mary Saxton, Roy Serpa and associates, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985), pp.17-43. Also Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, pp.25-37.

[sic] and Level 1B (patterns of behaviour) appears to make it even more useful.<sup>22</sup>

While Schein's model was simple, it helped identify and explain the deeper significance of elements of culture uncovered during this research.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner developed a similar model that suggested culture could be viewed in three layers. The outer layer contained artefacts and products and is 'the observable reality of the language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, fashions, shrines, and art. They are the symbols of a deeper level of culture'.<sup>23</sup> The middle layer represented the 'norms and values of an individual group. Norms are the mutual sense a group has of what is "right" and "wrong"...values on the other hand, determine the definition of "good and bad", and are therefore, closely related to the ideals shared by the group'.<sup>24</sup> The inner layer, meanwhile, comprised the basic assumptions or deepest meaning that 'has escaped from conscious questioning and has become self-evident, because it is a result of routine responses to the environment'.<sup>25</sup>

Kirke linked this model to the work of Bordieu and Giddens establishing that 'the important common ground between these sets of ideas is that the behaviour of human beings is naturally informed by, and embedded in, sets of rules that are so deep that the actors are not aware of their existence' and that 'these rules form the

---

<sup>22</sup> Steven Ott, 'The Organizational Culture Perspective', 2012, <http://www.slideshare.net/sandhyajohnson/the-organizational-culture-perspective-steven-ott>, accessed 12 June 2016. For greater detail see Steven J. Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective* (Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole, 1989), p.55.

<sup>23</sup> Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1997), p.21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.21-22.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

deepest layers of culture'.<sup>26</sup> Kirke's interpretation of Bordieu involved using the latter's ideas that attitudes become ingrained and accepted as normal based upon the society in which they are immersed.<sup>27</sup>

Kirke also made use of Giddens's views on structuration.<sup>28</sup> Giddens proposed that:

The flow of action continually produces consequences which are unintended by actors and these unintended consequences also may form unacknowledged conditions of action in a feedback fashion. Human history is created by intentional activities but is not an intentional project. It persistently eludes efforts to bring it under conscious direction.<sup>29</sup>

This gives rise to cultural rules that are not as simple as rules of a game or sport.<sup>30</sup> They 'are subject to far greater diversity of contestations than the rules of games'; they also represent both meaning and sanctioning.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the influences of Giddens and Bordieu, Kirke also made use of a distillation of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's *Riding the Waves of Culture* and Hofstede's *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*.<sup>32</sup> The resulting model making use of these amalgamated theories was expressed in the form of an onion in which concentric layers represented increasingly deep cultural layers of an organisation:

LAYER ONE (emphasis in original) is the surface layer, the observable elements that would form the raw data for social science research. We could divide these data into 'artefacts' and practices.

---

<sup>26</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – The Unexpected Force', p.12. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986 [1984]), pp.1-37.

<sup>27</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – The Unexpected Force', p.12. This is not to be confused with Kirke's other model 'Army Organizational Culture' model based upon four social structures, five informal relationships, and bending and breaking of rules. See Charles Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine. Continuity in Change in the British Army, 1700-2000* (London: Continuum UK, 2009), pp.30-45.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* Cambridge, p.27.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.18

<sup>32</sup> Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (London: Profile Books Ltd 2003 [McGraw-Hill International 1991]), p.9. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture*, pp.20-24.

Artefacts' comprise any observable resources that the human group or its members use or create. Such resources would include such diverse things as objects, clothing, and language.

'Practices' comprise what the members of the group do.

LAYER TWO is the attitudes and expectations that the individuals have which make them feel that the artefacts and practices are 'right'.

LAYER THREE is the deep structure from which the attitudes and expectations (and thus the artefacts and practices) are generated, as described by Bourdieu's 'ingrained dispositions' and Goffman's 'frames'.<sup>33</sup>

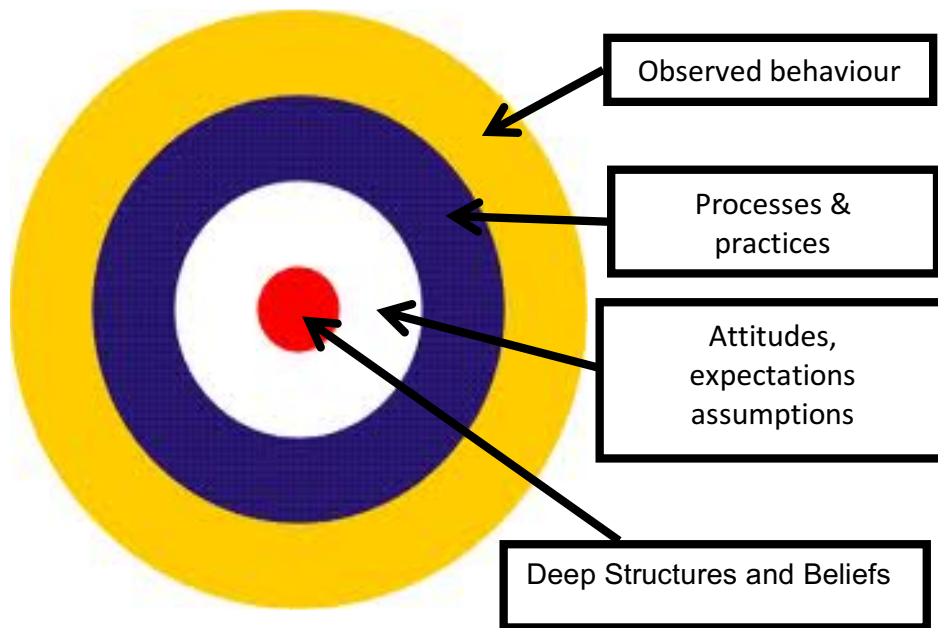
For the purposes of this thesis, this interpretation of culture has been incorporated into the four ringed 'Roundel Model' of organisational culture as shown at Fig 2, giving it an RAF-specific identity. This model builds upon Kirke's work and also underlines the inward and outward effects that the layers of culture have upon each other that was identified in this research.<sup>34</sup> It was used to distil, categorise and compare important facets of RAF activity for their effect on culture. The Roundel Model will occasionally be referred to in the thesis. However, its real value was in the research stage when it allowed a systematic comparative analysis of elements of RAF culture in order to determine their importance and meaning.

---

<sup>33</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – The Unexpected Force', p.12.

<sup>34</sup> This uses a version of the RAF roundel commonly in use during World War II to depict the organisational culture of the RAF. Inspired by Kirke's onion model it demonstrates culture in an RAF context and diagrammatically highlights the forces at play within a culture. The model added to Kirke's model by introducing the idea of 2-way dynamic interchange between rings in an RAF specific context. The Roundel Model also emphasises the blurred lines between the rings. Kirke based his model upon previous work by Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, Hofstede, Bordieu, Giddens and Goffman. Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – The Unexpected Force', p.12.

**Fig 2 - Roundel Model of Organisational Culture<sup>35</sup>**



*Fig 2: The Roundel Model of RAF Organisational Culture using a WWII Roundel. NB This model is designed to convey thematic ideas. Whilst it delineates themes as rings, like most models the edges of the rings are blurred.*

### **Observed Behaviour**

Observed behaviour is the most obvious manifestation of RAF culture which signals membership of the culture and, as in the case of many other organisations with a strong cultural bias, extends beyond the work milieu. Examples of observed RAF behaviour include appearance (both in and out of uniform), demeanour, language (professional jargon as well as 'banter'), symbols (such as the eagle and the roundel), badges of rank, buildings, doctrine, orders and tactics.

<sup>35</sup> Bowyer provided a comprehensive account of aircraft markings from the Second World War. Michael J F Bowyer, *Fighting Colours; RAF fighter camouflage and markings, 1937-1969* (London: Patrick Stephens Ltd, 1970 [1969]), p.34, p.45, p.46, p.52, p.59, p.60, p.63.

## **Processes and practices**

Processes and practices are those regular occurrences that take place within or around the RAF. They are both formal and informal and are of great interest to a commander as they are the key instruments through which organisational changes are made. They also infuse the other layers of culture thereby contributing to changes in the cultural landscape of the RAF. Applying levers of change in a culturally inappropriate manner can, thus, be of great consequence, either positively or otherwise. Examples of formal processes and practices in the RAF are: recruitment, training, wearing of uniform, rituals, traditions and ceremonies, honours and awards and security protocols. Informal processes include participation in sport and social activity, adoption of unwritten rules and the breaking of existing rules and/or protocol.

## **Attitudes, Expectations and Assumptions**

Attitudes, expectations and assumptions may be formal or informal.<sup>36</sup> For example, official ones, articulated in orders and regulations, lay out a series of official cultural standards that suggest that the RAF should have adopted smart and disciplined demeanour similar to the Army. However, informal attitudes, expectations and assumptions are important in the evolution of culture and often differ from those that are officially endorsed. This played a significant role in the RAF developing more relaxed attitudes, assumptions and beliefs regarding its approach to dress and discipline. This will be examined in Chapter II and in Part III.

## **Deep Beliefs**

Deep beliefs are those that are often so ingrained that personnel become blind

---

<sup>36</sup> Kirke examines these aspects in detail in Kirke *Red Coat, Green Machine*.

to them. Three excellent examples of these are air-mindedness, the aviator identity and the RAF's technical mind-set. Air-mindedness was an officially promoted concept that remains a strong theme around which the RAF coalesces today.<sup>37</sup> It suggested that only airmen can understand air power.

Meanwhile, this thesis proposes a theory that the romantic, adventurous and dangerous world of flying resulted in the emergence of an aviator identity that deeply affected the way the aviators of the British fighting services interpreted and acted in their world.<sup>38</sup> Aviators elevated professionalism in the cockpit and flying skill over many of the more mundane aspects of military life with the consequence that this aviator identity had a deep influence on attitudes throughout the service about what was really important.

In parallel and encouraged by the establishment of a wide variety of ground trades and specialisations and through investment in quality training, RAF personnel assumed a highly technical mind-set.<sup>39</sup> Technical prowess within the different ground trades as well as in the cockpit became a deeply defined value across the Service. This allowed personnel to distinguish themselves from the other services and was often a source of pride especially for the Other Ranks (ORs) of the RAF.

### **Application of the Model**

It should be noted that the model's distinctions, in common with most modelling processes, are blurred and that individuals within the culture will be mapped differently. Additionally, cultural components of the model may be present in more than one ring or, indeed, move from one ring to another. Notably, changes

---

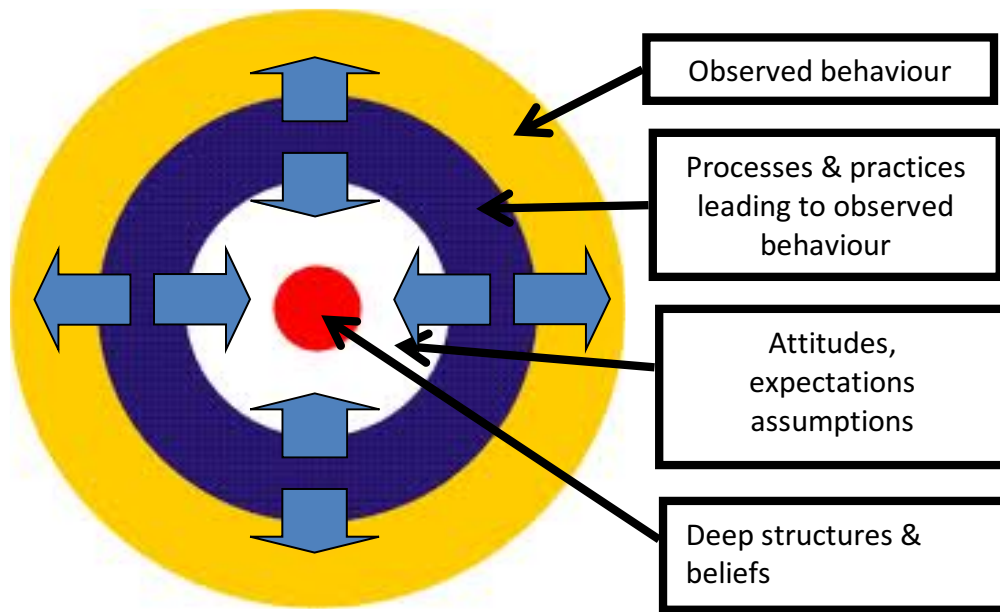
<sup>37</sup> Hugh Montague Trenchard was the First Chief of The Air Staff of the RAF. Themes on air-mindedness are clear throughout Boyle's biography of Trenchard. Andrew Boyle, *Trenchard* (London: Collins, 1962).

<sup>38</sup> Chapter II examines this aviator identity phenomenon.

<sup>39</sup> The technical mind-set will also be examined in Chapter II.

in the rings in the Roundel Model have both inward and outward effects on the adjacent rings, as shown in Fig 3. This model has allowed aspects of RAF culture to be examined systematically and allowed their meaning to be interpreted.

**Fig 3 - The Dynamic Nature of Culture**



*Fig 3: **The Dynamic Nature of Culture** Processes and practices have both a marked inward and outward effect upon the adjacent rings. Changing a practice or process can have a significant effect upon the observable behaviour or the attitudes and expectations. The latter would, in turn, have a knock-on effect upon weakening or reinforcing deeper structures.*

### **Limitations**

Before adopting a model or theory its limitations should be considered. Meek provided some perceptive criticisms of Organisational Culture studies that helped identify potential weaknesses and guided this research to ensure that false conclusions were not drawn. He cautioned that as Organisational Culture originates from a cross-section of disciplines 'there is a danger that, when one area of study borrows key concepts from other disciplines, the concepts become either stereotyped or distorted in the transfer' and that:



The concept of organizational culture can be a powerful analytical tool in the analysis and interpretation of human action within complex organizations. Alternatively, it can be misused to reify the social reality of organizational life.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the research, it became obvious that some studies on culture did exactly that. Kirke criticised definitions that 'place more stress on the attitudes that the management would like to see manifested in the behaviour of the workforce and less in the attitudes that are empirically observed'.<sup>41</sup> For instance, in the RAF sphere, Mahoney's work on RAF culture is evidence of this; his research focussed only on the officer cadre.<sup>42</sup> Meek highlighted this as a feature in a broader works on culture such as those written by Kilmann et al, Allen, and Martin.<sup>43</sup> He wrote:

Culture, if it is to have any meaning, needs to be related to the total organization, not regarded as phenomena solely vested in the hands of management.<sup>44</sup>

Organisational culture can be viewed in terms of 'espoused culture' as well as 'culture-in-practice'.<sup>45</sup> The former is sponsored by the leadership, while the latter emerges from 'between the ears' of the entire membership of the organisation.<sup>46</sup> This proved important in this research: it will be demonstrated that culture-in-practice played an important role in the divergence of RAF culture from that of the

---

<sup>40</sup> Meek, V Lynn Meek, 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses', *Organizational Studies*, Vol 9 Iss 4 (1988), p.454.

<sup>41</sup> Kirke, 'Organisational Culture – The Unexpected Force', p.11.

<sup>42</sup> Ross Mahoney,

'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, 1892-1937: A Social and Cultural History of Leadership Development in the Inter-War Royal Air Force' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Meek, 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses', pp.457-8. See also Brown, *Organisational Culture*, pp.31-32. For Schein's view of the effect of leaders and organizational culture see Schein E *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, p.22.

<sup>44</sup> Meek, 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses', p.458.

<sup>45</sup> Brown, *Organisational Culture*, p.31-32.

<sup>46</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

other services as will be seen in Part III. These terms will be used throughout the thesis.

Geertz wrote that 'anthropological writings are themselves interpretations and second and third order ones to boot' and that only a 'native' is able to make first order ones.<sup>47</sup> Initially, the author, as a serving RAF officer, assumed a claim to 'native' status. However, it was realised this was only partially true; the RAF has evolved dramatically since 1918, rendering the author a second order interpreter of many aspects of early RAF culture.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, some of the deeply held beliefs appear to have remained fairly constant. Thus, the author claims partial 'native' status. However, 'native' status brings with it cultural blindness. That is mitigated somewhat as the author has conducted 3 exchange tours during his military career that allowed RAF culture to be viewed from a different perspective and through the lens of another military.

## **Literature Review**

Military History has a reputation for examining campaigns or military organisations in isolation. Bond, a military historian, identified that 'traditional military history was essentially concerned with tactics and strategy' and that it 'tended to stress the significance of 'great captains' more than such aspects as war production, manpower allocation and civilian morale'.<sup>49</sup> There is an emerging realisation in the field of military history of the importance of social aspects of history. The air power historian, Gray, wrote that:

---

<sup>47</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p.15.

<sup>48</sup> For an understanding of problems associated with being an insider researcher see Charles Kirke, 'Insider Anthropology: Theoretical and Empirical Issues for the Researcher', in *Qualitative Methods in Military Studies: Research Experiences and Challenges*, eds Helena Carrerias and Celso Castro (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Brian Bond, in Michael Howard, 'What is Military History?' *History Today*, Vol 34, Issue 12 (Dec 1984), pp.6-7.

One of the major challenges to all military, naval and air historians and for that matter, their planners and practitioners in real life, is the need to explore warfare in its wider context. It is not enough to trot out the comfortable aphorisms from standard texts such as Clausewitz about war being an extension of politics, it is actually necessary to set the application of air power into the wider conflict taking due account of the political, legal, industrial, social and other factors.<sup>50</sup>

The lack of material covering the individual and society in military history is reflected in air power academic writing. Gray continued: 'the social and cultural aspects of military history have generally not been extensively covered for air warfare so there is a rich field for study'.<sup>51</sup> The air power academic Mahoney wrote that: 'apart from John James' 1991 study *The Paladins*; little serious attention has been focused on the RAF's human element from an organisational perspective or in terms of experience or development processes'.<sup>52</sup> That overlooks some other contributions, however, his point is well made; there is very little academic material in this area.

### **Social History of the RAF**

There is a small body of academic work that has touched on RAF culture but most academic work in this area is thematically narrow. While James' book *The Paladins* did not directly examine culture, it was the most pertinent work to this thesis.<sup>53</sup> Despite its usefulness, it was poorly referenced and required significant work to cross-reference the material.<sup>54</sup> Francis' *The Flyer* directly explored RAF

---

<sup>50</sup> Peter Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice* (New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p.11.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>52</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.18. Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.13.

<sup>53</sup> John James, *The Paladins. A Social History of the RAF up to the outbreak of World War II* (London & Sydney: Futura 1991 [1990]).

<sup>54</sup> James wrote that 'I have kept references to a minimum, as far as possible restricting them to lesser-known books'. James, *The Paladins*. p.18.

culture.<sup>55</sup> He drew particularly upon personal accounts but also made use of film, poetry and theatre that situated the RAF within broader British culture. A repeated error referring to Halton in Buckinghamshire, as 'Halston in Hertfordshire' and a claim that RAF officers 'prided themselves on their lack of knowledge of horses' at a time when officers such as Brooke-Popham and Trenchard were actively promoting equestrian activities highlighted weaknesses of the book regarding the inter-war era, albeit that was outside its titled time-frame.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the book's timeframe, 1939-45, significantly limited its overall value to this thesis and it largely focussed on aircrew.

Wilkinson recently wrote an insightful thesis examining RAF Reserves and class structures. This was a useful foray into social aspects of the Reserves, but it was thematically limited.<sup>57</sup> Seabright's article, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', meanwhile, underlined the technical nature of the Service and also examined the importance of aircrew in RAF culture.<sup>58</sup> These are themes that will be developed later. His article briefly, but perceptively, explored some of the historical origins of RAF culture and underlined challenges for the RAF culture in the modern war-fighting operations.

Lee's article 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos' broached the subject of

---

<sup>55</sup> Martin Francis, *The Flyer. British Culture and the Royal Air Force 1939-1945* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> For 'Halston in Hertfordshire' error see Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.14 & p.261. Equestrian error is found in Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.14. Brooke-Popham was an Army officer who joined the RFC and, following transition to the RAF, was the first Commandant of the RAF Staff College. He will be examined later.

<sup>57</sup> Frances Lousie, Wilkinson 'The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957 – Officer Class and Recruitment' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wolverhampton, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', pp.91-112

culture in the air power context.<sup>59</sup> It was a perceptive piece of work that examined useful cultural issues. It was mainly based upon oral testimony and personal account but backed up with Lee's obviously strong academic background that included Cultural Studies. However, it was aircrew-centric, not within the timeframe of this thesis and left broad RAF cultural issues untouched.

In 'Tribal Warfare', Wells examined a similar theme to that of Lee but it did not examine RAF culture in any detail.<sup>60</sup> However, Wells' previous book, *Courage and Air Warfare* did include some valuable social research on the RAF. Although the timeframe only covered the Second World War, it made useful observations, some of which had origins in the inter-war period.<sup>61</sup> Chapters on selection of aircrew and morale allowed inferences to be drawn about the culture that surrounded them. However, once again, this was also an aircrew-centric book that did not touch on some wider aspects of RAF culture.

Mahoney's PhD chapter 'Leadership and Royal Air Force Culture and Ethos' was a valuable contribution to RAF social history but, with a focus on Tedder and the officer cadre, understandably it had a relatively narrow officer-centric focus. Social issues concerning the ORs and ground trades were not covered while RAF rituals, traditions and artefacts were mentioned in little detail.<sup>62</sup> Mahoney's examination of the social makeup of Cranwell and the public school influence that pervaded the inter-war RAF was, however, very valuable.

---

<sup>59</sup> Lee P, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos', *Air Power Review*, Vol 15 No 1 (Spring 2012), p.4.

<sup>60</sup> Mark Wells, 'Tribal Warfare. The Society of Modern Airmen', *Air and Space Power Journal*, Vol 29 Issue 3 (May-June 2015), pp.82-87.

<sup>61</sup> Mark Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare. The Allied Aircrew Experience in the Second World War*. (London: Frank Cass 2000 [1995]).

<sup>62</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', pp.85-112.

Pugh included culture as a strand throughout his PhD thesis, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air'.<sup>63</sup> This was a useful contribution to the historiography of the early cultural origins of the RAF for the purposes of this thesis. However, his examination of culture concentrated largely on doctrine and centred on a relatively narrow aspect of espoused culture leaving many wider aspects of culture-in-action untouched. While he identified that doctrine is a reflection of the culture of the organisation, Gray cautioned that 'using the formal doctrine publications themselves has to be done with care and a critical eye'.<sup>64</sup> Given that Pugh and Parton have sufficiently covered early air-power doctrine, it was discounted as a specific area of research for more pressing culture-related subjects that have received little academic attention.<sup>65</sup> Doctrine, will, however, be referred to at times throughout this thesis.

The challenge in researching for this thesis has been the need to extract culturally relevant material intertwined with other diverse RAF subject matter. Kier offered the following guidance for examining a military culture:

Determining the culture of a military organization requires an extensive reading of archival, historical, and other public documents, including curricula at military academies, training manuals, personal histories of officers, internal communications in the armed services, and leading military journals. It is important to look for who or what is considered deviant or taboo in the culture

---

<sup>63</sup> James Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air: British Military and Naval Aviation, 1911 – 1918' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012). James Pugh, *Oil and Water: A comparison of Military and Naval Doctrine in Britain, 1912-1914*, in ed Michael LoCicero, Ross Mahoney and Stuart Mitchell. *A military Transformed? Adaption and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945* (Solihull Helion, 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.21. Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', p.6. Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939', (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009), p.6.

<sup>65</sup> Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air'. Parton Neville, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine:1919 – 1939'. Neville Parton, 'The Development of Early RAF Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 72 No 4 (October 2008), pp.1155-1178.

and what it is about such people or beliefs that conflicts with the organization's culture.<sup>66</sup>

In line with Kier's guidance, the research has included examination of many sources that are not traditionally considered by air power academics. Gray cautioned, of the popular bookstand genre, that 'it seems that popularity and accessibility are directly counter to intellectual rigour'.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Paris highlighted that due to its 'popular appeal, the war in the air has become very much the province of the journalist, the popular writer and the air war enthusiast'.<sup>68</sup> He suggested that the lack of academic rigour in the field has resulted in romanticised images and myths emerging surrounding air power.<sup>69</sup> This is borne out, for example, in Bishop's *Fighter Boys* in which the narrative on the early emergence of air power used dramatic language, was unreferenced, apart from the quotations of participants, and made no mention of Sykes or Henderson.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the personal accounts provided some valuable insights particularly when considering culture-in-action of the Service. When the populist narrative behind such publications is stripped away, they prove to be useful repositories of large numbers of interviews, letters and comment that can be used to gain an insight into important cultural trends worthy of further research. It is also important to consider the effect the bookstand genre itself has had on RAF culture. Romanticised literature, artwork, war stories, Biggles books and aeroplane magazines have all played a part

---

<sup>66</sup> Kier, 'Culture and Military Doctrine. France Between the Wars', p.70.

<sup>67</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.7.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Paris, *Winged Warfare. The Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain 1859-1917*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), pp.9-13. Sykes and Henderson will be examined in detail in Chapters III and IV.

in the development of how the RAF is perceived and, indeed, how RAF personnel perceive themselves.

Other sources, such as personal accounts, letters and biographies were useful in revealing the culture-in-practice, including counter institutional behaviour. The espoused culture, meanwhile, is more readily understood by researching official documents, doctrine, orders and regulations. Nevertheless, accounts found in the popular literature needed careful vetting to ensure that they were not the romanticised views that Paris cautioned against.

### **Background Material**

While Kier referred to militaries as 'total' organisations, Kirke and Seabright both highlighted that militaries are, nevertheless, influenced by broader society.<sup>71</sup> The RAF did not emerge in a vacuum, therefore understanding its culture required the organisation and its origins to be contextualised both in terms of its roots as well as the broader socio-political and geo-political environment in which it emerged.

Both Meilinger and Gray wrote on the historiography of air power; their works are essential reading for anyone considering air power research.<sup>72</sup> Higham's, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, analysed the inter-war years spanning political, military and social aspects of the era that affected the development of military

---

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Kier, 'Culture and Military Doctrine. France Between the Wars', p.69. Charles Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.16. Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Air Power Review*, Vol 7 No 1 (2004), pp.93-94. Goffman is commonly considered the originator of the term 'total' institution. Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth Penguin Books Ltd, 1968).

<sup>72</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*. Phillip S. Meilinger, 'The Historiography of Airpower: Theory and Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 64 Iss 2\_(1 Apr, 2000), pp.467-500.



thinking.<sup>73</sup> Higham covered maritime, land and air power and emphasised the contextual understanding of the military intellectuals he chose to study: 'they fitted themselves into the mainstream of intellectual history by becoming humanitarians, psychologists, economist, political scientists'.<sup>74</sup> Gollin's book *The Impact of Air Power* was contextually useful and considered the broad impact of air power but, frustratingly, stopped in 1914.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, accounts from people involved in the emergence of the RAF, such as Slessor and Sykes provided useful personal insights into the culture of the Service as well as the RFC and RNAS.<sup>76</sup> Gray identified that the cultures of the aviation services were firmly rooted in those of the parent services:

The World's air forces came from parent services and brought with them elements of their culture, ethos, structure and staff systems. Values and attitudes also came and approaches to thinking about the history traditions and practice were bound to be tainted. That said, the advent of military aviation immediately before the First World War brought with it a heady mixture of factors that allowed it to set real distance between the fledgling services and the parents.<sup>77</sup>

The culture of the RNAS and RFC would, in turn, be of great importance to that of the RAF. Understanding the RN and the British Army, were, therefore, important tasks for this thesis.

Essential contemporary reading, in the case of the Army, was Henderson's *The Science of War*.<sup>78</sup> Kirke's *Red Coat, Green Machine* was a cultural study of the

---

<sup>73</sup> Robin Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain: 1918-1939*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>75</sup> Gollin Alfred, *The Impact of Air Power on the British People and their Government, 1909-14*. London & Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989.

<sup>76</sup> Sir John Slessor, *The Central Blue*, (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1956). Sir Frederick Sykes, *From Many Angles* (London: George Harrap & Co Ltd, 1942).

<sup>77</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.11.

<sup>78</sup> Henderson GFR, *The Science of War. A Collection of Essays and Lectures*, (London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Bilbliolife, [Longmans Green and Co1912]). See, in turn,

British Army over 200 years; that was particularly useful as it took an anthropological standpoint.<sup>79</sup> Spiers' *The Army in Society* as well as his contribution to the *Oxford Illustrated history of the British Army* provided excellent background to Army culture.<sup>80</sup> Holmes' *Redcoat*, although intended for the bookstand market, was a well-researched book by a respected academic that highlighted many of the underlying cultural norms of the British Army.<sup>81</sup>

*Understanding Military Culture* by English was a useful academic assessment of military culture.<sup>82</sup> Although biased towards a North American view of organisational culture and modern North American military organisations, elements of his approach provided an applicable amalgamation of organisational theory in the military context. It remains one of the few deep analyses of military culture.

Sheffield's books *Command and Morale* and *Forgotten Victory* diverged away from Niall Ferguson's and John Keegan's views on the First World War in *The Pity of War and The First World War*.<sup>83</sup> The importance of this in relation to British military culture is that it has allowed a much more objective view of the British military and its leaders to emerge concerning the years immediately prior to and including the First World War along with a reassessment of the 'Lions led by Donkeys' paradigm. A result of the deeply emotional response to the First World

---

Olsen's view on Henderson. Richard Olsen, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thompson Capper' in *Stemming the Tide*, ed Jones. *Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, ed Spencer Jones, (Solihull: Helion & Company, 2013), p.189.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine. Continuity in Change in the British Army, 1700-2000* (London: Continuum UK, 2009),

<sup>80</sup> Edward Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London and New York: Longman 1980).

<sup>81</sup> Richard Holmes, *Redcoat. The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London: Harper Perrenial, 2002).

<sup>82</sup> English, *Understanding Military Culture*.

<sup>83</sup> Gary Sheffield, *Command and Morale. The British Army on the Western Front 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Praetorian Press, 2014), p.3. Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: The Penguin Press, 1998). John Keegan, *The First World War* (London: Hutchinson: 1998).

War is that it became a preoccupation for historians and somewhat overshadowed other events from that era. Bowman and Connelly referred to there being a vacuum in the historiography between the end of the Boer War and the First World War.<sup>84</sup> The Cardwell reforms and the Boer War, for instance, had resulted in significant institutional, procedural and cultural changes within the British Military that are largely overlooked. Thus, works such as Bowman and Connelly's assessment of the Edwardian Army gave a rare and objective modern academic insight into the Army of that era and demonstrated that while it was very much geared towards Empire, it was engaged and modernising.

Spencer Jones' *Stemming the Tide* included a series of chapters that provided an understanding of leadership in the British Army in the formative period prior to the First World War.<sup>85</sup> Robbins also wrote an excellent chapter entitled 'The army's ethos and culture' in his book *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18* although disappointingly, he did not refer to the RFC in any meaningful way despite its enormous expansion during the period that he covered.<sup>86</sup>

The first commander of the RFC, Henderson wrote *The Art of Reconnaissance* which is essential background reading when exploring Army culture surrounding the emergence of air power.<sup>87</sup> Originally written in July 1907

---

<sup>84</sup> Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.3. See also Sheffield's view about the emotional response to the First World War. Sheffield, *Command and Morale*, p.4.

<sup>85</sup> Spencer Jones, *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, (Solihull, Helion & Company, 2013).

<sup>86</sup> Simon Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18. Defeat into Victory*. (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2006).

<sup>87</sup> Henderson D Brigadier General, *The Art of Reconnaissance* (London: Kessinger Legacy Reprints (n.d. [John Murray, 1915 1907, 1908, 1911, 1914])). Henderson commanded the RFC throughout the First World War and was a key founder of the RAF. He will be discussed in greater detail later.

prior to the author's involvement in air power, it was widely circulated as a text for the British Army. This is what the contemporaries and subordinates of the future commander of the RFC were reading, and is an important indication of how highly he was regarded in contemporary military circles, something that is lost in the historiography. In its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in 1914, it gave a direct insight into his early, and somewhat narrow, views on the application of air power, explaining why the technical advances within the RFC were less innovative than those of the RNAS.<sup>88</sup>

In *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* the chapters by Spiers, Travers, Simkin and Bond highlighted cultural norms for the later exploration of the RFC within the context of the British Army and in comparison with the RN.<sup>89</sup> Of particular interest was the evidence of Army reforms and gradual professionalization during the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras.<sup>90</sup> However, class and tradition continued to exert significant pressure on military and naval culture and, despite reforms, amateurism and patronage remained strong in the British fighting forces.<sup>91</sup>

### **RN and RNAS Cultures**

The ultimate influence of the RNAS on the RAF was less than that of the RFC given the fact that Henderson, Trenchard and Sykes were all of Army origin and the RFC was approximately three times the size of the RNAS at amalgamation. It was, nevertheless, important to establish a good understanding of the cultural disposition of both the RN and RNAS.

---

<sup>88</sup> Henderson, *The Art of Reconnaissance*. Higham provided a useful analysis of how innovative the RNAS was in comparison to the RFC. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals*, pp.142-146. See also Goulter, *A Forgotten Offensive*, pp.2-18.

<sup>89</sup> David Chandler (Ed), Ian Beckett (ass ed), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, New York, 1994).

<sup>90</sup> Spiers Edward, *The Late Victorian Army*, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army 1868-1914*, eds Chandler and Beckett, pp.205-214.

<sup>91</sup> Tim Travers, 'The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army 1868-1914*, eds Chandler and Beckett, p.218.

Mahan and Corbett were essential reading in order to understand the origins of RN pre-eminence, particularly given that Corbett was to become the official historian for the First World War and a lecturer at the Royal Naval College.<sup>92</sup> His influence on the RN was significant; his writings helped shape RN reforms in the pre- First World War era with his theories of Command of the Sea being of particular importance, especially given that aspects of air power bear some similarities to sea power.<sup>93</sup>

The collection of essays edited by Till in *The Development of British Naval Thinking* was another valuable source of background information regarding British maritime thinking in the run up to the First World War.<sup>94</sup> Till identified a lack of professionalism, much like in the Army. This theme coincided with Mahan's view.<sup>95</sup> Contextually, therefore, Parton's assessment that the RAF developed an anti-intellectual bias is unsurprising despite Brooke-Popham's best efforts to develop an intellectual streak in the RAF.<sup>96</sup> Lambert similarly reflected that the RN 'preferred to work without a system, leaving the development and delivery of higher education to amateur scholars like Julian Corbett' and that 'In 1914 it went to war intellectually ill-prepared, having failed to engage with experience of the past, trusting to a Nelson

---

<sup>92</sup> The most commonly referenced work by Mahan is *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783*. A T Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783* (Wroclaw: reprint by Amazon Fulfilment, [original 1889]), More pertinent to this thesis was a collection of Mahan's broader writings. In particular, his writings on Howe, Nelson and Trafalgar, Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Mahan on Naval Warfare*, ed Allan Westcott (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1999). Julian Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 2004).

<sup>93</sup> Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*.

<sup>94</sup> Geoffrey Till, 'British naval thinking: a contradiction in terms?' in *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in memory of Bryan Ranft*, ed Geoffrey Till (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006), p.1.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>96</sup> Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939', p.99. Brooke-Popham's contribution to the Staff College will be examined in Ch VII.

talisman'.<sup>97</sup> Schurman's *Education of a Navy* provided a useful analysis of the development of strategic thought within the RN from 1867-1914 although, surprisingly, it provided no narrative about the emergence of air power.<sup>98</sup> Romans' PhD thesis reflected the pre-eminence of the Executive officers within the RN.<sup>99</sup> This is very similar to the cultural ascendancy of the RAF General Duties Branch. Pilots, in particular, were held in high regard when the branch based system eventually came into existence in the RAF. According to Mahoney, this appeared, to have its roots in the RN approach to branches for officers that the RAF adopted.<sup>100</sup>

Rüger's *Great Naval Game* examined the place of the RN in the age of Empire and provided a valuable insight into RN culture that arose from the global hegemony it had enjoyed for 200 years.<sup>101</sup> It outlined institutional assumptions of superiority over the Army that pervaded the RN. This explains, perhaps, why the RN would not condone the emergence of a joint RFC, insisted upon RN control of its own aerial service and would become antagonistic towards the RAF in the inter-war period. The book also provided a detailed exposé of how the RN fitted with national culture. As fixed wing aircraft emerged, naval jingoism had reached fever pitch due

---

<sup>97</sup> Andrew Lambert, 'Education in the Royal Navy: 1854-1914' in *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in memory of Bryan Ranft*, ed Till Geoffrey (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006), p.56.

<sup>98</sup> D M Schurman, *The Education of a Navy. The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought 1867-1914* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1965).

<sup>99</sup> Elinor Romans, 'Selection and Early Career Education of Executive Officers in the Royal Navy c1902-1939' (PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2012).  
<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/10701/RomansE.pdf?sequence=4>, accessed Aug 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory'.

<sup>101</sup> Rüger J, *The Great Naval Game. Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

to the arms race with Germany cementing the RN's place in the national psyche.<sup>102</sup> It provided a contextualised view of the RN and British society that is rarely considered in the historiography of the RAF, yet is important to both the culture of the RNAS and the wrangling between the RN and RAF. Seuter's book, *Airmen or Noahs*, meanwhile, projected a clear message about the resourcefulness, forward thinking and flexibility of the RNAS.<sup>103</sup> It also underlined the frictions between the RN and the RNAS, although that did need to be tempered, somewhat, by the very clearly embittered view Seuter had of the RN. However, the very fact that such a dedicated member of the Naval Service should feel that way underlined the distance that emerged between the RN and the RNAS.

Roskill's book *The Naval Air Service* provided a collection of important primary sources pertaining to the RNAS and is essential reading but it suffered from a lack of analysis.<sup>104</sup> Roskill was a major post-war historian who wrote the official naval history of the Second World War and was a senior research fellow at Churchill College Cambridge. His two volumes entitled *Naval Policy Between the Wars*, however, were only of incidental use in understanding the RN perspective on the RAF.<sup>105</sup>

The most useful recent work regarding the RNAS is by Pugh both in his PhD thesis and in *Oil and Water*.<sup>106</sup> In addition to producing well-researched and

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>103</sup> Rear-Admiral Murray F Seuter, CN, RN, *Airmen or Noahs. Fair Play for our Airmen* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1928).

<sup>104</sup> Stephen Roskill, *The Naval Air Service. Documents Relating to the Naval Air Service*, Volume I, 1908-1918 (Navy Records Society, 1969).

<sup>105</sup> Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars I. The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2016 [1968]). Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars II. The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2016 [1968]).

<sup>106</sup> Pugh, *The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air*. Pugh, *Oil and Water*.

referenced work, his analysis of the historiography about the RNAS provided a salient warning that helped focus this research. Whilst acknowledging that the work of Goulter, Paris, Grove and Parton redressed the imbalance in the historiography that *The War in the Air* had established, Pugh noted that Goulter and Paris, in particular, failed to contextualise their work with the wider historiography of the RN.<sup>107</sup>

The final book to be considered pertinent to the RNAS was Benbow's *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years*.<sup>108</sup> Grove and Till contributed three valuable chapters that provided a balanced view of the emergence of the RNAS and acknowledged some of the rivalries and tensions that existed, not only between the War Office and the Admiralty, but also between the RNAS and the RN. Grove noted that 'the airmen chafed under firm Admiralty control and regarded the setting up of a fully independent air service in 1918 as something of a liberation'.<sup>109</sup> That sentiment was reflected in the Ellwood recordings.<sup>110</sup> It is somewhat surprising that the members of the RNAS were far more accepting of the new service than perhaps a cursory observation of the inter-service rivalry of the inter-war years or, indeed, the era following the Second World War might suggest.

### **RAF Leaders**

Despite significant archival material concerning the emergence of the RAF, the historiography surrounding Trenchard, Sykes, and Henderson is disappointing. Many historians have commented on Trenchard and opinion on him is starkly

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.34.

<sup>108</sup> Tim Benbow, ed, *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Eric Grove, 'Air Force, Fleet Air Arm – or Armoured Corps? The Royal Naval Air Service at War', in *The First 100 Years*, ed Tim Benbow (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), p.27.

<sup>110</sup> IWM Audio files, Catalogue 3167, Ellwood 9:54-11:29



divided.<sup>111</sup> His own written material is limited making it difficult to pin down where his motivations and ideas lay and where they overlapped with those of his staff.<sup>112</sup> He also avoided giving interviews and being filmed. Consequently, despite his fame, he remains somewhat of an enigma.<sup>113</sup> The official biography, *Trenchard*, by Boyle was factually useful but presented as a sycophantic hagiography that left much to be desired as did the more recent and much waited for biography by Miller.<sup>114</sup> Allen's book, *The Legacy of Lord Trenchard*, meanwhile, provided one of the few books that countered many of the accepted myths and organisational givens that abound in the RAF.<sup>115</sup> However, Allen's referencing was far from extensive requiring significant cross-referencing in order to prove his assertions. This thesis will provide a new viewpoint on Trenchard that will help make him more accessible.

---

<sup>111</sup> For example: Boyle A, *Trenchard*. Russell Miller, *Boom. The Life of Viscount Trenchard, Father of the Royal Air Force* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2016). Wing Commander H R Allen, *The Legacy of Lord Trenchard* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1972), Tami Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare. The Evolution of British and American Ideas About Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004 [2002]), (on morale) p.73, (on navigation and equipment), p.88-90. Malcolm Cooper, *The Birth of Independent Air Power* (London: Allen Unwin, 1986), p.72. David Divine, *Broken Wing* (London: Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1966), pp.174-179. Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.52-54. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals*, pp.132-170. Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Moral Bombing" The Evolution of Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II', *Journal of Military History*, Vol 60 Iss 2 (April 1996), pp.243-270.

<sup>112</sup> Meilinger highlighted the lack of written material produced by Trenchard. Meilinger, 'Historiography of Airpower', p.482. See also Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p52.

<sup>113</sup> See 'Lord Trenchard – But rarely seen – and still more rarely heard – opens new Middlesex Auxiliary Air Force headquarters'. *Pathé News* (12 April 1934). <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/lord-trenchard/query/trenchard>, accessed 7 April 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*. For comment on Boyle's *Trenchard* see Meilinger, 'The Historiography of Airpower', p.482. *Boom* included errors such as reporting that Trenchard was present at the Staff College opening and also that Trenchard and Baring drove to see 60 Squadron on 8 April 1917 - Baring claimed to have flown in aircraft and not driven. Miller failed to reference his source. While these may be minor errors, they bring Miller's accuracy into question. Miller, *Boom*.

<sup>115</sup> Allen, *The Legacy of Lord Trenchard*.

Despite Henderson's importance in command of the RFC and his central role in the introduction of the RAF, Jordan noted that 'Sir David Henderson, the first commander of the RFC, is almost unknown.'<sup>116</sup> This thesis will bring together a number of different threads that will contribute a more balanced view of early RAF leaders. The only detailed contemporary writing on Henderson was by Seely and Jones.<sup>117</sup> More recently, Paris highlighted the stark lack of coverage of Henderson.<sup>118</sup> The University of Glasgow has a small biography on him along with some brief archival records concerning his time there.<sup>119</sup> Greenald wrote a short article on him in RAF Halton magazine and Henderson earned a paragraph in AP3003 the official *Short History of the RAF*.<sup>120</sup> Greenald is currently writing a biography on Henderson that is yet to be published but should prove useful in highlighting Henderson's role in British air power.<sup>121</sup> Pugh, meanwhile, wrote a chapter on Henderson that is well researched and insightful.<sup>122</sup> There is, therefore, a small body of academics that is slowly redefining Henderson's contribution to the

---

<sup>116</sup> Jordan D, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997), p.6.

<sup>117</sup> RAFM Henderson Papers AC71/4/2 Seely J G B, Forward to *The Life of Sir David Henderson*. It is believed that HA Jones wrote the chapters of the same publication. Jones also wrote an obituary about Henderson: Jones H A, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force' reduced version reproduced in *Air Power Review* Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.9-16 original full version in RAFM Henderson Papers AC 71/12/12. See also RAFM Henderson Papers AC 71/12/147-148, Junior J, 'Men of the Day. Sir David Henderson', *Mayfair*, (March 1918), p.22.

<sup>118</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.214.

<sup>119</sup> 'The University of Glasgow Story. Lieutenant General Commanding David Y Henderson, Sir', [www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178](http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178), accessed 2 June 2015.

<sup>120</sup> Jonathan Greenald, 'Sir David Henderson – Chief of the Royal Flying Corps and Architect of the RAF', *The Haltonian*, Issue 70 (December 2014), p.21. 'Short History of the RAF', AP2003, p.6. <https://www.raf.mod.uk/history/shorthistoryoftheroyalairforce.cfm>, accessed 17 April 2017,

<sup>121</sup> Greenald *The First Air Chief*, unpublished Draft

<sup>122</sup> James Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps' in *Stemming the Tide*. ed Jones, pp.263-290.

emergence of British air power. This thesis will contribute to that revisionist movement.

It was really only Ash, Pugh, Higham and, to a lesser extent James who acknowledged Sykes' role in the establishment of the RAF.<sup>123</sup> Ash's work demonstrates deep research. His proposal that Sykes played a much more important role than the historiography suggests is sound, and supported by the archival evidence. However, Ash's writing was, in places, overly biased towards Sykes. For instance, according to Pugh, he over-looked the similarity of Sykes' and Haig's views on the offensive in order to strengthen the idea that Sykes was an air revolutionary.<sup>124</sup> Despite this, Ash should be considered the current leading academic on Sykes. This thesis will add to Ash's work by underlining Sykes' organisational brilliance and ability to integrate the new technology within existing Army structures. Many of the processes and practices that he established had an enduring cultural effect upon both the RFC and the RAF.

Sykes' autobiography was held up by Gray as an example of how a comment, unsupported by the wider body of evidence, can be 'dangerous' over his claim that Haig was not an advocate of air power.<sup>125</sup> This is a feature of autobiographical works that the researcher needs to be wary of. Autobiographies also suffer from being written with hindsight and authors justify their actions or

---

<sup>123</sup> Eric Ash, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard' in *Air Power Leadership*, eds Peter W Gray and Sebastian Cox, (London: The Stationary Office, 2002), pp.160-177. Eric Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution* (London & Portland Frank Cass, digital edition 2005 [1999]). Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of The Control Of The Air'. Pugh, *Oil and Water*. James, *Paladins*.

<sup>124</sup> Pugh J, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', pp.109-110.

<sup>125</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History Theory and Practice*, p.29. This pertained to Sykes' report that Haig was not an advocate of air power; this was subsequently disproved by Jordan and Sheffield, see Jordan David and Sheffield Gary, 'Douglas Haig and Airpower' in, *Air Power Leadership*, eds Peter W Gray and S Cox, (London: The Stationary Office, 2002), pp.264-283.

positions. Sykes' autobiography was thus treated with due caution and cross-referenced wherever possible.<sup>126</sup> However, in defence of Sykes, Trenchard also referred to a contemporary perception that Haig was resistant to air power.<sup>127</sup> This perhaps gives Sykes' claim in his autobiography some credence; it is possible that, while Sheffield and Jordan have demonstrated Haig's overall support of air power, that the message he portrayed may have waivered from time to time. Views and positions do, after all, change with time.

## Training

The aspects of training considered for this thesis were the apprentice system, the RAF College and the Staff College. Academic material of any real substance covering the apprentice system was lacking despite the fact that it was the most innovative aspect of RAF training. Greenald, Armitage and Larkin wrote short, non-peer reviewed, articles that involved an element of academic analysis but they barely exposed elements of RAF culture.<sup>128</sup> The Trenchard Museum archive proved a valuable source of published and unpublished personal accounts providing human commentary revealing evidence of a strong apprentice sub-culture and culture-in-action that will be exposed in this thesis.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*.

<sup>127</sup> See AIR 8/179 CAS Archives, Interview with Lord Trenchard, 12.30-3pm April 11 1934. Dictated notes by H.A. Jones, on Policy of Independent Air Force 11 Apr 1934. In 1916, Brancker also intimated that there was a conflict in Haig's mind between the value of aeroplanes and guns. Norman Macmillan, *Sir Sefton Brancker*, (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1935), p.135.

<sup>128</sup> Larkin Derek, 'The RAF Halton Aircraft Apprentice Scheme', *Old Haltonians*, <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/news/Halton%20Story.pdf>, accessed 21 Oct 2017. Air Chief Marshal Michael Armitage, 'The Origins of the Boys' Service in the RFC and the RAF', in *Spirit of the Air*, Vol 1, No 2, (2006), pp.28-30. J B Greenald, *Sir David Henderson – Chief of the Royal Flying Corps and Architect of the RAF*.

<sup>129</sup> In particular see Wing Commander C T Kimber, *Son of Halton. The Memoirs of an Ex-Brat* (London, Fakenham and Reading: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1977). John Ross, *The Royal Flying Corps Boy Service* (Dover, Buckland Press Ltd, 1990). Frederick Weston, *A*

Despite its importance, The RAF College Cranwell, has also received little consideration from the academic community.<sup>130</sup> Haslam's *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell* was a fairly simplistic chronology that provided some useful cultural observations, however, it was poorly referenced.<sup>131</sup> Mahoney examined aspects of the College including analysis of social backgrounds. Importantly, he highlighted Cranwell and Andover as 'key enablers in the development of the assumption of independence as they established and nurtured a feeling of membership for the officer class of the RAF'.<sup>132</sup> This thesis uses material available in TNA, the RAF College Archive and the Trenchard Museum in order to build upon Mahoney's work and to establish a deeper understanding of this important institution. Of particular value was the hitherto unused Character Book that provided an exciting window on the demography of the cadets.<sup>133</sup>

Mason's history of the RAF Staff College is probably the most complete work

---

*Trenchard Brat*, (Studley: Brewin Books Ltd, 1999). Halton Archive, Group Captain G B Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered* (n.d.). Halton Archive, Porter K, One of Trenchard's Brats (n.d.). Halton Archive, Rawlinson H, *Chronicle of a Trenchard's Brat, 24<sup>th</sup> Entry by 565663* (n.d.). Taylor B, *Halton and the Apprentice System* (Leicester: Midland Publishing, 1993). Hammerton J, 'A.B.C of the R.A.F, Apprenticeship in the RAF' Amalgamated Press, 1942, Tams F, *A Trenchard Brat* (Edinburgh, Cambridge, Durham: The Pentland Press Limited, 2000). Wyndham Deere, *A Brat's Progress. The Whimsical Reminiscences of a Royal Air Force Apprentice* (Bryn Illtyd Publications, 2000), p.28. Ron Borg, *Stop Cryin' in the Rear Rank. A Serious yet Lighthearted Backward Glance at Ground Crew Life in the Royal Air Force, 1938-1949, and a New Life in Canada* (Ottawa: Hignell Book Printing, June 1998).

<sup>130</sup> There are fewer personal accounts by officers who attended Cranwell than by apprentices who attended Halton. This is an interesting inversion of the norm that officers wrote the history and, importantly, underlines the depth of feeling towards the Apprentice system.

<sup>131</sup> E B Haslam, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell* (London: HMSO, 1982). Haslam served as the Assistant Director of Studies at Cranwell, and then, upon retirement, was Head of the Air Historic Branch 1970-1978.

<sup>132</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.98.

<sup>133</sup> RAF Cranwell College Archive, CRN/D/2011/71, Character Book.

on the subject.<sup>134</sup> It was written whilst he served at the RAF Staff College. Well researched and referenced, it did nevertheless exhibit an overly positive bias, which is unsurprising as Mason had an RAF chain of command to answer to. Mahoney examined the Staff College and provided useful comment about its contribution to culture.<sup>135</sup> Other writers such as Parton, Biddle, Gray and English wrote worthwhile academic analyses on the Staff College.<sup>136</sup> However, none of their work provided analysis directly related to RAF culture. Thus, much like other aspects of this thesis, significant reliance has been placed upon drawing from such academic writing and primary sources material and melding them into a framework of cultural understanding. The sources that were of most value with respect to the RAF Staff College were AIR 69 in TNA, material held at the Joint Service Staff College, audio files held at the Imperial War Museum and papers by Brooke-Popham from the KCL Archive along with personal accounts by Slessor.

### **Artefacts, Traditions, Customs and Rituals**

There has been virtually no academic analysis of RAF artefacts, traditions, customs and ritual. Congdon, Hering and Sargent provided bookstand genre descriptions of the development of early RAF symbols while Hobart provided a more

---

<sup>134</sup> Mason RA, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, unpublished paper written at the RAF Staff College Bracknell, 1972, p.2. Copy held at Joint Command and Staff College Library, Shrivenham.

<sup>135</sup> Mahoney,

'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory.

<sup>136</sup> Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine:1919 – 1939', pp.97-99. Gray, *Air Warfare History, Theory and Practice*, pp.46-47. Peter Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of The RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013 [2012]), pp.41-45. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92. Allan D English, 'The RAF Staff College and the Evolution of RAF Strategic Bombing Policy, 1922- 1929', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 16, No 3 (1993), pp.408-31.

specific overview of the history of badges and uniforms.<sup>137</sup> Stradling wrote enlightening contemporary books entitled *Brass Hat* and also *Customs of the Service* but they were largely descriptive with little analysis.<sup>138</sup> James provided the most relevant academic work with respect to this subject matter.<sup>139</sup> The dearth of academic material for this section required research that drew heavily upon archival and other primary source materials.

## Architecture

Architecture was key in Trenchard's plan for making the RAF a permanent organisation in his 1919 White Paper.<sup>140</sup> However, there is little academic material that dealt with infrastructure and the impact it had on RAF culture. In *Bases of Air Strategy*, Higham covered the evolution of RAF infrastructure. Curiously, for a professor of military history, he chose to provide no foot or endnotes, preferring only to provide two pages entitled 'Notes on Sources'.<sup>141</sup> The book is well researched but the lack of referencing makes his material frustratingly difficult to corroborate. The book concentrated on the operational functions of airfields along with the physical and organisational aspects of airfield construction. It provided a clear picture of the scale of airfield construction but covered little of the cultural,

---

<sup>137</sup> Squadron Leader P G Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1961). Philip Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors* (Woodhall Spa: SONIK Books, 1985). Malcolm C Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force* (Barnsley Pen and Sword, 2015). Eric Sargent, *The Royal Air Force* (Faulton and London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd, n.d, ca Second World War - marked 'Book Production War Economy Standard).

<sup>138</sup> Stradling A H, *Brass Hat. Being Hints on How to Make the Job Easier* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Limited, 1951). A H S (confirmed as Stradling A H), *Customs of the Service* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Limited, 1939 and sixth ed 1943), The Trenchard Museum Archive.

<sup>139</sup> James, *Paladins*.

<sup>140</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>141</sup> Robin Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy. Building Airfields for the RAF 1914-1945* (Shrewsbury: Airlife Publishing Ltd), 1998.

sociological or psychological impact that airfields had upon the millions of men and women who served on them. The lack of contextualisation is odd given how assiduously Higham contextualised *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*.<sup>142</sup>

Francis, the archivist and chairman of the Airfield Research Group, wrote many books, articles and studies of military infrastructure. His book, *British Military Airfield Architecture* included a promising chapter entitled 'Domestic Buildings' that had the potential to examine the human dimension. However, while it provided excellent descriptions and plans of buildings, it proffered little on how humans fitted in.<sup>143</sup> Congdon and Hering recognised the social aspects of life in the RAF and in their respective books both indirectly acknowledged a link between the infrastructure of the RAF and people who lived and worked in it. Hering's short chapter on mess customs described the life in officers' messes and conveyed its importance as a cultural hub for officers.<sup>144</sup> However, he only considered officers messes providing no comment on the much broader and deeper cultural effect of the technical estate, married quarters or other domestic accommodation.

Congdon recognised the importance of buildings and the civil engineers that designed and constructed them in his chapters 'Construction Miracle' and 'RAF College Cranwell'.<sup>145</sup> His observation about personnel being familiar with life on a station thanks to the use of standardised building designs was important and he also noted the 'personal comfort that station accommodation provides'.<sup>146</sup> However, his analysis did not go much deeper.

---

<sup>142</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Francis, *British Military Airfield Architecture. From Airships to the Jet Age* (Yeovil: Patrick Stephens Ltd, imprint of Haynes Publishing, 1996).

<sup>144</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, pp.151-156.

<sup>145</sup> Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, pp.11-26.

<sup>146</sup> Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.11.



Once again, James provided the most valuable viewpoints; in addition to painting a clear picture of the thought that went into the Bulloch designed and Arts Council-approved plans for some of the key buildings, he succeeded in conveying how the buildings affected the people who lived and worked in and around them.<sup>147</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, an Army Officer, made valuable observations about the way RAF stations worked and the effect that physical structures had upon personnel.<sup>148</sup>

Gray, Goulter and Grey highlighted the dangers of relying on official RAF histories.<sup>149</sup> *Works* is an official history and is, therefore, prone to such weakness. However, along with James, it is one of the few documents that provided any real measure of analysis of the social impact that the expansion infrastructure had upon personnel.<sup>150</sup>

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the RAF has a culture that runs deep, yet it has received little attention from the academic community. Organisational Culture is a multi-disciplinary school of thought that proved useful in explaining that culture. Meanwhile, the Roundel Model, derived from Kirke's modelling, allowed archival material to be examined and interpreted in a systematic manner. This helped the author interpret elements of RAF culture and their consequences and was particularly valuable in the research for part III.

---

<sup>147</sup> James, *Paladins*. Lutyens is often attributed as the architect of many RAF buildings. James made this error and it is incorrect. See Chapter VII.

<sup>148</sup> Ronald Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki & Blue* (London: The Saint Catherine's Press Ltd, 1952).

<sup>149</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.20. The author has had first hand experience in preparing F540 histories that commanders have subsequently 'adjusted' in order to present a positive report; Gray referred to this as "cover up". Cox at the AHB maintains a policy of restricting access to only the originating unit in order to try to prevent this occurring.

<sup>150</sup> AHB, Air Publication 3236, *Works*, Air Ministry, 1956. 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934, Air Historical Branch (1) Air Ministry. G 106,640.

The lack of academic literature on the subject of RAF culture demonstrates that this area of air power is in need of research. Keir's guidance to look broadly in order to examine culture is important to this thesis. While there may be a dearth of academic comment that deals directly with the subject, there is a plentiful supply of primary source material available. Meanwhile, many areas of academic writing tangentially touch upon culture given the enormity of the subject. The challenge lies in how broadly the researcher needs to look in order to draw the strands of culture together into a cogent and manageable entity that then allows meaningful analysis to be conducted. Understanding the origins of RAF culture required a clear appreciation of the culture of the RNAS, RFC and, in turn, the RN and British Army. That appreciation also needed to be contextualised within the social and geopolitical paradigms of the era in which air power emerged. Thus, as well as researching material that the air power theorist will recognise as serious primary sources or academic comment, the need to understand culture-in-practice has required examination of personal accounts, RAF magazines, unpublished material and the bookstand genre material. Manifestations of espoused culture were most clearly identified in Air Publications, orders, regulations, official papers and correspondence.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AVIATOR IDENTITY AND TECHNICAL MIND-SET

The myth of Icarus, drawings by Da Vinci and Jules Verne's fiction indicate a longstanding and popular fascination with manned flight. Early aviators fulfilled one of mankind's most elusive dreams. In flimsy machines with unreliable engines they risked their lives to soar like birds. They were pioneers of the third dimension and assumed heroic status to those on the ground. Wells wrote that perceptions of physical and mental superiority of flyers were often linked to 'characteristics associated with sportsmen, hunters or cavalrymen' and militaries began to recruit accordingly.<sup>1</sup> In Britain, he noted that selection was based on 'naïve notions relating to the social and cultural background of flyers'.<sup>2</sup>

The RAF, politicians, the media and aircrew themselves reinforced, what will be referred to in this thesis as, the aviator identity. With time, this would become an increasingly pronounced phenomenon that remains alive even today.<sup>3</sup> Lee wrote: '

From the era of dog-fighting biplanes to the age of fly-by-wire, twin-engine fast-jets with stealth technology and satellite-guided weaponry, each iteration of technological advancement has seen its associated RAF aircrew – especially the pilots – construct their ethos in the shadows of those early pioneers. The heritage and heroics of their forebears have been claimed and selectively incorporated in the ethos of each new generation who would apply the increasing utility of air power in combat operations.<sup>4</sup>

This aviator identity was not restricted to the British aerial services nor was it exclusive to military flyers. It was a global phenomenon that the media and general

---

<sup>1</sup> Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Rob Burgon, *Piano Burning and Other Fighter Pilot Traditions* (Utah: Slipstream Publishing, 2016). For a perceptive psychologist's view of how the Aviator Identity has been internalized and perpetuated within the military environment. 'The Failing Aviator', published online 2009, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WecvU\\_QYt\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WecvU_QYt_c) accessed 16 April 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Lee, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos'

public bought into as much as the aviators themselves.<sup>5</sup> It was sufficiently strong to create a bond between aviators that would even transcend the politics of war. Not only did RAF aircrew belong to RAF culture but they also belonged to an international culture between aviators demonstrating Kirke's point that 'we all belong to a vast array of different groups, each with its own culture, so we are always trimming our behaviour to fit in with the culture of different groups at different times'.<sup>6</sup> This aviator identity was enormously important in the development of attitudes, assumptions and deep cultural structures of the RAF.

In parallel with the aviator identity, as the aerial forces emerged, leaders rapidly prized the idea that they were creating highly technical services. This was recognised and sponsored at the highest level and resulted in a mind-set that would have a profound effect across all ranks of the RAF.<sup>7</sup> Technical and specialist competence for pilots and within trades and branches became a strong and coalescing focus for the RAF that contributed to its identity and pride. The apprentice scheme and RAF engineering, in particular, allowed the RAF to express

---

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the panache of French aviators and its influence in Britain. Air Vice-Marshal Peter Dye, 'France and the Development of British Military Aviation', *Air Power Review*, Vol 12, No 1, (Spring 2009), p.5. See also heroic imagery and reporting of 'Les Triomphateurs du Michelin Grand Prix' in *La Vie au Grand Air* No 652 (18 March 1911). For a view of aviation enthusiasm in the United States see *Aircraft Year Book*, New York: Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America Inc, (1924). See also *Popular Aviation, 1927-1928* (this became *Aeronautics* and then *Flying Magazine*). *Looping the Loop* shows poster art-work from various nations that underlines the spirit of adventure and glamour surrounding flight that transcended national borders. Henry Serrano Villard, Willis M Allen, *Looping the Loop. Posters of Flight* (California, Kales Press, 2008 [2000]). See also Dominick A Pisano, *The Airplane in American Culture* (USA, University of Michigan Press, 2006 [2003]), pp.16-18.

<sup>6</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture and Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

<sup>7</sup> The technical nature of the RFC was clear in CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'. The importance of training for this 'highly technical service' was underlined in Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force', p.4. Trenchard's clear view on the RFC being a technical service will be referred to later and is in Alan Morris, *Bloody April. The Heroic Story of the Fliers of World War 1* (London, Arrow Books, 1968), p.144.

superiority over the other services on both a personal and institutional level. It also helped attract high quality cadets and recruits.<sup>8</sup> Underlining technical expertise in the delivery of cutting edge airpower also gave the RAF its means of expressing and defending its independence. This chapter will examine the aviator identity and how a technical mind-set contributed to broader RAF culture and behaviour.

### **Romance and Chivalry**

Aviation was very risky, modern and perceived as romantic.<sup>9</sup> This new mode of transport placed airmen at the forefront of technology, meanwhile, flying was restricted to a relatively small and elite band of people. The ability to soar in the third dimension and to look down upon the earth, where mere mortals lived gave aircrew a privileged and elite existence. Hamilton-Patterson wrote that: 'in all but the most granitically [sic] unimaginative, a pilot's aerial viewpoint could at unexpected moments become almost philosophically detached, even lordly'.<sup>10</sup> Modernity and youthfulness defined the aerial services that were populated by young adventurous risk-takers. A key feature of the new aerial services is that those who went into combat were few in number and predominantly officers.<sup>11</sup>

Roskill noted of the RNAS that:

There is no doubt that it attracted into its ranks many very gallant idiosyncratic characters. And outstanding gallantry was often, perhaps usually, allied to idiosyncrasy.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.9. Lawrence referred to the higher standards required for entry into the RAF even outside the apprentice system. He also referred to RAF standards with reverence. TE Lawrence, *The Mint* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 21 and p.195.

<sup>9</sup> Air Commodore Peter Dye, 'The Aviator as Superhero', *RAF Air Power Review*, Vol 7, No 3 (Autumn 2004), pp.65-76. Lee P, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos', pp.1-19. Paris, *Winged Warfare*. Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p.4.

<sup>10</sup> James Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death. The First War in the Air* (London Head of Zeus Ltd, 2015), p.152.

<sup>11</sup> Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', pp.91-112

<sup>12</sup> Roskill S, *Documents Relating to the Naval Air Service*, p.x.

Pemberton Billing, an MP, and early member of the RNAS, said: 'because of its gallantry and of the constant risks, not only war risks but peace risks, it attracts a temperamental type of man'.<sup>13</sup>

Writing in 1944, Brooke-Popham celebrated that 'youthful adventure' and 'idealism' inspired the gallantry that RAF tradition was based upon.<sup>14</sup> He wrote the following about youthful adventure:

For airmen experience the full joy of a fearless heart; they exhibit a certain joyous carelessness of life, perhaps because they can feel with Peter Pan that "to die will be an awfully big adventure" – just a big adventure nothing more. This spirit is made evident in a special form of courage – the exhilaration of danger.<sup>15</sup>

That Brooke-Popham committed such comments in an official publication is important. On the general subject of officer-like qualities on the ground and in the Mess, he was a traditionalist.<sup>16</sup> However, with respect to the aerial aspects of the Service, his views on youthful adventure demonstrate an official endorsement of an almost amateur approach to this risky profession. Brooke-Popham wrote the following on idealism that underlines the sense of poetic insignificance induced by flying: 'being brought into close contact with the great powers of nature' realised not only that they were 'weak puny' creatures but also that they were 'brought into contact with the other side of nature – beauty, certain aspects of which can only be

---

<sup>13</sup> Pemberton Billing, 'Clause 3', Hansard, HC Deb, 16 November 1917, vol 99 cc749-78, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1917/nov/16/clause-3-transfer-and-attaching-to-air>, accessed 13 Nov 2017.

<sup>14</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham 9/6/35, Brooke-Popham, 'Notes on the Traditions of the Royal Air Force', ATCP No 55, April 1944, pp.2-3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> For Brooke-Popham's traditionalism see KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4 'Commandant's Address, 4 April 1922', p.4. Biddle T, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92. See also English 'The RAF Staff College, p.410.

seen by those who fly.<sup>17</sup> Aviation epitomised romantic adventuring that chimed with the well-entrenched tradition of contemporary jingoistic boys' adventure literature typical of Imperial Britain such as *Boys Own Paper*.<sup>18</sup>

As well as the romance of flying, notions of chivalry also emerged in the First World War. Military aviation came to represent a form of aerial jousting.<sup>19</sup> Cecil Lewis wrote that:

To be alone, to have your life in your hands, to use your own skill, single handed against the enemy. It was like the lists of the Middle Ages, the only sphere in modern warfare where a man saw his adversary and faced him in mortal combat, the only sphere where there was still chivalry and honour.<sup>20</sup>

Chivalry between opposing aircrew was most clearly demonstrated following capture during the First World War. Grinnell-Milne wrote of his German captors:

They did much more than spare our lives, they spared our pride...It may have been wholly that much exaggerated 'comradeship of the air' which linked us, but I prefer to believe that our mutual understanding ran deeper. We wore the uniforms of our respective countries, we stood for different causes, but, beneath all the superficialities, we knew that we were actuated by the same motives. Youth, adventure, high spirits – those things wound up for us the mainspring of life. We would have fought just as well without propaganda; we had no need for bitter hatred. So may it have been in the days of chivalry.<sup>21</sup>

The sense of chivalric code was condoned and perpetuated by the hierarchy even at HQ RFC level; air dropped letters sanctioned by the HQ with news of downed crews of both sides were held in official files that also include orders for

---

<sup>17</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham 9/6/35, Brooke-Popham, 'Notes on the Traditions of the Royal Air Force', *ATCP* (No 55, April 1944) p.3.

<sup>18</sup> *Boys Own Paper Magazine* was published from 1879 to 1967 and emphasised adventure and British imperial hegemony.

<sup>19</sup> For an examination of chivalry see Dye P, *The Aviator as Superhero*. Lee P, *Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos*. Paris M, *Winged Warfare*, p.6. Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p.4.

<sup>20</sup> Cecil Lewis, *Sagittarius Rising* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2009), p.45.

<sup>21</sup> Duncan Grinnell-Milne, *Wind in the Wires* (London: Grubb Street Publishing, 2014 [London: The Aviation Book Club, 1937]), p.151.

See also Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.169.

British crews to drop information over German lines.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the officially endorsed language adopted by aircrews was chivalric. For instance, the First World War term 'victory' implied gallant duelling. Pisano underlined that victory was 'a euphemism that cloaked the more malign term "kill"', although the term 'kill' would later become commonplace.<sup>23</sup> The chivalric code remained evident, although officially condemned, in the Second World War, as highlighted by the 1944 *Tee Emm* article '*He Sold his Country for a Cigarette*'. The article articulated concerns that captured airmen were speaking freely with German aviators immediately after their capture and insisted it should stop.<sup>24</sup>

The emphasis on chivalric behaviour was questioned by Paris who highlighted that the popular press had encouraged the emergence of a heroic narrative that Raleigh, in particular, strengthened by 'virtually giving it the official seal of approval'.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Lee juxtaposed the mythology of chivalric behaviour that had emerged against the harsh realities of what actually took place during combat.<sup>26</sup> Gould Lee's contemporary account of his experiences in the First World War also demonstrated that the lived experience was somewhat removed from that portrayed in the popular press and by Raleigh. Parker, an RFC pilot from 1915-1918 wrote: 'the war that started with no small amount of chivalry became a dog-eat-dog affair before it reached the end and man was controlled by his most savage emotions & animal instincts'.<sup>27</sup> Hamilton-Paterson wrote that 'this careful skewing of reality has made it easy for later generations to retain a very limited and trivialised

---

<sup>22</sup> TNA AIR1/864/204/5/511, 'HQ RAF BEF, Fate of German Airmen 14<sup>th</sup> April-8<sup>th</sup> Nov 1918'.

<sup>23</sup> Pisano, *The Airplane in American Culture*, p.19.

<sup>24</sup> See CFS Archive, '*He Sold his Country for a Cigarette*', *Tee Emm*, Vol 4 No 9 (December 1944), p.201. Unaccessioned,

<sup>25</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.6.

<sup>26</sup> Lee, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos', p.9.

<sup>27</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, *Memoirs Vol 1* (1962), p.77.



version of the first war in the air and, indeed, to mis-understand its significance ever since'.<sup>28</sup> This misunderstanding is a result of the structuration effect induced by that 'careful skewing of reality'. The reality involved long hours, terror, boredom and humour.<sup>29</sup> Dye's article, 'The Aviator as Super Hero' underlined some of the very important and sobering realities of aerial combat in the First World War.<sup>30</sup> The high attrition rates, long hours working in open cockpits, loss of colleagues and poor training all placed significant stress upon aircrew.<sup>31</sup> When those stressors overwhelmed aircrew, they were frequently removed to 'Not Yet Diagnosed Nervous' Centres.<sup>32</sup> By the Second World War, neurological problems with aircrew were referred to as Lack of Moral Fibre (LMF) and dealt with severely. LMF is a highly contested subject that has been extensively dealt with by English, Wells, Kingdon and Collins and will not be discussed in depth here.<sup>33</sup> However, English wrote that 'the LMF label did inspire fear in fliers, and it did keep some of them at their stations'.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, Wells provided an interesting angle on RAF LMF policy that supports the idea that, through its actions, the RAF institutionally, although

---

<sup>28</sup> Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.2.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Gould-Lee, *No Parachute* (London: Grub Street, 2014 [2013]), p.68. Lewis, and Bartlett, also highlighted the life in the aerial services involved a range of emotions beyond the simply chivalric. See also Lewis, *Sagittarius Rising* and Squadron Leader C P O Bartlett, *Bomber Pilot 1916-1918*, ed Chaz Bowyer (London: Ian Allen Ltd, 1974).

<sup>30</sup> Dye P, 'The Aviator as Superhero' p.65. For further comment about perceived superhuman status see also Wells, 'Tribal Warfare', p.83.

<sup>31</sup> Dye, 'The Aviator as Superhero', p.72.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Kingdon, 'Behind Closed Doors: Revisiting Air Command's 'Lack of Moral Fiber and Waverer Disposal Policy' and its 'Treatment' of Neurotic Cases, 1941-1945', *Chicago Journal of History*, Iss 2 (Autumn 2013), p.19..

<sup>33</sup> For analysis on Lack of Moral Fibre see English, 'Leadership and Lack of Moral Fibre in Bomber Command 1939-1945. Lessons for Today and Tomorrow' in *The Insubordinate and the Noncompliant: Case Studies of Canadian Mutiny and Disobedience 1920 to Present*, ed Howard Coombs (Kingston and Toronto: Canadian Defence Academy Press and Dundurn Group, 2007). See also: Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*. Kingdon, 'Behind Closed Doors' and Michael D. Collins 'A Fear of Flying: diagnosing traumatic neurosis among British aviators of the Great War', *First World War Studies*, Vol 6. Iss 2, (2015), pp.187-202.

<sup>34</sup> English, *Leadership and Lack of Moral Fibre*, p.112

possibly subconsciously, promoted the myth of aviators being super-human.<sup>35</sup> This was supported by Collins who wrote that as Medical Officers and the administrators blamed combat stress on failures of ‘physical and moral ‘character’’, so the ‘experts and bureaucrats forged the cult of the aviator as a military hero’.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to this official promotion of the aviator identity, gallantry citations, the official history of the First World War, popular literature, poetry and press coverage all helped further to underpin it.<sup>37</sup> Lee highlighted the importance of Lord Rothmere’s descriptions of aircrew as: ‘the breathless tones in his description of aerial derring-do would appear more at home in a romantic novel than in a ministerial message published in *The Times*’.<sup>38</sup> The romantic super-human image of aviators endured, through structuration, as new generations of aircrew arrived in the RAF with pre-conceived ideas of flying and life in the Service. In the interwar period, popular literature such as Biggles and magazines such as *Popular Flyer*, *Air Stories* and *Boys’ Own Paper* would also play a significant role reinforcing such imagery.<sup>39</sup> Despite the realities Dye highlighted, Lee underlined how aircrew viewed themselves in line with the popular images that abounded:

The pilot’s identity as the brave superman of extraordinary physique and intelligence brought him affection from the public and envy from the trench-bound Tommy. He ‘strafed the Hun’, contested aerial duelling, reconnoitred enemy territory, dropped bombs: all with remarkable skill, endurance in the face of physical and mental injury, determination and cunning. Usually until he died doing so.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p.194.

<sup>36</sup> Collins ‘A Fear of Flying’, p.188.

<sup>37</sup> For examples of how aircrew expressed such feelings see for example, eds John Pudney and Henry Treece, *Air Force Poetry*, (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1944).

<sup>38</sup> Lee, ‘Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos’, p.8.

<sup>39</sup> Biggles was written by WE Johns, a First World War RFC pilot and editor of *Popular Flyer* magazine. Johns wrote prodigiously with just under 100 Biggles books and short stories. The first Biggles story was ‘White Fokker’ in the 1932 Edition. W E Johns, ‘White Fokker’, *Popular Flyer* (April 1932).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p.8.

## **Officially Endorsed Dominance of Pilots**

Given that the third dimension was accessible and understood only by a special few, so the RAF formed its General Duties (GD) Branch that, initially, was almost entirely composed of pilots. This was akin to the RN's Executive Branch in delivering the future leadership of the RAF as highlighted by Mahoney:

Through the GD Branch, the RAF showed an evidential preference for pilots. The RAF nurtured selected GD Branch officers as future leaders, as they exhibited the traits that the Service valued, which linked with the generation of a distinct culture and ethos...<sup>41</sup>

RAF leadership was, therefore, entirely dominated by pilots.<sup>42</sup> Aviator identity combined with the need to be technically proficient were key to advancement in the officer cadre in this service that defined itself on technical superiority.<sup>43</sup> This would later serve to create divisions in the officer corps as new branches were introduced but the GD Branch would remain dominant.<sup>44</sup>

## **Discipline and Lackadaisical Attitudes?**

In the aerial services, the officers conducted the fighting and often, at junior officer level, they were not responsible for large bodies of troops as they were in the Army and RN. Combined with the atmosphere of chivalry, romanticism and a sense of fatalism that arose out of the clear dangers of flying, in peace as well as war, some interesting behavioural patterns emerged. Francis wrote that:

The air force was characterized by an apparently relaxed attitude towards discipline, uniform, and deportment which stood in marked contrast to the standards maintained by the army and navy. Pilots adopted an extremely lackadaisical attitude towards drilling or saluting, and even senior officers

---

<sup>41</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.111. Seabright also reflected upon this as the central difference between the RAF and the other services. Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', pp.98-101.

<sup>42</sup> To date, every Chief of the Air Staff has been a pilot.

<sup>43</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force', p.5.

<sup>44</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.110-111.

seemed oblivious to decorum or protocol....the pre-war RAF appeared to possess a carefree culture which was more reminiscent of a private flying club than of a focussed fighting service.<sup>45</sup>

This statement conforms with a populist view of the RAF but is a little overstated and needs to be unpacked and balanced. Lewis identified that, unlike their infantry counter-parts, aircrew:

...lived, as it were, either in the stretch or the sag of nerves. We were either in deadly danger or we were in no danger at all and this conflict between something which was really more or less just like being at home and being in really quite a tight position.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps because of this and despite the demands of a doctrine that centred upon the relentless offensive, some First World War commanders adopted an approach with the aircrew under their command that was, indeed, relatively more relaxed than in infantry units and RN ships. Daybell wrote that Trenchard was no 'Chateau General' and that he did not expect infantry style "bull".<sup>47</sup> He also noted that RFC leaders 'at all levels, imposed a relaxed and easy discipline that emphasised individuality and personal initiative and the result was a close knit corps that fought an aggressive campaign with courage and tenacity'.<sup>48</sup> The focus was on the technical delivery of airpower. This was supported by Morris in an account of Trenchard's admonishment of an officer who ordered a mechanic on an early morning run. 'This is a technical corps. Our job is to shorten the war. You're not in

---

<sup>45</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.15.

<sup>46</sup> Cecil Lewis, 'The Great War Interviews', *BBC*, 31:22-31:56 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbj6p>, accessed 13 Nov 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Wing Commander P J Daybell, 'Trenchard's Undisciplined Mob', *Air Clues* (October 1997), p.372.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.374.

the Army now, you know. Get this into your thick head!'.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, Hamilton-Paterson wrote that:

A regime of squadron life had been established with a unique flavour of its own, one that in many respects ran counter to many of the regular Army's most sacred tenets. Typical of this were matters of discipline and dress, for everyday life on an active squadron was often conducted in comparatively informal terms...Visiting brass were often surprised and occasionally scandalised that RFC airmen might not only dispense with saluting but came and went on the airfield in a motley assortment of clothes.<sup>50</sup>

Parker noted that, on arrival in the RFC in 1915, he demonstrated he could already confidently perform drill and was never called to perform ceremonial duties again during the War.<sup>51</sup> A perception emerged, then, borne out in the archives and primary source material, that rules and regulations did not necessarily apply to this technical service.<sup>52</sup> Such an approach was also evident in the RNAS which earned a reputation across the wider RN for a lack of discipline.<sup>53</sup> However, the extent to which the RNAS, RFC and RAF should be considered a lackadaisical organisation should not be over-emphasised.

It will be seen that Sykes' vision, in conjunction with Barrington-Kennet's, was that the RFC, and subsequently, the RAF, would have all of the necessary disciplinary and behavioural standards of a highly disciplined army.<sup>54</sup> This afforded the Service recourse to punishment that was as harsh as that in the RN or Army.

---

<sup>49</sup> Morris, *Bloody April*, p.144.

<sup>50</sup> Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.157.

<sup>51</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, *Memoirs*, Vol 1 (1962), p.12.

<sup>52</sup> In addition to Hamilton-Patterson see, for example, CFS Archive, 'They Want to Turn Me into a Guardsman', *Tee Emm* Vol 4 No 2 (May 1944), p.52. See also 'Where's that Zipped Lip?', *Tee Emm* Vol 4 No 3 (June 1944), p.60. Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', pp.97-98.

<sup>53</sup> See Grove, 'Air Force, Fleet Air Arm – or Armoured Corps?', p.27 and p.36.

<sup>54</sup> Barrington-Kennet was an officer serving on the MW who was an advocate of high standards of dress and discipline. Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.96.

This was reflected in the RFC, RNAS and RAF Orders and King's Regulations.<sup>55</sup> In addition to regulations, the RAF adopted organisational structures and practices such as Officer of the Day as well as the RN concept of an Officer of the Watch.<sup>56</sup> This was not, therefore, an organisation built on institutional ill-discipline and unprofessionalism ignoring all contemporary military norms. Throughout the inter-war years, the RAF placed significant importance on deportment, discipline and drill, particularly at institutions such as the RAF College, the apprentice schools and other training establishments. The Ensign ceremony, meanwhile, was treated with reverence throughout the inter-war period at every RAF Station.<sup>57</sup> Such was the formality of the RAF, James referred to an underlying stuffiness in the inter-war RAF officer cadre.<sup>58</sup> It will also be seen that, during the Second World War, the expansion period stations were viewed as flagships of RAF discipline and behaviour.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, the LMF policy was harsh. It would, therefore, be misleading, to characterise the entire RAF as Francis did. The reality was far more nuanced. It is clear that many aspects he highlighted were, indeed, present in the

---

<sup>55</sup> King's Regulations highlight the many documents indicative of structured discipline. All officers were to be in possession of The King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions for the Royal Air Force, The Manual of Air Force Law, practical notes on Air Force Law, The RAF Services Pocket Book, The Manual of Military Hygiene and the Manual of Military Sanitation in its application to Military Life, RAF Handbook on the Vickers Gun and the RAF Handbook on the Lewis Gun. AHB, 'King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions for the Royal Air Force 1924', p.579.

<sup>56</sup> The Officer of the Watch was supported by an airman skilled at semaphore and log keeping, to oversee all aspects of flying on a station. RAFM, 'RAF Terminology and Ceremonial', Order 641, 18 July 1918, RAF Air Ministry Weekly Orders,

<sup>57</sup> The ceremony initially was detailed and involved the presence of a band or bugler and a guard of honour. Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.171.

<sup>59</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.175. Richard Caygill, 'Nearly a Somebody', WW2 People's War, BBC, 22 Aug 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/54/a5246354.shtml>, accessed 12 May 2013. Essex-Lopresti made reference to formal RAF stations and less formal ones in Dr Michael Essex-Lopresti, 'Memories of a Wartime Erk in the RAF', WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Aug 2004, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/40/a2939240.shtml>, accessed 24 May 2015.

RAF, in varying degrees. That depended upon a variety of factors such as the leadership, the type of aircraft, and the type of station. However, much like the notions of chivalry, the popular perceptions of RFC, RNAS and the early RAF lacking discipline and being very relaxed were important as they would contribute to an image that, through structuration, would become amplified and then self-sustaining.

Francis' statement that 'the RAF was 'reminiscent of a private flying club rather than a focused fighting service' appeals to the populist view typified by Monty Python or Blackadder sketches. However, this undermines the RAF's disciplined approach to flying and engineering. The strict selection and training systems for aircrew and a need to fit in with the super-human aviator image encouraged high standards in the air. Meanwhile, it will be seen that training for ground-crew, particularly the apprentices, encouraged a deep pride and competitive edge in RAF personnel towards the technical aspects of their work. It will be demonstrated that the RAF was suffused with its own language and humour and that RAF personnel from some of the RAF sub-cultures did, at times, exhibit less regard for some of the processes and practices associated with military service such as drill and deportment. However, RAF technical professionalism both in the air and on the ground can hardly be compared to that of a flying club.

## **Conclusion**

The aviator identity emerged, in no small part, because of a fascination with manned flight. Throughout the period considered by this thesis, despite the advent of aeroplanes, few people had experienced flight. Therefore, an aura emerged that surrounded those able to achieve what had previously been considered an

impossible dream. They were considered adventurous and daring. This was not without foundation; flying attracted many flamboyant risk takers and accidents were frequent. The conditions were, therefore, set for eccentricities to be magnified during the intense pressures of warfare. With the encouragement of the aerial services, the press and the establishment, a mythological image of aviators emerged that aircrew themselves subscribed to and reinforced. The leaders set up the RFC, RNAS and then the RAF along largely traditional organisational lines based upon their own previous experiences and preconceptions. However, the aviator identity and the technical mind-set resulted in these organisations adopting a different culture-in-practice despite the similarity in structures, rules and orders to those of the RN and Army that provided the framework for the RAF's espoused culture. Following amalgamation of the RNAS and RFC, this would become increasingly pronounced as the RAF did not have a parent service to answer to. The aviator identity and the technical attitude of the RAF will be important themes throughout the thesis and they had a profound effect upon the manner in which RAF culture emerged.



## PART II

### EARLY LEADERS

Meek, in an extremely valuable and cautionary paper wrote that ‘the problem with some studies of organizational culture is that they appear to presume that there exists in a real and tangible sense a collective organizational culture that can be created, measured and manipulated in order to enhance ‘organizational effectiveness’.<sup>1</sup> He was particularly concerned with a trend that assumes that even ‘honest grapplers’ have produced studies that ‘seem unduly linked to the interest of management and which promulgate the idea that ‘culture’ is the collective consciousness of the organization, ‘owned’ by management and available to management for manipulation.’<sup>2</sup> He added that ‘most anthropologists would find the idea that leaders create cultures preposterous: leaders do not create culture, it emerges from the collective social interaction of groups and communities’.<sup>3</sup>

Schein wrote: ‘I believe that cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group’.<sup>4</sup> Meek cautioned that Schein overemphasized the importance of the impact of leaders on a culture<sup>5</sup>. However, Schein clearly articulated the importance of shared culture but also highlighted the importance of leaders in a newly formed organisation that still recognises that the culture ultimately emerges from the ‘social interaction of groups and communities’:

---

<sup>1</sup> Meek, ‘Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses’ p.453.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.453.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.

<sup>4</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, p.2,

<sup>5</sup> Meek, ‘Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses’ p.459.

Culture is created by shared experience, but it is the leader who initiates this process by imposing his or her beliefs, values, and assumptions at the outset.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis firmly contends that leaders do not directly create culture. Part II will, however, support Schein's position. In the very hierarchical environment of the early Twentieth Century fighting forces, Henderson, Sykes and Trenchard initiated a process that, in due course, resulted in the emergence of RAF culture. They set up processes, practices, symbols, traditions and rituals that were key to the emergence of the espoused culture of the RAF. However, the distinctive overall RAF culture that eventually emerged was heavily influenced by how its members interpreted and reacted to the world that emerged out of the organisation that had been set up by its leaders; that culture-in-action will be examined in Part III.

RNAS leaders Seuter, Vaughan-Lee and Paine were considered for inclusion in Part II. However, their roles in the development of the RAF were minor although the author recognises their role in developing the RNAS into a forward-looking organisation that drove developments such as the introduction of torpedoes, early RNAS offensive operations and building up an armoured car Division in France.<sup>7</sup> In the author's opinion, the key leaders that need to be examined in Part II are Henderson, Sykes and Trenchard.

---

<sup>6</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, p.225.

<sup>7</sup> Grove, 'Air Force, Fleet Air Arm – or Armoured Corps?', p.27-55. However, their role in the development of the RAF was minor.

## CHAPTER III

### HENDERSON - FATHER OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE?

Trenchard's biographer, Boyle, describes Henderson, as a 'singularly cool and far sighted man'.<sup>1</sup> Yet history has largely overlooked the far sightedness that was so crucial to the formation of the RAF. Greenald, pointed out that 'the man who set out the blueprint for the creation of the Royal Air Force, is little known today' and that his recognition amounts to not much more than 'the Henderson Mess and parade square being named after him'.<sup>2</sup> In 'Short History of the Royal Air Force' he was only accorded a short paragraph that described how his fortunes changed in the RFC following a series of 'low-level' staff appointments.<sup>3</sup> It will be seen, on the contrary, that he was a well-respected high flying officer in the Army. Pugh described him as 'a highly effective staff officer' while Gollin referred to Henderson as the 'moving spirit' in the organisers of the Royal Flying Corps highlighting the esteem in which he was held by Buchan, Trenchard and Jones.<sup>4</sup> In *Winged Warfare*, Paris attributed 'many of the crucial decisions affecting the development of the air service' to Henderson but wrote that 'his role has never been fully explored'.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Higham acknowledged Henderson's contribution, albeit in a footnote about the official history, and explained a key reason for his lack of recognition was that both Sir Walter Raleigh and H A Jones:

Fell heavily under the influence of Lord Trenchard as did the third of Trenchard's official biographers, Andrew Boyle. As a result, the work of Sir

---

<sup>1</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.99.

<sup>2</sup> Greenald, 'Sir David Henderson – Chief of the Royal Flying Corps and Architect of the RAF', p.21.

<sup>3</sup> 'Short History of the Royal Air Force', AP3003, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.269. Alfred Gollin, *The Impact of Air Power*, p.198. RAFM AC 71/4/2 Unpublished draft probably Jones (Forward by Maj Gen J Seely)

<sup>5</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.214. *The Life of Sir David Henderson*, Chapter I, p.2.

Frederick Sykes, the real founder with Sir David Henderson of the Royal Flying Corps, has been carefully slighted.<sup>6</sup>

In rare criticism, Boyle noted the care Trenchard invested in choosing the official historian and that he 'sternly refused to allow freeplay to his own capital role in its [the RAF] arrival and survival'.<sup>7</sup> This chapter will add to Pugh and Greenald's work to increase awareness of Henderson's contribution to the RFC and RAF.

Henderson led the real work of the Technical Sub-Committee of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation in 1912.<sup>8</sup> He was then the Director of Training at the War Office, with the RFC under his purview, until he was made Director of Aeronautics and deployed into the field in command of the RFC during its dramatic growth. On 1 April 1918, the RFC had become a vast organisation comprising 15 522 officers, 98 738 ORs with 8350 flying machines.<sup>9</sup> Jordan wrote that 'he deserves much greater prominence since he might reasonably lay claim to being the 'father of the RAF''.<sup>10</sup> The transformation was impressive, not only in scale, but also in terms of rapid technological change. Under Henderson's command, the RFC developed its own uniforms, established orders, an early doctrine, manned airfields and aerodromes, developed training procedures and brought new technology into the British armed services. Pugh wrote that the RFC was 'an integral component of the BEF, and the Corps reflected the doctrine,

---

<sup>6</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.120.

<sup>7</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.514.

<sup>8</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation', War Office, 29 February 1912. Also, TNA Air 1/119/15/40/62 in file entitled 'Policy and Organization Memorandum on Naval and Military Aviation'.

<sup>9</sup> TNA Air 8/13 'Synopsis of British Air Effort During the War', (London: HMSO, 1919), p.16.

<sup>10</sup> David Jordan, 'Lieutenant-General Sir David Henderson: Forgotten Father of British Air Power?', *Air Power Review*, Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.19-20. This was similarly claimed in 'The University of Glasgow Story, Lieutenant General Commanding David Y Henderson, Sir', [www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178](http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178), accessed 2 June 2015.

practices and wider cultural identity of the British Army'.<sup>11</sup> However, Pugh did not acknowledge some of the cultural shifts of the RFC. Air power represented a significant change in the way war was conducted. The technology was new, RFC structures and bases gradually became more air power oriented and only a small number of individuals, mainly officers, conducted the fighting, the majority, mainly in the ORs, provided support. This gave rise to a distinctly different sub-culture in which the aviator identity was crucially important. The processes and practices required to conduct aerial warfare were different to many of those in the other corps and regiments and despite being part of the British Army and, contrary to Pugh's view, the changes resulted in a significant divergence away from British Army culture. That culture transferred, in large measure, to the RAF on 1 April 1918. In order to examine the culture of the RAF, Henderson's important role in the growth of RFC culture needs consideration. Another key aspect of Henderson's impact on the RAF beyond his command of the RFC was the influence he had on the establishment of the RAF itself. He was the main military adviser informing the Smuts report and was deeply involved in the transition process.

This chapter will examine Henderson's early career and personality. It will then examine the more important processes and practices that Henderson was responsible for introducing and how they affected the RFC organisational culture and also that of the RAF.

David Henderson was born on 11 August 1862, attended Clifton Bank School, St Andrews.<sup>12</sup> He matriculated at Glasgow University in 1877 at the age of 15 where

---

<sup>11</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.266.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas Haig was one of his contemporaries at Clifton Bank. RAFM AC 71/12/12, Jones H, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force'.

he studied under Lord Kelvin and was in the company of some of the most progressive scientists of the Nineteenth Century.<sup>13</sup> Pugh underlined that Henderson's very technical background was unusual compared to other more generalist educations of his contemporaries such as Haig.<sup>14</sup>

Commissioned into the Argyll and Southern Highlanders in Aug 1883 he served on imperial duties until 1894 in South Africa and Ceylon.<sup>15</sup> Following a period of regimental duties in Edinburgh, he attended Staff College at Camberley.<sup>16</sup> Pugh identified the important point, as far as the future culture of the RFC is concerned, that Henderson attended the Staff College at a very important time when 'the education provided at Camberley went some way to providing the British Army and its Staff College graduates with a shared language that reflected the corporate image of the organisation and the values and beliefs to which it gave precedence'.<sup>17</sup> This was the Army that had emerged from modernisation of the Caldwell reforms and was getting its house in order; Henderson was a product of the significant changes that this caused.<sup>18</sup> He graduated in 1896 and took up a position in the Mobilisation Section at the War Office from which, according to Jones, 'most of the officers who

---

<sup>13</sup> Lord Kelvin after whom the unit of absolute temperature was named. See Jones H, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', Henderson Papers, RAF Museum AC 71/12/12. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography also contends he studied under Lord Kelvin. Smith R, 'Henderson, Sir David', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/view/article/33808?docPos=1>, accessed 12 June 2015. Henderson made reference to his scientific background in the preface to Lanchester F, *Aircraft in Warfare, the Dawn of the Fourth Arm* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1916), ppv-ix.

<sup>14</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.267.

<sup>15</sup> RAF Museum AC 71/12/12, 'Jones H A, Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force'. See also 'Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Henderson biography, <http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/HendersonD.htm>, accessed 2 June 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.268.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> For a broad understanding of the changes the British Army of the era underwent see particularly Henderson GFR, *The Science of War*. Holmes, *Redcoat*. Holmes, *The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*. Kirke C, *Redcoat, Green Machine. Stemming the Tide*, ed Jones.

passed through the Section, in its early days, achieved high command' reflecting that he was a high flyer.<sup>19</sup> The Mobilization Section surveyed the entire British Army establishing its capabilities and wartime roles.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in addition to his regimental duty in Empire, Henderson developed a broad understanding of how the Army functioned, how it was structured and how it was modernising. In 1898, he took part in the Battle of Omdurman under command of Kitchener. This was a key battle of Empire in the Nineteenth Century and resulted in Kitchener becoming a household name.<sup>21</sup> Henderson also witnessed the effects of the newly introduced machine-gun technology at Omdurman.<sup>22</sup>

During the Boer War, as an intelligence officer, Henderson was besieged at Ladysmith but led troops on a daring mission on Gun Hill. Despite being wounded, he and his men destroyed a key gun emplacement. This was widely reported in the press and gained Henderson significant credibility.<sup>23</sup>

In South Africa, Henderson experienced rapidly changing tactics and the integration of new technologies. He was appointed brevet Lieutenant Colonel, became Kitchener's right-hand man, and totally reorganized the intelligence system that was being used.<sup>24</sup> In doing so, he showed his flair for original thought and an ability to establish new organisational structures, processes and practices. His

---

<sup>19</sup> RAF Museum AC 71/12/12 Jones H A, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', p 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> For more detail of Henderson and Siege of Ladysmith see: RAFM AC71/12/601-2 Henderson Family Scrap Book Press Cuttings: 'How Long Tom Was Destroyed' also 'Position at Lady Smith. A Brilliant Sortie. Guns Captured' also 'New Director of Intelligence' also 'Map Showing the Position of the Boer Guns round Ladysmith', The Times (Jan 24 1900). See also Brigadier Brian Parritt, *The Intelligencers. British Military Intelligence from the Middle Ages to 1929* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2011), p.193.

<sup>24</sup> RAFM AC71/12/601-2 Henderson Family Scrap Book Press Cuttings, 'New Director of Intelligence'.

scheme would later form the backbone of the intelligence system used by the BEF in 1914.<sup>25</sup> In addition, according to Pugh, 'Henderson became a vital member of Kitchener's "inner circle", securing an important and influential patron in the process'.<sup>26</sup> Patronage was an important aspect of the Edwardian Army that allowed advancement.<sup>27</sup> The British Army of the era was thus delineated into spheres of influence or camps. Kitchener, would become a valuable ally to Henderson; it was Kitchener's patronage, for instance, that called for him to be returned to the RFC when he had been sent by French to command the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in 1915.

Henderson returned to the UK and in 1904 was appointed Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General for the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps at Aldershot under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir John French who became another important patron to him in the RFC. French's patronage would be the reason for Henderson being chosen as the aviation specialist for the 1912 Technical Sub-committee.

In 1904, Henderson published two key books. The first, *Field Intelligence* would, according to the Official History of the Intelligence Corps, 'prove a vital document for the next war as the Field Intelligence Departments were disbanded at the end of the war in 1901'.<sup>28</sup> The second, entitled *The Art of Reconnaissance*, was

---

<sup>25</sup> RAF Museum, AC 71/12/12 'Jones H A, Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', p.4. See also RAFM AC/71/12/12 Letter from de Bertodhaus to H A Jones p.2.

<sup>26</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.269. He was mentioned in dispatches by Kitchener in July for his Intelligence work, and was also written up by him for a DSO that was awarded in November 1902. DSO announced in The Edinburgh Gazette, November 4, 1902, p1086.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/Edinburgh/issue/11458/page/1086>, accessed 21 Oct 2017. Mention in Dispatches with citation in The London Gazette, July 29 1902, p.4836.

<sup>27</sup> See Gary Sheffield, *The Chief, Douglas Haig and The British Army*, (London: Aurum Press Limited, 2011), p.24. See also Travers, 'The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918', p. 218.

<sup>28</sup> Henderson David, *Field Intelligence: Its Principles and Practice* (London: HMSO, 1904) in IWM LBY 80/1294. See also 'History of The Intelligence Corps', MOD,



published in 1907 and was widely used for Army infantry training.<sup>29</sup> This gave Henderson's ideas and intellect broad exposure across the Army. His writing was not overly academic in nature and was acceptable in a military that did not treasure intellectualism.<sup>30</sup> Pugh wrote: 'he avoided the label and stigma associated with the term "intellectual".<sup>31</sup> Henderson was, therefore, well known, well respected and had strong patrons throughout the British Army.

Henderson's first interaction with air power came in 1909. He was appointed as French's 'expert on aviation' in a submission to the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation and he also accompanied French at the French Great Aviation Week in Reims in 1909.<sup>32</sup> He enrolled for flying lessons and earned Royal Aero Club Certificate number 118 on 17 Aug 1911.<sup>33</sup>

The 1912 report by the Technical Sub-committee to the Standing Sub-Committee of the Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation recommended forming a joint organisation to oversee the development of aerial services to be called the 'National Corps of Aviators'.<sup>34</sup> It was through French's patronage that Henderson was recommended as its main adviser. French wrote that the officer to lead the work

---

[http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/history\\_of\\_intelligence\\_corps.pdf](http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/history_of_intelligence_corps.pdf), accessed 21 Oct 2017. See also 'Henderson, Lieutenant General Sir David', in *Philosophers of War. The Evolutions of History's Greatest Military Thinkers*, eds Daniel Coetzee and Lee W Eysturlid L (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: Praeger, 2013 [Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC]), p.447.

<sup>29</sup> RAF Museum AC 71/12/12 Jones H A, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', p.4. Henderson D, *The Art of Reconnaissance*.

<sup>30</sup> Anti-intellectualism and amateurism in the British Army will be examined later.

<sup>31</sup> Pugh J, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps' p.270.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.271. [www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178](http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178), accessed 2 June 2015 and RAF Museum AC 71/12/12, Jones H A, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', p.5.

<sup>33</sup> 'The University of Glasgow Story. Lieutenant General Commanding David Y Henderson, Sir' and 'Air of Authority - A History of RAF Organisation', Henderson biography.

<sup>34</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'. The Technical Sub-Committee was headed by Lord Haldane with Churchill, Seely, Esher, Chalmers, Battenburg, Samson, Haddon, Murray, Henderson, O'Gorman and Ottley sitting on it.

should be 'without doubt David Henderson – for two reasons, the first that he has learned to fly, a very rare thing nowadays - and I suppose an air sense to an airman is important as sea sense to a seaman - secondly, he is a faithful man. He will not fail you in a tight corner'.<sup>35</sup> French understood the importance of having an air-minded officer on the Sub-Committee.

While the Technical Sub-Committee submission was signed by representatives from both the War Office and the Admiralty, in reality the team comprised majors MacInnes and Sykes, led by Henderson.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Impact of Henderson's Personality on the Culture of the RAF**

Henderson was extremely well respected in contemporary society in military circles, as well as in wider society, which played a major part in helping him secure understanding and patronage for air power. Seely wrote that:

David Henderson was indeed a most remarkable and unusual man, and the outstanding service which he rendered to his country, in being the principal author of the Air Force which shattered Germany's dreams of Air Supremacy was made possible by those qualities. I judge those qualities to have been courage, consistency, charm and loyalty. Each one of those qualities he had to an exceptional degree.<sup>37</sup>

The author of the biography itself, in which Seely wrote that introduction, referred to Henderson as follows: 'he was a highly popular officer. His brilliant gifts earned him the respect of all those with whom he worked, and the simplicity and charm of his character earned him their love. "He never interfered with his subordinates, but one would give of one's best just because it was David who

---

<sup>35</sup> Mason George, 'The Forgotten Father of the Royal Air Force', 28 April 2015, <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/blog/the-forgotten-father-of-the-royal-air-force/>, accessed 7 April 2017. Also, Greenald *The First Air Chief*, unpublished Draft (n.d.) p.45.

<sup>36</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p 272. Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.214.

<sup>37</sup> AC 71/4/2 *The Life of Sir David Henderson*, Chapter I, p.2.

asked”, said Sir George Milne’.<sup>38</sup>

However, one of Henderson’s most criticised characteristics was his lack of vision for air power in its earliest stages. Until after the departure of the BEF for France, he was not broadminded enough to see the potential of air power outside the sphere of intelligence gathering; even Jones criticised him for a lack of vision for the RFC in its early days.<sup>39</sup> Paris pointed out that:

General Sir David Henderson who saw only a limited auxiliary role for aircraft, and who above all, believed that bombing was ‘uncivilised’ and unacceptable in modern warfare. If this was the attitude of its commanders, no wonder the RFC took so long to develop its potential.<sup>40</sup>

Pugh, meanwhile, wrote that the ‘MW’s narrow focus on reconnaissance, a direct result of Henderson’s influence and expertise, the Wing developed in something of a one-dimensional fashion’.<sup>41</sup> Orange, Goulter and Gollin provided compelling evidence to highlight how the RN was developing a range of capabilities prior to and during the First World War while the RFC remained wedded almost entirely to intelligence and spotting for the Army.<sup>42</sup> The innovative thinking by the RN was extensive. For instance, by March 1914, Seuter, whilst in command of the RNAS, had already deposited a patent for the development of torpedoes.<sup>43</sup> The RFC did not pay much attention to employing weapons on aircraft to provide a credible home defence, despite this being one of the RFC’s tasks. The RFC also did not give much consideration to offensive action. As well as only viewing aircraft for

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>39</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.9.

<sup>40</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.163.

<sup>41</sup> Pugh, *David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps*, p.278.

<sup>42</sup> Vincent Orange, *Churchill and his Airmen. Relationships, Intrigue and Policy Making 1914-1945*. (London: Grub Street 2013), ch.1-2. Goulter C, *A Forgotten Offensive*, pp.2-10. Gollin, *The Impact of Air Power*, p.199.

<sup>43</sup> For Seuter’s innovative dedication to developing air power see, for instance, RAFM AC 74/12/2/3 ‘Patent Office application for Torpedo patents’.

intelligence purposes, Henderson saw little value in developing bombing capabilities, in no small part because of his own moral objections to it.<sup>44</sup> Thus the RFC arrived in France in 1914 with no tangible offensive capability. This is perplexing; Sykes had noted the French developing bombing and arming aeroplanes with guns in 1911 and they even believed that the Germans did not attack France in 1911 for fear of the French destroying vital bridges with bombs.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, Sykes wrote of using aircraft as fighting machines in both the air-to-air and air-to-ground roles in *Aircraft in War* in 1914.<sup>46</sup> The RFC also carried out some missions at the Netheravon Concentration Camp using guns and bombs. Offensive capability was, clearly, available but Henderson directed policy to favour reconnaissance.<sup>47</sup> After the First World War started, the RNAS was able to mount an attack on Dusseldorf on a Zeppelin hangar as early as 8 October 1914 in what Orange highlighted as being part of Churchill's plan to prevent German aircraft reaching the British Coast.<sup>48</sup> Orange also highlighted that while the War Office was responsible for Home Defence, the RFC was not equipped to do so and that Churchill took on that role for the RNAS.<sup>49</sup> These criticisms of Henderson are valid when considering his early views on air power. However, they fail to recognise Henderson's more progressive approach to air power that emerged with the passage of time and experience. It was Henderson who had the vision of establishing an independent air force that made him probably

---

<sup>44</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.166 & p.215.

<sup>45</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/7/1, Sykes F, 'Notes on Aviation in France, Nov 1911'.

<sup>46</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/16, Sykes F, 'Aircraft in War', *Quarterly Review*, April 1914, Article 13, p.567.

<sup>47</sup> Sykes, 'Notes on Aviation in France'. Also 'Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) at Netheravon. The Concentration Camp'. *Flight*, No 288 (No 27, Vol VI) (July 3 1914), p.698, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200698.html> accessed 7 May 2017. Also, RAFM AC 73/35/1/18.

<sup>48</sup> For more detail on RNAS development see Seuter, *Airmen or Noahs*.

<sup>49</sup> Orange, *Churchill and his Airmen*, pp.18-19.

the most forward thinking air power protagonist of his era.

However, while the historiography concentrates on Henderson's lack of air power vision, his fundamental contribution to air power and the culture of the RFC was the manner in which he introduced it. Respected, well connected, forthright and conventionally successful in the British Army, Henderson was able to promote air power from within the establishment, dressed up in an acceptable manner to both external and internal audiences. He developed what today would likely be termed a multi-stranded corporate communications campaign exploiting aviation's novelty to seduce the press and garner interest upon his personal contacts including the Asquiths and Royalty.<sup>50</sup> In both his staff work, and broader published material, he was not afraid to express his opinion nor to dress up hard-hitting truth where required. His forthright approach and obvious technical and organisational skills earned him a reputation for dependability both with Kitchener and French. Pugh wrote that it was 'cautious and deferential progressiveness that Henderson utilised to further the cause of aviation within the British Army'.<sup>51</sup> Through his persuasive yet conformist approach, he succeeded in gaining acceptance within the establishment of what was one of the most important revolutions in the history of the British military.

Pugh wrote that 'Henderson was not of the Herbert Richmond or J.F.C Fuller school of reform and innovation'.<sup>52</sup> However, although Richmond and Fuller were both brilliant theorists whose writing had great effect upon modern warfare, neither were implementers of practical innovation like Henderson. Seely pointed out that 'it has seldom, if ever, fallen to the lot of any man to be principally responsible for the

---

<sup>50</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.275.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.270.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

creation of a new Army, and almost at once to find himself in Command of it in battle'.<sup>53</sup> While Henderson may have had a narrow view of air power, in the early stages of RFC development, his skill lay in the translation of concept and theory into a structural and operational reality. His conservative approach ensured that air power was accepted by the establishment, but a consequence of that was that it would have many structural and cultural similarities with its parent services. The way in which he established the acceptance of the RFC within the Army is contrasted by the RNAS' more troubled relationship in the RN.<sup>54</sup> Roskill highlighted that RNAS officers:

...tended to rub the more conventionally minded senior naval officers up the wrong way – chiefly by their alleged lack of discipline. The emancipated form of discipline practised among airmen was certainly not understood by the regular Navy of those days.<sup>55</sup>

Admiralty Weekly Orders in 1916 highlighted clear irritation by the Admiralty at RNAS officer behaviour.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, Joubert de la Ferté wrote that:

The Admiralty's adventure into aviation still remained of a tentative nature. There did not seem to be a clear conception of the part that aircraft could play in naval warfare, although many junior officers had strong views on the subject...<sup>57</sup>

The credibility Henderson established for British air power was key to its relatively smooth integration into the British Army.

## **Organisational Structure**

Henderson's contribution to the Technical Sub-Committee is important. The

---

<sup>53</sup> AC 71/4/2 *The Life of Sir David Henderson*, p.4.

<sup>54</sup> The relationship between the RN and the RNAS will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

<sup>55</sup> Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.xi and pxii. For additional view of the frictions see Seuter, *Airmen or Noahs*.

<sup>56</sup> Admiralty Weekly Order No 756 of 21 April 1916. 'R.N.A.S and R.N.V.R Officers – Titles and Uniforms', in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.296.

<sup>57</sup> Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955) p.18.

Sub-Committee had a mandate to recommend broad principles for 'the future development of Aerial Navigation for Naval and military purposes' for which terms of reference already laid out a broad framework.<sup>58</sup> This included the establishment of a Naval Aviation Service, a Military Aviation Service, a National Corps of Aviators, a State School of Aviation (including staffing and housing) as well as the provision of aeroplanes and hangars and the development of an aircraft factory.<sup>59</sup> Henderson's task was to lead his Sub-Committee and build upon this agreed, but scant, proposal for the development of British air power. His report produced two important results. Firstly, it painted an extremely bleak picture about the state of British aviation with the French possessing 250 military aircraft while the British owned fewer than a dozen.<sup>60</sup> That hard-hitting statement counters Pugh's view that Henderson was deferential.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, the report provided a detailed working framework from which the resultant RFC would be formed. It incorporated a very early doctrinal basis for the use of aircraft and established the principle of jointery for British air power. In borrowing terms such as squadron and introducing new ones such as wing, it introduced a new lexicon, that would enter into common parlance within the air services. It laid out an organisational structure including numbers of squadrons to be employed.<sup>62</sup> It proposed courses and training syllabi that would be required, including for ground

---

<sup>58</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation', p.1.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>61</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.270. Gollin referred to a wide spread feeling of unease that Britain was behind Germany, the United States and France in terms of prowess regarding this new technology. Gollin, *The Impact of Air Power*, p.7.

<sup>62</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'.

personnel, advice for the selection of airfields, and pay proposals.<sup>63</sup> This was a detailed report that provided a roadmap upon which the RFC would form and incorporated all the basic processes and practices necessary for the evolution of a new espoused culture.

Of note, at this nascent stage, Henderson underlined the importance of developing technical skills in the RFC. He and the Technical Sub-committee identified a need to ensure that enough well-trained mechanics to support military flying for starting the RFC but also in order to expand if required.<sup>64</sup> The first function of the Aircraft Factory, as outlined in the Technical Sub-Committee Report, was 'the higher training of mechanics for the Flying Corps'. This established what would become a mantra for the RFC and subsequently one of Trenchard's key themes; that the Service was primarily a technical one.

Following ratification of the Report's recommendations, the RFC was established on 13 April 1912 and an Air Committee was established, on 25 April 1912, designed to oversee activity between the RN and the Army.<sup>65</sup> According to Greenald, 'Henderson, with political backing from Asquith, Haldane and Seely, ably supported by Sykes and Macdonough, had set out the blueprint for the next three years of British military aviation'.<sup>66</sup> In fact, Henderson had set out a plan that would shape not only the next three years, but one that envisaged expansion and called for aviation to be dealt with as a joint service. That was a theme to which he would

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> 'RFC Centenary' [https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc\\_centenary.aspx](https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc_centenary.aspx), accessed 5 Dec 2014. 'The evolution of an Air Ministry', [http://www.rafweb.org/Organsation/Air\\_Boards.htm](http://www.rafweb.org/Organsation/Air_Boards.htm), accessed 5 Dec 2014. 'Royal Warrant', Special Army Order, dated 15 April 1912, reproduced in *Air Power Review*, Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.65-72. TNA AIR 8/2, 'Memorandum on the Organization of the Air Services', dated Oct 1917 by Lieutenant-General Sir David Henderson, p.1.

<sup>66</sup> Greenald, *The First Air Chief*, p.47.



return to when he realised the potential of independent action and also the immense frustration and friction that evolved between the RNAS and RFC.

In July 1912, Henderson, having operated under the temporary position as the Chair of the Technical Committee, was formally appointed to the position of Director of Training at the War Office and the RFC was officially placed under him. Aviation was only one aspect of his duties; Greenald wrote that 'Henderson was overworked, unable to delegate to the degree that the situation called for and was under some pressure often working day and night'.<sup>67</sup> That view denigrated a highly professional soldier whose powers of delegation appear very good. He was supported, in no small measure, by Sykes whose work ethic was equally high.<sup>68</sup> The division of duties saw Sykes rapidly build a highly functional MW that enabled the cultural development of the RFC and was the platform for mobilisation of the RFC in 1914 and its subsequent enormous expansion.

Henderson and Sykes' early commander/subordinate relationship appears, at first sight, to be one of efficiency, good communication and mutual trust. Henderson dealt with higher-level policy and political matters while Sykes dealt with the detail and daily routine of the MW.<sup>69</sup> Even Boyle wrote that Sykes, in Spring 1914 'held the confidence of his chief'.<sup>70</sup> However, Henderson's wife expressed a very low opinion of Sykes in August 1914.<sup>71</sup> It is likely that Henderson's view of him at that stage was similar, but that he maintained cordial professional relations. Working with Sykes, Henderson took an active role in the development of the MW. He recognised the

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.52.

<sup>68</sup> Eric Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.40.

<sup>69</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.274.

<sup>70</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.109.

<sup>71</sup> RAFM Henderson Papers 71/12/147-148 Lady Henderson Notes covering early deployment period of 1914, dated August 17 1914.

importance of badges, mottos, insignia and markings and their role in corralling Esprit-de-Corps. He took an active role in decisions such as providing approval for the 'Wings' flying badge, the uniform and the motto proposals.<sup>72</sup> Jordan wrote that he 'was clearly aware of the creation of the clock code and the squaring of maps' and that 'it is worth commenting on the willingness of Henderson to listen to his subordinates'.<sup>73</sup> Henderson, was also directly responsible for the development of the Roundel. He wrote to the French and included a small hand-drawn picture to request approval for the RFC to make use of aircraft insignia similar to the cockade carried on French aircraft.<sup>74</sup> That design remains one of the most enduring and strongest insignia of the RAF.

Henderson had responsibility for the Royal Aeroplane Factory and the Central Flying School (CFS), but from a cultural perspective, the developments forged on the MW in the run up to the First World War are the most important for consideration. Sykes was the main power behind the MW Training Manual part II (1914).<sup>75</sup> However, Henderson was, ultimately responsible for it.<sup>76</sup> Dye wrote that the Training Manual 'provided the foundation for all future British Air Power Doctrine'.<sup>77</sup> Pugh highlighted that it 'embraced the core themes of moral superiority and the importance

---

<sup>72</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.97.

<sup>73</sup> Jordan, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918', p.157 and p.166. For Clock Code and other ground to air signals see RAFM AC 71/4/1 'Instructions Regarding the Co-operation of Aeroplanes with other Arms', dated July 1915.

<sup>74</sup> TNA Air 1/864/204/4/512, test report entitled 'Experiment to Determine the Visibility of the "Union Jack" Painted on the Left Lower Wing of B.E.2 A. No 201', dated 19 October 1914. TNA Air 1/864/204/4/512 Letter from Henderson to the Chef de Missions Françaises (Huguet), dated 29 October 1914 with reply of confirmation dated 31 Oct 1914 from Huguet. TNA Air 1/864/204/4/512 'Routine Orders', dated 12 Nov 1914 ordering roundels to be painted on all aircraft approved by Henderson.

<sup>75</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.277.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Dye J, 'Air Power's Midwife – Logisitcs support for Royal Flying Corps Operations on the Western Front 1914-18'. (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013), p.47. See also Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', p.61.

of the offensive, and put forward its ideas based on a language and philosophy that would be reassuringly familiar to the Army as a whole'.<sup>78</sup> It successfully introduced the new technology into the scheme of manoeuvre of the Edwardian Army that respected traditional Army expectations. However, while it may have been recognisable to the Army, the introduction of the novel technology and changes in processes and practices associated with it were, nevertheless, enormous. The subtle manner in which Henderson did this was impressive and supports Kirke's proposal that 'it is better to ride the organizational culture that exists, and cannot change rapidly rather than to confront it with change that will challenge it'.<sup>79</sup> Seuter's confrontational approach was less successful than Henderson's more subtle one perhaps indicating that Henderson had a better intuitive understanding about implementing cultural change.

Following deployment of the BEF, the applicability of air power soon resulted in calls for RFC expansion.<sup>80</sup> Henderson prepared a new scheme for the organisation of the RFC. Archival evidence shows a letter from Brackner in which he identified two 'quite spontaneous and independent' suggestions that had been submitted to him by Trenchard and Marindin.<sup>81</sup> Those letters suggested how the RFC should be organised, further indicating that Henderson was prepared to listen to his subordinates. This was a fairly progressive approach given the intensely hierarchical nature of the Army in the First World War.

Under duress from Army units, Henderson chose to decentralise the RFC and

---

<sup>78</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.272.

<sup>79</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – the Unexpected Force', p.16.

<sup>80</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/21/2 Letter French to Sec War Office, dated 17 Oct 1914.

<sup>81</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/21/2 Letter Brackner to Henderson. Also, AC 73/35/1/21/2 'Suggestions by Captain Marindin' and AC 73/35/1/21/2 'Suggestions by Colonel Trenchard', heavily annotated in red, presumably by Henderson.

also applied to institute the rank of wing commander, previously applied for by the RNAS as a rank for its command of flying units.<sup>82</sup> Wing commanders would take command of 2-3 squadrons each encouraging faster tasking chains and closer co-operation with Front Line army units. Henderson maintained a vestige of centralised control to ensure that technical expertise, logistics, standardised operating procedures would be maintained. He also, vehemently insisted on maintaining his HQ in France with him in command.<sup>83</sup> The degree of centralised control he chose was pragmatic given the methods of communication at the time. However, it was over the decentralisation of the RFC that Sykes felt particularly strongly and would form part of the letter that caused a schism between him and Henderson.<sup>84</sup> Centralised control and decentralised execution would become a basis upon which the RAF would subsequently, and still does, operate. Thus, while he was responsible for establishing what would become a deeply held tenet of air power, it was Sykes who really understood and promoted it.

Henderson's role in establishing organisational aspects of the new Service was an important influence on the emerging espoused culture. Henderson and his staff in the War Office were responsible, in conjunction with the politicians, for drawing up the legal and organisational framework for the new Service. Jordan wrote that Henderson was:

---

<sup>82</sup> RAFM AC 73/53/1/22, 'Reorganization of the Royal Flying Corps', dated 18 November 1914. Copy also in AC 71/4/2 'Organization of The Royal Flying Corps', letter from Henderson to CGS dated 30 Oct 1914.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. also AC73/35/1/21/2 briefing note on discussion between Henderson and Sec of State, dated 3 Nov 2014, also AC73/35/1/21/2 Letter Henderson to Brackner, dated 13 Nov 1914, also AC73/35/1/22 further briefing note on discussion and agreement in principle on organization between Henderson and Sec of State dated 18 Nov 2014.

<sup>84</sup> RAFM 73/35/1/23/4 Sykes, paper entitled 'Notes on the superior control and coordination of the aeronautical services', dated Nov 1914. The intrigue between Henderson and Sykes will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

...in prime position to influence General Smuts when he was commissioned to conduct his investigation into the organisation of British air power. Henderson's advice played a considerable part in Smuts' decision to recommend the creation of an independent air service'.<sup>85</sup>

This involved: establishing the legal basis of the RAF through the Air Force Act; establishing King's Regulations for the RAF; determining the branches of the new service to deal with discipline and administration; instituting the amalgamation of the twin procurement and training systems; transferring of officers and men to the new service; establishing rates of pay and pension and equalising the rate of progression through the ranks.<sup>86</sup> This was a detailed and enormous task. In organizational terms, then, Henderson played a major role the organisational establishment of the RAF for which he receives little credit

## **Training**

Henderson was in no doubt that the CFS would be a key pillar in building the RFC up to allow British air power to catch up with that of competing nations. Administered by the War Office, command of the School was given to Captain Paine RN to ensure that it was joint.<sup>87</sup> The beginnings of the School were typified by a sense of urgency as described by John Salmond:

As usual England had been asleep during the past years when America and France were striving to develop aeroplane flight and Germany had leaped ahead of both when the Kaiser and people had passionately supported the building of airships....Once again we had been outstripped by our continental neighbours and would have continued so, until some commercial profit from this quixotic invention became visible, had it not been for the war clouds looming on the horizon. Now they were visible for all to see, and England was alert and the government aware of the danger, put in its weighty official push. Our job at the Central Flying School was to turn out pilots to fill the squadrons

---

<sup>85</sup> Jordan, 'Lieutenant-General Sir David Henderson: Forgotten Father of British Air Power?', pp19-20.

<sup>86</sup> RAFM 71/4/2 Correspondence copy of letter concerning the progress of organisational plans for the introduction of the RAF (nod).

<sup>87</sup> For a history of Central Flying School see John W R Taylor, *C.F.S. Birthplace of Air Power* (London: Putnam, 1963).

that were now forming. We started at sunrise and finished at sunset with intervals for lectures and practical work in the shops.<sup>88</sup>

With time, CFS became more than a basic training organisation. Building on the instructional techniques that had been developed by one of its CFS alumni, Major Smith-Barry, CFS took on the role of training flying instructors.<sup>89</sup> As the RAF expanded, other flying schools were established with CFS taking on the mantle of the specialist school honing instructional skills and setting standards; CFS began to build a reputation for expertise and standardisation. From 1937, CFS assumed the task of evaluating handling characteristics for every type of aircraft in development for prospective RAF use.<sup>90</sup> CFS was responsible for setting and maintaining standards provided the foundation for RAF training throughout the inter-war period and endures today. Indeed, the CFS that was recommended in the Technical Sub-Committee Report and introduced and nurtured during Henderson's time has proved to be one of the most enduring specialist organisations in military aviation in the world and has inspired the establishment of CFSs with similar structures and organisational aims throughout many of the Commonwealth nations.<sup>91</sup>

Henderson had learned in the Boer War that representative training was vital to operational effectiveness. That was an area that had been lacking for the British and accounted for some of the early poor performance in South Africa. He sought to professionalise the RFC by training alongside other arms in a representative

---

<sup>88</sup> 'The Central Flying School', [http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc\\_centenary/the-rfc/the-central-flying-school.aspx](http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc_centenary/the-rfc/the-central-flying-school.aspx), accessed 29 Nov 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Taylor, *C.F.S.*, pp.76-79. See also, Joubert de La Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.84. See also, *RAFM Central Flying School*, <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/taking-flight/historical-periods/central-flying-school.aspx>, accessed 29 Nov 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Taylor, *C.F.S.*, pp.76-79.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

manner.<sup>92</sup> He ensured that the RFC was based close to Salisbury Plain at Upavon to allow the MW to train with troops and he strove to ensure that integrated training with other arms took place. He also ensured his patrons and contacts were abreast of the major exercises the RFC took part in such as the 1913 manoeuvres and the Netheravon Concentration Camp under Sykes.<sup>93</sup> At Netheravon, he drove the air power publicity programme by hosting some extremely senior guests observing the capabilities of the RFC including the Prime Minister Asquith, Churchill, Lord Roberts as well as foreign military air attachés from Germany, Italy and Japan.<sup>94</sup>

### **Doctrinal Beginnings**

In military organisations it can be difficult to track exactly who was the originator of a particular idea, doctrine, process or practice. While commanders might be the signatory of a paper or proposal, such work is frequently the product of various inputs from the staff surrounding the commander. Establishing the exact provenance of an idea can, therefore, be a challenge for the researcher. However, in Henderson's case, so new was air power and such was his pre-eminence as one of the few military thinkers in the field of British aviation, that many of his strands of doctrinal thought and emphasis can be tracked through a number of documents.

---

<sup>92</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation', p.9.

<sup>93</sup> For a useful background on the Netheravon Concentration Camp see three articles in *Flight* Issues No 287 (June 26 1914), p.670; 'Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) at Netheravon. The Concentration Camp'. *Flight*, No 288 (No 27, Vol VI) (July 3 1914), p.698. <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200698.html>, accessed 7 May 2017. 'The 'Royal Flying Corps', *Flight* No 289 (No 28, Vol VI), pp.723-726 (including useful photograph listing all officers present). <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200722.html>. Accessed 9 Jan 2016. For 1913 manoeuvres see RAFM AC73/35/1/13 'Instructions for the participation of Royal Flying Corps Military Wing, in the Army Manoeuvres and the Divisional Operations preceding them', 1913.

<sup>94</sup> 'Netheravon Concentration Camp', *Flight* (Jul 3 1914), p.696. The Asquiths were part of his personal network. See also Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.275.

Henderson's influence in the 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation' has already been demonstrated.<sup>95</sup> A further example of his direct influence can be established by comparing his early work on aerial reconnaissance in the second edition of his book *The Art of Reconnaissance* with the 'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps'.<sup>96</sup> The wording, particularly regarding reconnaissance is strikingly close. In *The Art of Reconnaissance* he addressed the value of aircraft for reconnaissance as follows:

The principle value of aerial reconnaissance lies in the distance which can be covered; in the speed with which the objective can be reached, and the information brought back; in the fact that there are no obstacles to be met with except hostile aircraft; and in the consideration that the enemy's dispositions in depth as well as in front can be observed'.<sup>97</sup>

The 'Training Manual' written two years later by Sykes highlighted similar tenets of aerial reconnaissance suggesting Henderson's influence over early doctrinal development:

First it is very rapid...

Second, it is not stopped by natural obstacles such as rivers, or by artificial obstacles in the shape of fortresses.

Third, it can ascertain the movements, position and approximate strengths of the enemy's main bodies instead of the mere contour of covering troops.

Fourth, it is a comparatively simple matter to bring back the information gained in time for it to be used.<sup>98</sup>

Henderson's doctrinal summary of the value of aircraft has endured well beyond the formation of the RAF. Although his writing was restricted to air power's potential contribution to reconnaissance his basic tenets of what he perceived can still be identified in modern doctrinal documents such as Air Publication AP3000,

---

<sup>95</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Henderson D, *The Art of Reconnaissance*. Also 'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps, Part II (Military Wing)', General Staff, War Office, 1915, Chapter II. Reproduced in *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), pp.108-117.

<sup>97</sup> Henderson D, *The Art of Reconnaissance*, p.176.

<sup>98</sup> 'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps', p.109.



'The UK Air and Space Power Doctrine' still articulates the core characteristics of air power as speed, reach and height and uses remarkably similar terminology to Henderson to explain them.<sup>99</sup>

## **Independence**

Henderson firmly believed in the need for the RN and the Army to work cooperatively in developing air power as expressed in the Technical sub-committee report.<sup>100</sup> During the First World War, he became acutely aware of the frictions and inefficiencies that emerged as the RFC and the RNAS vied to operate in the third dimension.<sup>101</sup> His frustrations were clear from the recommendations that would emerge, firstly in his 'Memorandum on the Organization of the Air Services', and subsequently in his contributions to the Smuts Report.<sup>102</sup>

After Henderson returned to London, Trenchard took command of the RFC and adopted a highly offensive approach in order to support Haig's intent. Henderson defended Trenchard's approach even when the scale of RFC losses were severely attacked in the press.<sup>103</sup> Trenchard was delivering air power in a manner that suited both Henderson and their ultimate commander, Haig, and it required all of

---

<sup>99</sup> 'The UK air and Space Power Doctrine', Air Publication 3000, Fourth Edition, Ministry of Defence, [http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/9E435312\\_5056\\_A318\\_A88F14CF6F4FC6CE.pdf](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/9E435312_5056_A318_A88F14CF6F4FC6CE.pdf), accessed 20 July 2015 p16.

<sup>100</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'.

<sup>101</sup> RAFM AC 71/4/4 'Notes on Relations of Air Force with Navy and Army for Consideration by General Smuts' Committee'.

<sup>102</sup> TNA AIR 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 4, Henderson D, 'Memorandum on The Organisation of the Air Services', p.9.

<sup>103</sup> For a summary of the attacks by the media and in Parliament see RAF M AC 71/12/12 Jones H, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', pp.1-8. In order to understand the vicious nature of Press reports see RAFM AC 71/4/4 Letter from Hubert Walter to Henderson dated 7 September 1917. See also RAFM AC 71/4/4 Extract from speech by Mr Pemberton Billing dated 13 March 1917. The extensive letter collection in the RAFM Henderson Papers indicates the lengths that Henderson went to writing to families and colleagues defending the RFC position regarding aircraft.

the RFC assets to achieve the task.

However, despite his earlier disappointing narrowness of vision, Henderson began to extend his views on the potential of air power. A memo, signed in July 1917 demonstrated that he was already thinking about independent action but also acknowledged the need for both land and maritime forces to be supported.<sup>104</sup> He estimated that the RFC would not have the capacity to conduct strategic long range bombing until early 1918, however, he saw its potential and highlighted the need for an independent body to adjudicate on how army, navy and strategic demands should be met.<sup>105</sup> He wrote that if an Air Ministry were in existence, 'it would be its duty to look ahead and consider the best means of employing this Service, that is to say, considering for instance whether it could be better employed under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief, in France or only under his nominal command, if serving in France, but strategically directed by the General Staff of the Air Ministry'.<sup>106</sup> But this expansive thinking came at personal cost.

According to Boyle, Robertson removed Henderson from the Army Council for 'having assisted Smuts during 'school hours''.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, Brancker highlighted that Henderson was considered by Robertson to be 'outspoken adherent of the policy of an independent the Air Service' and that Robertson took an opportunity to 'get rid' of him.<sup>108</sup> It is clear that he placed the advancement of air power ahead of career and service loyalties. This brings into question the suggestions in the historiography by Ash that Henderson had a 'pre-occupation with personal motivations' and supports

---

<sup>104</sup> TNA AIR 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 4, Henderson D, 'Memorandum on The Organisation of the Air Services'.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>107</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.241.

<sup>108</sup> Macmillan, *Sefton Brancker*, p.157.

Pugh and Boyle's more generous views on his selflessness.<sup>109</sup>

Boyle reported that Trenchard said:

Henderson had twice the insight and understanding that I had...he was prepared to run risks rather than lose a chance which he saw might never come again. He did so with no thought of self-interest, and it is doubtful whether the R.A.F. or Britain realises its debt to him, which is at least as great as its debt to Smuts.<sup>110</sup>

In his 'Memorandum on the Organization of the Aerial Services' Henderson highlighted the inefficacy of the Air Committee as well as the first and second Air Boards and pointed out that despite the Second Air Board adopting a policy, 'the responsibility of carrying it out is completely divided'.<sup>111</sup> He had identified that the majority of the officers:

...sit on the Board mainly as representatives of the Board of Admiralty and the Army Council... All investigations of the kind at present are purely Naval or Military, and it is not to be expected that the opinions expressed should be entirely free from the Naval or Military bias of these separate departments'.<sup>112</sup>

In his 1917 Memorandum he suggested the 'formation of a complete department and a completely united service dealing with all operations in the air, and with all the accessory services which that expression implies'.<sup>113</sup> The document concentrated on efficiency and economy as the reasons for the existence of a unified force rather than forming it based upon either an implicit strategic need or, indeed, the premise of the pervasiveness of air power which he had already demonstrated as early as 1914 in the second edition of *The Art of Reconnaissance*.<sup>114</sup>

In a further memorandum dated 12 September 1917, Henderson provided a

---

<sup>109</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.62.

<sup>110</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.232-233.

<sup>111</sup> TNA AIR 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 4. Henderson D, 'Memorandum on the Organisation of the Air Services', p4.

<sup>112</sup> TNA AIR 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 4, Henderson D, 'Memorandum on The Organisation of the Air Services', p.9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* p.8.

<sup>114</sup> Henderson D, *The Art of Reconnaissance*, p.176-177.

description of long range bombing capacity. However, he also noted that 'I have little doubt that this programme could be accelerated, but in order to carry this out, it will certainly be necessary for air production in its various branches to have a higher measure of priority than it is at present allowed.'<sup>115</sup>

As has been seen, the historiography rightly concentrates on Henderson's lack of vision in the early days of the RFC but his vision for an independent force in 1917 for which he deserves just credit is largely overlooked. Similarly, when it came to the practicalities of unification of the services, Henderson was visionary. In a speech in 1917 he underplayed the frictions that existed between the RNAS and the RFC as healthy rivalry and said:

I have never lost faith in the advantage of unification, nor lost hope of its possibility. Now it is agreed that the time is ripe.<sup>116</sup>

Brancker wrote that: 'David Henderson became his [Smuts'] military assistant and was, I think, responsible for most of the details of the new organization which eventually came into being. It was just the type of work at which he excelled'.<sup>117</sup>

Henderson was not chosen to lead RAF. Joubert de la Ferté wrote that he lacked 'the ruthlessness that was needed in the lead of a new service that was fighting for recognition as a separate entity'.<sup>118</sup> With a reserve RAF commission, he was appointed Vice-President of the Air Council in January 1918. However, he resigned when Sykes' was appointed as CAS. He wrote to Bonar Law to highlight that he was not resigning because he could not work with Sykes but for the good of the RAF as his 'previous relations with Sykes' and his 'view of him, were not

---

<sup>115</sup> TNA 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 7, 'Bombing Operations', dated 12 Sept 1917.

<sup>116</sup> RAFM AC71/4/4, Notes for speech, dated 14 Dec 1917.

<sup>117</sup> Macmillan, *Sefton Brancker*, p.156.

<sup>118</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.28.

secrets'.<sup>119</sup> Henderson wrote that he wanted to remove himself 'from the atmosphere and falsehood which has enveloped the Air Ministry'. Sykes had a toxic relationship with Trenchard and by 1915 a previously productive relationship with Henderson had also soured. Sykes' prickly personality is often cited as the reason for this but all three officers were partly culpable and it appeared there was not room for all three officers to work together once Trenchard arrived in the RFC.<sup>120</sup> In a rapidly growing Corps under the pressures of war, tensions were inevitable. Sykes patronage with Sir Henry Wilson also did not help relations and Devine even referred to Trenchard having a personal vendetta against Sykes.<sup>121</sup> Thus trifling disputes grew into a breakdown of relations. Sadly for British air power, the RAF would not benefit from a collegiate approach from these three pioneering officers as highlighted by Jordan.<sup>122</sup>

## Conclusion

Henderson's successful career, influential network, an ability to deliver intellectual argument and concepts in an acceptable manner and a selfless dedication to the greater good of the British military ensured that aviation gained acceptance. He was somewhat limited in his vision of the wider application of air power prior to the First World War but, by 1917, he had seen the potential for air power and was one of the few prophets able to see the future of independent action. He decided to recommend the formation of an independent service to Smuts that

---

<sup>119</sup> RAFM AC71/12/75, Letter from Henderson to Bonar Law, dated 26 April 1918.

<sup>120</sup> Miller, *Boom*, p.101 and p.116. Boyle A, *Trenchard* p.115-117 and p.139. *David Divine, The Broken Wing*. London: Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1966, p.48 and p.68. For Henderson's resignation: RAFM AC73/35/121/2RAFM AC73/35/1/23/1 Letter exchange Ref No A/508 notably Henderson dated 20/11/14. For Sykes' view, see Sykes, *From Many Angles* p.144.

<sup>121</sup> David Jordan, 'Sir Frederick Sykes', *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), p.75. Devine, *The Broken Wing*, p.68. Higham made a similar implication, Higham, *The British Military Intellectuals*, p.124.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

was seen as disloyal by some in the Army. His most important legacy to RAF culture lies, then, in the skilful manner in which he convinced the military, politicians and public of the need for the aerial services in the First World War and, later, the need for it to be independent.

The organisational structures, processes and practices that were introduced under Henderson's tenure as Director of Military Aeronautics and as the Commander of the RFC were very important to the espoused culture that would emerge in the RAF. The RFC, structurally and organisationally, was not much different to other elements of the British Army except for sea going elements.<sup>123</sup> However, aviation related processes and practices, heavily influenced by the aviator identity and the technical mind-set of the RFC resulted in a very different culture-in-action; the RFC quite rapidly became a distinctive sub-culture within the British Army. This could have interfered with the successful integration of air power within the Army, however, Henderson appeared to limit this quite well. His influence, standing and clever handling of media ensured that air power was accepted in the British Army. His conservative approach ensured the basic tenets of RFC culture largely conformed with an Edwardian Army outlook; he rode the existing culture well.<sup>124</sup> In contrast, the tactically more exploratory RNAS did not have officers of the political calibre of Henderson or, indeed, Sykes to judge how to integrate air power into the Senior Service. None of the RNAS senior commanders was Staff College trained, nor did any achieve Flag Officer rank.<sup>125</sup> Accordingly, the RNAS did not achieve the same level of acceptance within the RN. Indeed, Seuter referred to it as the 'Cinderella

---

<sup>123</sup> Admiralty Telegram Mar 23 1918 Addressed to C-in-C Mediterranean (ADM 1/8512) in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.645.

<sup>124</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture – the Unexpected Force', pp. 11-15 and Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition: A Key Internal Factor For MOD', pp.97-99.

<sup>125</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps' p.306.

Service.<sup>126</sup>

Goulter wrote that 'at the time of amalgamation of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps in 1918, the latter was the larger of the two aviation branches and, therefore, provided most of the senior staff.'<sup>127</sup> She went on to say that 'the new Service was closer in character and outlook to the Royal Flying Corps'.<sup>128</sup> However, Henderson was concerned that the transition should recognise traditions of both Services: 'it is a good start that the heads of the R.N.A.S and the R.F.C. are to be members of the Air Council, and so will start the new Service on the old traditions'.<sup>129</sup> Thus, despite being conceived by an RFC officer, the RAF would assume some RNAS processes and practices.<sup>130</sup>

The biggest and most tangible cultural contributions Henderson made to the RAF took place in the early establishment of the RFC with Sykes as his most important collaborator. These were: overseeing of the RFC's organisational structure, introduction of the idea that the service was centred on technical expertise, training, development of an air spirit including uniforms, badges, and symbols, laying down the basis of a doctrine, establishment of a disciplinary procedure, ordering the writing of the RFC Manual and the establishment of orders. Subsequently, Henderson's vision and advice to Smuts to deliver a separate air power organisation and his involvement in its establishment was central to the development of RAF

---

<sup>126</sup> Grove, 'Air Force, Fleet Air Arm or Armoured Corps', p.39

<sup>127</sup> Goulter, *A Forgotten Offensive*, p.xvi.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22

<sup>129</sup> RAFM AC 71/4/4 File entitled '*Henderson Letters*' extracted from Henderson Minute File. 'Remarks on Sir Douglas Haig's Dispatch', 20 September 1917.

<sup>130</sup> This was not down to Admiralty demands. It will be seen later that, rather than trying to influence the shape and culture of the RAF in its own image, the Admiralty was extremely resistant to the borrowing of its practices and traditions on matters such as the use of naval ranks and also expressed objections to the RAF copying Naval tradition by adopting an ensign.

espoused culture. Accordingly, Henderson, rather than Trenchard, deserves the moniker 'Father of the Royal Air Force.'<sup>131</sup> However, it is disappointing that this pioneering officer's influence on British air power was prematurely cut short over niggling intrigues with Sykes for which he must bear some responsibility.

---

<sup>131</sup> 'Short History of the RAF', AP 2003, p.6.



## CHAPTER IV

### SYKES

As commander of the MW, Sykes established many of the RFC structures, documentation, disciplinary procedures, training routines, uniforms, mottos and badges that helped establish a sub-culture within the British Army.<sup>1</sup> According to Jordan: 'Sykes seems to have been the driving force behind all the staff decisions that were required and day-to-day affairs, whilst Henderson presided over the whole assembly as the Director of Military Aeronautics.'<sup>2</sup>

Sykes' had hoped to command the high-profile deployment of the RFC to France as Henderson had promised.<sup>3</sup> He was, however disappointed; Henderson took command of the RFC. As Chief-of-Staff, he was, nevertheless, involved in the decision making and changes that inevitably came out of the RFC's first war fighting experiences. Later, he assumed command of the RFC in the field during a period when Henderson was ill and also when the latter was briefly posted away from the RFC to command the 1st Infantry Division.<sup>4</sup> However, following the breakdown in relations with Henderson, Sykes proceeded to command the air campaign in the Dardanelles. His ranks of temporary Colonel Second Commandant RM followed by temporary Wing Captain whilst in the Dardanelles, reflect the joint nature of his

---

<sup>1</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918', p.18.

<sup>3</sup> Sykes *From Many Angles*, p.122. Jordan, 'Sir Frederick Sykes', p.75. Devine, *The Broken Wing*, p.48.

<sup>4</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/23/2 Sykes Papers. Telegram dated 23 Nov 1914 approving assumption of command on 22 Nov 1914. Also RAFM AC73/35/1/23/3, 'List No 2. Appointments, Commissions Rewards etc', 28 Nov 1914. This decision was later reversed by Kitchener.

assignment.<sup>5</sup> In the Dardanelles, he gained a new insight into the potential of air power having seen it used in combined land and maritime operations.

After a period away from aviation, including setting up the Machine Gun Corps, he was called back to assume position as the second CAS at a crucial time. As CAS, he set in motion organisational plans and instituted practices and processes, many of which would later be used by Trenchard and would have significant impact upon RAF culture. However, Sykes has received even less credit than Henderson for the former's work in the RFC as well as while he was CAS.<sup>6</sup> In official histories Sykes is often passed over. For example, in *AP3003 A Short History of the RAF*, Sykes' role in the RFC was not mentioned, while his contribution as CAS was reduced to highlighting when he was appointed and that it was decided he was not the right man and was replaced by Trenchard.<sup>7</sup> In *C.F.S.*, Taylor made no comment about Sykes' period as CAS in his description of the establishment of the RAF.<sup>8</sup> Sykes is also discredited by academics and military officers. For instance, Meilinger dismissed Sykes' proposals for the RAF when he was CAS as 'fanciful at best, irresponsible at worst'.<sup>9</sup> Joubert de La Ferté, meanwhile, made only passing and disparaging comment about Sykes contributions.<sup>10</sup> His place in history was particularly affected by the bitterness between him and Trenchard and

---

<sup>5</sup> The London Gazette, 21 September 1915, Issue 29304, p.9324.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29304/page/9324>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Moral Bombing"', p.243.

<sup>7</sup> 'Short History of the RAF', AP 2003, p.28 and p.41. Higham, *The British Military Intellectuals 1918-1939*, p.120 and p.124.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *C.F.S.*

<sup>9</sup> Phillip S Meilinger, 'Trenchard, Slessor and Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II' in ed Col Phillip S Meilinger, *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, (New Delhi: The School of Air power Studies, Lancer Publishers and Distributors, 2000), p.48

<sup>10</sup> Joubert de La Ferté P, *The Third Service*, p.19 and p.62.

also in the way in which the history of the RFC and the First World War was written.

Paris wrote that:

Sykes has never received the credit due him for his part in the creating the British air service and, indeed, because of the eventual dominance of his rival Hugh Trenchard and the latter's influence over early RFC/RAF historiography, has been virtually written out of the official histories and those over which Trenchard had some sway.<sup>11</sup>

Higham wrote that the 'work of Sykes was carefully slighted' by Jones, Raleigh and Boyle and even wondered if Trenchard played a role in the 1914 records that were missing from Farnborough and had been written by Sykes.<sup>12</sup> Higham included Sykes as one of his *British Military Intellectuals*, but for many years was a lonely supporter of his role in the development of British air power until Ash and Pugh published work on him.<sup>13</sup>

The groundwork that Sykes invested in the MW in 1914 would be a fundamental and enduring building block of RAF espoused culture and a framework in which RAF culture-in-action would emerge. However, in addition to recognising that, this chapter will also serve to restore some credit to Sykes for the extremely important part he played in establishing the RFC and the RAF.

Frederick Hugh Sykes was born on 23 July 1877 to Henry and Margaret. Henry was a mechanical engineer who died two years after Frederick's birth, an event that would establish what Sykes' called a 'financial struggle' that affected how the family lived, how Frederick was educated and set him on a path of

---

<sup>11</sup> Paris *Winged Warfare* p.214. Also Higham, *The British Military Intellectuals*, p.120.

<sup>12</sup> Higham, *The British Military Intellectuals*, p.124.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.120 and p.124.

Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of The Control Of The Air'. Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*. Ash, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard'

unconventionality.<sup>14</sup> Sykes left school at 15 and went to live in Paris with ambitions of entry into the Diplomatic Service.<sup>15</sup> In Paris he attended lectures at various institutions and took private language lessons. Forced into positions below his station, such as working in a shop, Sykes felt the brunt of disadvantage caused by the Victorian class system, but continued to recognise and respect its strictures. His autobiography exuded yearning to regain the social status lost through the death of his father. He worked in Ceylon and travelled widely, including to the United States.<sup>16</sup> Although he followed an unconventional path and, through struggle, learned to deal with ambiguity, he possessed a deeply rooted conservatism. This was an important factor in the way he later approached the task of setting up the MW of the RFC. His unconventionality ensured that he was armed to navigate the uncharted path of bringing a new technology into service. However, his conservative side ensured that the structures that he put in place around that new technology were conformist and recognisable to the Edwardian Army.

His autobiography conveyed a contemporary middle-class idealistic sense that the British Empire was a permanent and a civilising force for good.<sup>17</sup> He had a vision of air power underpinning the economic as well as military security of the Empire. He wrote:

---

<sup>14</sup> Sykes F, *From Many Angles*, p.15. Sykes, 'Sir Frederick Hugh', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/view/article/36393?docPos=1>, accessed 22 Jul 15.

<sup>15</sup> Ash E *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.10.

<sup>16</sup> David Jordan, 'Sir Frederick Sykes', p.75.

<sup>17</sup> Belief in Empire is an evident theme throughout the archives that reflects a contemporary view prevalent amongst the British middle classes. See Ward who examined Britain's relationship with Empire. Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, (London, Routledge, 2004), pp.10-13. See also valuable personal accounts in Charles Allen, *Tales from a Dark Continent*, (London: Abacus, 1979) and Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Abacus, 1975).

Just as the naval supremacy of Britain was won because commercially we were the greatest seafaring people in the world, so will air supremacy be achieved by that country which, making aviation a part of its everyday life, becomes an air faring nation.<sup>18</sup>

Sykes' opportunity to serve Empire came during the Boer War. He joined the Imperial Yeomanry Scouts in the ranks.<sup>19</sup> Captured during his first engagement, he spent time as a POW. Later in the Boer War, he was commissioned into the Cavalry, became a regular soldier and was injured. Ash wrote that 'Sykes had witnessed war from some of its worst perspectives 'as a line soldier, as a prisoner, and as a casualty. Yet he embraced those experiences as valuable lessons in life, and they would shape his character and approach to a future war'.<sup>20</sup> Sykes highlighted that South Africa exposed a lack of preparedness of the British Army.<sup>21</sup> In South Africa, he also learned the importance of the moral component of fighting power that became a theme of his career.<sup>22</sup> At Staff College, he wrote of the supreme importance of moral qualities of an officer.<sup>23</sup> The importance he placed on the moral component is clear throughout his biography as shown in his writing on Haldane's reforms:

It never seems to me to be sufficiently realized by the man in the street that any organization is almost entirely dependent upon the quantity and numerical superiority of its officers, NCO's and leaders. And they need time to select and train.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Sykes, 'Aircraft in War', p.569. See also Sir Frederick Hugh Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War* (London: Edward Arnold and Co, 1922), p.7.

<sup>19</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.25.

<sup>20</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.13.

<sup>21</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.32-33

<sup>22</sup> This is the modern interpretation of fighting power which identifies three components: Moral, Physical and Conceptual. 'UK Defence Doctrine', Joint Services Publication 0-01, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2014), p.25.

<sup>23</sup> RAFM Sykes Papers AC 73/35/1, Sykes F, 'Outlines of Strategy', Staff College Paper, 31 October 1908, p.16.

<sup>24</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.85.

Sykes' attended Staff College in Quetta in 1908.<sup>25</sup> Gray cautioned that 'the degree of influence emanating from the reading, teaching, or the wider learning environment, can easily be overstated'.<sup>26</sup> However, in Sykes' case the Staff College experience appeared profound. Ash wrote that through the experience he was 'indoctrinated into the accepted contemporary military theory of European powers during the pre-war period'.<sup>27</sup> Pugh also wrote that 'it becomes clear that Sykes was heavily influenced by the teaching and education he received at Quetta'.<sup>28</sup> The depth of the Staff College influence is also supported by Sykes' autobiography.<sup>29</sup> Ash also underlined the importance of this experience and directly linked Capper's teachings on the offensive to Sykes' decision to take all of the MW aircraft to France in 1914.<sup>30</sup> However, it is of note that he eventually moderated his traditional view on the offensive and developed a more expansive and strategic view on the application of air power that also recognised the importance of defensive action.<sup>31</sup>

In 1911, Sykes learned to fly and gained Aviator's Certificate No 95.<sup>32</sup> He was appointed to the Operations Directorate at the War Office and specialised on Europe. Almost immediately, he was sent to France in October 1911 to visit French aerodromes. His observations gave an insight into how the French were using their

---

<sup>25</sup> RAFM Sykes Papers AC73/35/1/Vol I, Letter from Brigadier General T Capper to Captain F Sykes Date December 1909. The importance Sykes placed on the value of Staff College will be examined in more detail later.

<sup>26</sup> Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive*, p.41.

<sup>27</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and then Air Revolution*, p.17.

<sup>28</sup> Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins Of The Control Of The Air', p.79.

<sup>29</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.71.

<sup>30</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and then Air Revolution*, pp.17-18.

<sup>31</sup> Sykes, 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the information of the Imperial War Cabinet' in Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.544-554. See also TNA Air 8/6, Sykes, 'Air Power requirements of the Empire'. TNA Air 8/6 file Air Power requirements. Post war air force. Air Defence.

<sup>32</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/6/4 Aviator's Certificate No 95. Reported also in 'Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom. Notices to Members', *Flight* (1 July 1911), p.569, see: <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1911/1911%20-%200567.html>, accessed 8 October 2017.

machines and how they structured their organisation.<sup>33</sup> In particular, the visit formulated, in his mind, how aerial fighting units should be structured for warfare. The squadron concept that emerged remains the standard fighting unit in the RAF today.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently chosen to be a member of the Technical Sub-Committee he played a key role supporting Henderson in shaping the RFC.<sup>35</sup>

Sykes commanded the RFC MW at its inception while Samson commanded the Naval Wing and Paine the CFS.<sup>36</sup> Sykes was the key player in this context given that he produced the lion's share of the staff and organisational work that resulted in concrete establishment of the key processes and practices that would transfer to the RAF. The following account highlights Sykes' recollection of challenges ahead:

The organization of the Corps to its smallest detail in technical stores, supply and transport had to be thought out. The type of machine required; the method of obtaining it from a struggling industry; its use and maintenance; the personnel, its training and equipment; these, and a thousand other aspects of the question, required the employment of a large staff of experts. But the experts did not exist and the duties were carried out almost entirely at Farnborough, where in addition time had to be found to compile the official training and other text books and regulations required for an entirely new arm'.<sup>37</sup>

## **Esprit De Corps**

Sykes' Staff College experience, his time in the Boer War and a brief, but instructive, period observing German manoeuvres taught Sykes the importance of

---

<sup>33</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/71 Sykes F, 'Notes on Aviation in France'.

<sup>34</sup> Ash, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard', p.163.

<sup>35</sup> CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation'.

<sup>36</sup> 'The Royal Flying Corps', *Flight* (May 25 1912), p.462, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1912/1912%20-%200462.html?search=sykes>, accessed 9 Jan 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, p.26.

'moral' and how to inspire an esprit de corps.<sup>38</sup> Capper's views on the 'moral' were particularly ardent.<sup>39</sup> For Instance, in 1908 at a Staff College lecture Capper underlined both the importance of 'moral' as well as the contemporarily important theme of offensive action:

The art of war consists almost entirely in the application of one principle; that never changes. It is the principle that determination to conquer or die must pervade all ranks from the leaders to the simple soldiers; and that principle must not be the mere enthusiasm of the moment, but it must be a principle nourished and cultivated by moral training and intelligent preparation throughout the whole of his military career.<sup>40</sup>

The basis upon which Sykes built the MW demonstrates understanding that the new organisation needed more than flying machines. He recognised that the people would be fundamental to success and was particularly cognisant of the need to encourage a bespoke esprit-de-corps. This was especially important as the RFC brought together RN and Army personnel as well as civilian technicians. In *Aviation in Peace and War*, he wrote:

All was new. A new Corps. A new element in which to work. New conditions in peace akin to those in war. And there had to be developed a new spirit, combining the discipline of the old Army, the technical skill of the Navy, and the initiative, energy and dash inseparable from flying... Esprit de Corps was of vital importance, but as officers and non-commissioned officers were drawn from every branch and every regiment of the army this was no easy matter.<sup>41</sup>

This indicates that Sykes understood both the need for the RFC to be a technically oriented organisation and also the importance of actively incorporating the aviator identity into the structures and processes of the organisation. He later wrote of the importance early RFC spirit would have on that of the RAF:

---

<sup>38</sup> RAFM Sykes Papers AC73/35/1/Vol I, Sykes F, 'Outlines of Strategy', Staff College Essay, dated 31 Oct 1908.

<sup>39</sup> Olsen, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thomas Capper', p.189. Also Sykes, *From Many Angles* p.71.

<sup>40</sup> Olsen, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thomas Capper', p.197.

<sup>41</sup> Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, p.26.



The fine spirit of the personnel of the R.A.F. today was built up upon the strict selection and sound training of the recruits of those first years. The highest standards throughout had to be secured and retained...Barrington-Kennet vowed that he would make the R.F.C. "as smart as the Guards and as efficient as the Sappers."<sup>42</sup>

This also demonstrated that Sykes recognised the role his staff played in the emergence of the early RFC spirit. He particularly attributed Herbert, Becke, Longcroft, Chinnery and Barrington-Kennett as the key protagonists in helping him develop the spirit, badges, mottos and uniforms.<sup>43</sup>

### **RFC Training Manual and RFC Standing Orders.**

Sykes outlined his expectations regarding routines, discipline and comportment to the Corps. Orders and manuals were of profound importance in this and Sykes conducted most of the order writing. The RFC Training Manual was particularly important.<sup>44</sup> Ash wrote: 'Sykes had produced and personally written most of that manual during the winter of 1913-14' and that 'it was a typical Sykes product – massive in size, detailed and focused entirely on the goals of achieving organizational efficiency'.<sup>45</sup> Higham also reflected on how hard Sykes worked on the Training Manual.<sup>46</sup> Ash referred to it as the 'air power bible the RFC carried into battle', and that:

In addition to great technical detail on aspects of aircraft and engine assembly and repair, it included the RFC regulations on instrumentation, navigation, meteorology, transport and flight training. It outlined the RFC organization and established administrative guidelines'.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.96.

<sup>43</sup> Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, p.27. Barrington-Kennet had two brothers who also perished in the First World War. To understand the inspirational effect of the Barrington-Kennet family see Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.8, p.38 and p.50. See also Joubert de La Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.30 and Baring, *Flying Corps Headquarters, 1914-1918* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1968), p. 88.

<sup>44</sup> 'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps, 1915'.

<sup>45</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.40.

<sup>46</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.124.

<sup>47</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.40.

The Training Manual was far more than a book of rules and regulations. It established the 'Characteristics and Principle Duties of Aeroplanes' and outlined how aeroplanes should interact with other arms, in particular Artillery. It also detailed how offensive action should be conducted as well as action of aeroplanes when fired upon by anti-aircraft guns.<sup>48</sup> A theme throughout the Manual is the clear obsession with the offensive that was common British military thinking of the era and is, perhaps, further evidence of Capper's influence on Sykes. Olsen referred to Capper's 'outspoken belief in the offensive'.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, Pugh highlighted Sykes' commitment to the offensive that is reflected clearly in his autobiography, particularly in the early stages of his career.<sup>50</sup>

Sykes wrote RFC Standing Orders at the same time as the Training Manual but they were not published until 1915 whilst Sykes was commander in the field of the RFC.<sup>51</sup> Standing Orders dealt with aeronautics, the organisation and administration of the MW establishing detailed duties of the headquarters, aircraft parks and squadrons. This provided a clear administrative structure and laid out processes and practices to be followed by the entire RFC MW used terminology common to other corps in the Army. Standing Orders also firmly established the centrality of air power to the fledgling Corps and set in train artefacts, processes and practices that would become the basis of RAF identity.

---

<sup>48</sup> 'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps, 1915'.

<sup>49</sup> Olsen, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thomas Capper', p.73.

<sup>50</sup> Pugh highlighted Sykes' commitment to offensive action, Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins Of The Control Of The Air', p.104. Sykes, *From Many Angles*.

<sup>51</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/14 'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', HMSO, 1915.

Standing Orders laid down standards and types of dress and the variety of accompanying new badges and gilt miniatures for aircrew and ground-crew.<sup>52</sup> These were all recognisable to the contemporary military establishment with just the major differences being the maternity dress uniform, the introduction of brevets and the fact that officers in the RFC full dress uniform were not to carry swords.<sup>53</sup>

RFC Orders included ritualistic novelties regarding ceremonial procedures that integrated the new technology into existing drill such as incorporating aeroplanes into parade procedures in which aeroplanes were taxied through the middle of a parade, before turning to take off and fly past the saluting base at 80ft.<sup>54</sup> Mess rules would normally be determined by individual messes but Sykes published officers' and sergeants' mess rules at Corps level in RFC Orders.<sup>55</sup> In doing so, he clearly set behavioural norms for a very disparate group of personnel.<sup>56</sup> This is an indication of both Sykes' attention to detail and also that he was an astute judge of how to encourage cohesion amongst groups of personnel with diverse backgrounds. Mess rules such as the mess committee structure, requirements of the constitution of the mess, relationship between the commanding officer and the various messes, expected attitudes towards mess staff would survive transition into the RAF and bear a much closer relationship to Army messing rules than those of the RN.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. pp.39-41.

<sup>53</sup> Swords would later be introduced to the RAF Dress regulations.

<sup>54</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/14, 'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', p.82.

<sup>55</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/1/14 'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', pp.42-52.

<sup>56</sup> The importance Sykes placed on Mess life was clear from in his account of his arrival in 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars. Sykes *From Many Angles*, p.40.

<sup>57</sup> For a comprehensive view of RN traditions including Mess etiquette and rules, see Lieutenant Commander John Irving, *Naval Life and Customs. Tradition, Lore and Language of the Royal Navy* (Altringham: Sherratt and Hughes, 1944). 'Officers' Mess Rules' at RAF Wittering, RAF Linton-on-Ouse, January 2017 and RAF Leeming, November 2015, continue to have threads that have a link back to RFC Officers' Mess rules.

Sykes also chose to emphasise discipline in the RFC Orders. King's Regulations should have been sufficient to cover the disciplinary needs of the Corps.<sup>58</sup> However, by providing a more digestible guide to discipline than King's Regulations, RFC Orders explicitly set out RFC expectations and standards. Included in RFC Orders are references to saluting, personal appearance including facial hair and haircuts that would form the basis of RAF standards.<sup>59</sup>

## Training

Sykes' experience in the Boer War demonstrated the importance of ensuring that training was relevant, appropriate and conducted in conjunction with other arms. Sykes also used training opportunities to prove the value of air power:

We had to prove our value to the other arms, many of the leaders of which, owing to a long period of peace, found difficulty in differentiating between the normal usages of peace and war and in understanding the right use of aircraft.<sup>60</sup>

In September 1913, Henderson's patron, French, took elements of the RFC under command during annual field manoeuvres. Sykes wrote a memorandum that contributed to orders for this major exercise and thus gained the RFC exposure to the wider Army.<sup>61</sup> When French subsequently became the commander of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, he had an understanding of contemporary air power

---

<sup>58</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/14, 'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', pp.30-38.

<sup>59</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/14, 'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', pp.33.

<sup>60</sup> Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, p.26.

<sup>61</sup> See RAFM AC73/35/1/13 'Instructions for the participation of Royal Flying Corps Military Wing, in the Army Manoeuvres and the Divisional Operations preceding them', 1913. In his autobiography, Sykes referred to Rawlinson being in Command for the manoeuvres in the South with Haig in the North. However, the archived 'Instructions' referred to French as the commander in the South. Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.110. See also Andrew Whitmarsh, 'British Army Manoeuvres and the Development of Military Aviation, 1910-1913', *War in History*, Vol 14 No 3 (2007), pp.325-346.

capabilities and also knew Sykes and Henderson. Accordingly, the RFC was included in BEF Orders; this was notable given how undeveloped the RFC was.<sup>62</sup>

Sykes biggest contribution to training was the Concentration Camp held at Netheravon in June 1914 which tested the RFC's ability to deploy, refined logistical arrangements and proved the concepts developed in the RFC Training Manual, RFC Orders and Field Service Regulations. Sykes saw 'those two precious months as a godsend, not only to the RFC but to the whole Army'.<sup>63</sup> Sykes was widely given the credit for being the driving force behind the Netheravon Concentration Camp in contemporary press reports such as *Flight*, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Telegraph*.<sup>64</sup> This is one area of the historiography that does acknowledge Sykes. Ash wrote: 'historians are unanimous in crediting Sykes with the initiative and direction of the 'Netheravon Concentration Camp'.<sup>65</sup> Higham, wrote that it was brought together 'on his own initiative' and that: 'at Netheravon they held the final practices and training for war'.<sup>66</sup> From the cultural perspective, the RFC exercised its end-to-end processes and practices under pressure for the first time.

---

<sup>62</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/20/2 French J Field Marshal, 'Standing Orders for the Expeditionary Force', Southampton 9 August 1914, p.9

<sup>63</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.111.

<sup>64</sup> 'Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) at Netheravon. The Concentration Camp', *Flight*, No 287 (No 26 Vol VI) (June 26 1914), pp.670-677 in RAFM AC 73/35/1/18 <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200670.html>, accessed 7 May 2017. 'Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) at Netheravon. The Concentration Camp'. *Flight*, No 288 (No 27, Vol VI) (3 July 1914), pp 698-701, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200698.html>, accessed 7 May 2017, 'The Royal Flying Corps', *Flight* No 289, (No 28, Vol VI) (10 July 1914) pp.723-726 (including useful photograph listing all officers present). <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200722.html>, accessed 9 Jan 2016. *Flight* article also available in Sykes Papers at RAFM AC 73/35/1/18. For The *Morning Post* and The *Daily Telegraph* reports see: Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.112-118.

<sup>65</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.43.

<sup>66</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.125.

## Publicity and Press

Sykes, like Henderson, understood the need to convince politicians, the public and high-ranking officers of the Army of air power's value. Sykes wrote that he helped 'the cause of aviation by means of lectures and articles in the current journals, and by inviting representatives of the Press to visit our centres and observe the progress being made'.<sup>67</sup> In addition to Netheravon he gave lectures at the Royal Aeronautical Society in 1912 and 1913, presided upon by General Grierson and Sir John French, thus reinforcing air power at senior Army levels.<sup>68</sup>

Pugh referred to the difference in messaging between the leaders of the RFC and the RNAS. That helps explain the fractious nature of the relationship between the Admiralty and the RNAS compared with the more productive relationship between the Army High Command and the RNAS:

Trenchard and Sykes skilfully utilised the press, whilst providing digestible and appealing visions of air power to their professional and political seniors. Sueter made little or no use of the press, and failed to articulate a coherent vision of naval air power to the Board and other senior naval officers.<sup>69</sup>

Sykes also 'saw a good deal' of Churchill and engaged him in air power discussions.<sup>70</sup> Sykes wrote an article in the *Quarterly Review* that explained the structure, equipment, manning and roles of the British air services.<sup>71</sup> He crafted it to highlight that aeroplanes would assist the cavalry and was careful to say that aeroplanes 'cannot supplant it in its rôle' thus avoiding expressing a direct threat to

---

<sup>67</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.107.

<sup>68</sup> Sykes, 'Military Aviation', *The Royal Aeronautical Society Journal* (July 1913), pp.127-139. See also Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.107-108.

<sup>69</sup> Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins Of The Control Of The Air', p.102 and p.308.

<sup>70</sup> Sykes had quite a close relationship with Churchill until their views on air power diverged in 1919 on what Sykes called 'his disastrous Air Policy'. Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.106. Higham contended that Churchill's opinion of Sykes was altered in 1917 when he opposed Sykes' views on Strategic Bombing. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.124.

<sup>71</sup> RAFM AC73/35/1/16. Sykes F, 'Aircraft in War', *Quarterly Review*, April 1914, Article 13, pp.558-569.

that particularly important arm of the Army.<sup>72</sup> He was less averse to taking aim at RN capabilities pointing out that:

The entire vote for the Air Service for the current year would not purchase a single Dreadnought, yet there can be no doubt that the expenditure represents a better insurance return. From the point of view of national safety, a paramount air service is the most economical form of national insurance.<sup>73</sup>

The idea of air power representing value for money would later enter into the RAF psyche; 'substitution' formed a pillar of Trenchard's Imperial Policing policy that under-wrote RAF survival during the inter-war period.

Henderson and Sykes had engaged in an 'Information Operation' such that, by the time the BEF was mobilised, the RFC was understood by politicians, the Press and senior Army commanders as highlighted in French's letter to the War Office.<sup>74</sup> They recognised the need broader cultural acceptance of air power.

### **Organisational Structure**

Dye wrote that Sykes 'would soon provide the organizational blueprint for the RFC' and that he 'set about creating an effective air service drawing heavily on French practice'.<sup>75</sup> Sykes was part of the Joint Air Committee that established the Squadron of 12 aircraft as the primary fighting unit fighting unit of the RFC.<sup>76</sup> This allowed the squadron to be tactically self-sufficient and 'homogenous unit, with its

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p.564.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p.569.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from French RAFM AC73/351/21/1 Letter from French to the Secretary, The War Office dated 17 October 1914.

<sup>75</sup> Dye, 'Air Power's Midwife', p.43 and p.47. See also Dye, 'France and the Development of British Military Aviation', p.4.

<sup>76</sup> TNA Air 1/118 'Mobilization Store Table – Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing). An Aeroplane Squadron (12 Aeroplanes)', 1913. Also Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, pp.27-28 and Sykes, *From Many Angles*. p.95.

own field-repair, store and transport services, and self-supporting as regards cooking, supplies etc'.<sup>77</sup>

In 1942, Sykes pointed out the legacy of decisions taken in 1912: 'this organization, with few modifications, was the one with which the R.F.C. took the field on mobilization in August 1914. It stood the test of war, and is the basis of the Royal Air Force to-day'.<sup>78</sup> This structure born out of Sykes' vision of espoused culture continues not only the basis for organising fighting units for war but is a structure for culture-in-action to emerge. Despite a constant turnover of personnel, the culture 'between the ears' of sqn personnel has caused squadrons to develop their own quite distinct histories, traditions and very deep allegiances and they oddly retain their own character.

Sykes commissioned Mobilization Store Tables that established the range of items a squadron would need for a deployment from 12 aircraft and 129 personnel down to items and tools such as 18 twist gimlets, 20 lbs of beeswax and 2 lbs of asbestos packing.<sup>79</sup> More importantly, he understood the need to exercise the logistic chain in realistic scenarios such as the Netheravon Concentration Camp. Sykes' assumption that air power would need to be expeditionary was timely; the ultimate scale and complexity of RFC expeditionary operations was described by Dye as follows:

All of this required the creation of an extensive ground organization, employing large numbers of skilled and semi-skilled personnel, underpinned by a supply chain that stretched from the front line, via the repair depots and air parks, to the factories at home<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.95.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>79</sup> TNA AIR 1/118 'Mobilization Store Table – Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing). An Aeroplane Squadron (12 Aeroplanes)', 1913.

<sup>80</sup> Dye, 'Air Power's Midwife' p.16.



Sykes' contribution to the organisational effectiveness of the RFC was highlighted by Henderson in 1914: 'The excellent organization of the RFC in the field and its system of reconnaissance are largely due to Lieutenant-Colonel Sykes' admirable management in peace-time'.<sup>81</sup> Meanwhile, a letter from French gave early endorsement of the RFC reflects Sykes' success developing the structure of the RFC:

Such efficiency as the Royal Flying Corps may have shown in the field is, in my opinion, principally due to the organisation and training. It is therefore most desirable that any reinforcements should be organised, trained and equipped in the same manner as the squadrons now in the field.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to establishing the organisational building blocks that allowed RFC espoused culture to develop, Sykes also established the importance of training and the need for the force to have an expeditionary capability.

### **Dardanelles**

The intrigues surrounding Sykes were many in the difficult three way Trenchard, Sykes and Henderson relationship.<sup>83</sup> Ultimately, this lost him his position in France. Ash wrote that the 'posting to the Dardanelles was probably more a case of Henderson giving Sykes the command that he wanted'.<sup>84</sup> This is doubtful; Ash himself later highlighted that the 'Trenchard-Sykes controversy has eclipsed the relationship between Sykes and Henderson' and that it was actually

---

<sup>81</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.138. Presumably, prior to the Sykes/Henderson rift.

<sup>82</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/2/21/1 Letter French to Secretary of the War Office dated 17 Oct 1914.

<sup>83</sup> On Henderson's 'sacking' of Sykes see Miller, *Boom*, p.101 and Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.139. On the strange incident Trenchard reported about Sykes leaving a locked confidential box with shoes in it see Miller, *Boom*, p.116 and Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.115. See also Devine, *The Broken Wing*, p.48. For an insight into Henderson's view of Sykes see letters concerning Henderson's resignation: RAFM AC73/35/121/2RAFM AC73/35/1/23/1 Letter exchange Ref No A/508 notably Henderson dated 20/11/14. For Sykes' view, see Sykes, *From Many Angles* p.144.

<sup>84</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.67.

more bitter than that between Trenchard and Sykes.<sup>85</sup> Although neither Brancker's biography, nor Sykes' autobiography, registered suggestion that Sykes had been sacked, Henderson's opinion of Sykes were clear in his letter to Bonar Law following the former's resignation from the Air Council.<sup>86</sup> It is also clear that privately held views from their earlier relationship had become public knowledge.<sup>87</sup> On balance of archival evidence, it appears likely that Sykes' posting to the Dardanelles was at least a sideways move that suited Henderson following the breakdown of their relationship.

However, the Dardanelles experience transformed Sykes' views of the potential for airpower that informed the vision he had for the RAF as CAS and influenced later RAF doctrinal development. His temporary ranks of Colonel Second Commandant RM and Wing Captain RN in the Dardanelles reflect the emerging joint nature of airpower in that theatre.<sup>88</sup> He wrote to Churchill envisioning multi-arm support and outlining plans for bombing and reconnaissance of Constantinople well beyond the battlefield.<sup>89</sup> He wrote that this was:

The first occasion on which the conception of an Independent Air Force, always latent in my mind, was tested in the field. The RNAS at Gallipoli was, in practice, an independent unit.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p.194.

<sup>86</sup> Macmillan, *Sefton Brancker. Sykes, From Many Angles*. RAFM AC 71/12/75 Letter of Resignation from Henderson to Lord Rothmere dated 26 April 1918 and subsequent letter to Bonar Law dated 26 April 1918 (documents are together in archive).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Lady Henderson's views on Sykes are also insightful. RAFM Henderson Papers 71/12/147-148 'Lady Henderson Notes' covering early deployment period of 1914, dated August 17 1914.

<sup>88</sup> *The London Gazette*, 21 September 1915, Issue 29304, pp.9323-9324.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29304/page/9324>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

<sup>89</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/2/24 Letter from Sykes to Churchill dated 4 Nov 1915. For combined operations and his views on the requirement for aerial offensive see Sykes 'Memorandum to Vice-Admiral Commanding Eastern Mediterranean Squadron', dated 21 October 1915, in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.226. See also Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, pp.82-83.

<sup>90</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.187.

He also described having the capability to either serve more than one theatre or, if only operating in one, 'we shall be able to supply all naval and military requirements with ease and be in a position also to undertake an aerial offensive on a large scale'.<sup>91</sup> He came to believe that bombing had significant moral impact through evidence from prisoners; this became a central air power tenet in the inter-war era.<sup>92</sup> He also refused to allow RNAS assets to be directly attached to Army and RN units, thereby preventing inefficient tasking through centralised control.<sup>93</sup> This would also become a key RAF doctrinal tenet.

To Sykes, independent action appeared to have real possibilities, however, he was probably ahead of his time. RNAS aircraft were not robust enough to deal with long-range maritime operations in poor weather. He also tried to impose Western Front RFC experiences and processes on the RNAS.<sup>94</sup> Rather than exploiting RNAS culture, he tried to confront it and met stiff resistance that doubtless affected his success.

However, Sykes' approach to air power at that time was more visionary than Trenchard's view that the RFC was purely a supporting arm. The evidence supports Ash's contention that:

The revolution in air power was in the new uses of technology and in new organizations, where Sykes was hard at work. His concepts of strategic interdiction and combined-arms attack were as revolutionary as the idealistic visions of the Italian Giulio Douhet.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> RAFM AC 73/35/2/24 Letter from Sykes to Churchill dated 4 Nov 1915.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> For centralisation of command see AC 73/35/1 'First Report on the requirements of the R.N.A.S E.M.S.', dated 9 July 1915, p.5. See also Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.78.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p.75.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.208 and p.206. It is of note that Ash compared him to one of the most well known air power theorists. Sykes was very unlikely to have been aware of Douhet - See Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.257. The first evidence of Douhet in an RAF

Ash highlighted that historians have concentrated on Sykes' personal battles but 'missed his achievements and shortcomings'. However, the personal battles and cannot be ignored. In the Dardanelles, his uncompromising temperament reduced his stature as a leader and prevented him from implementing his vision for air power there to its fullest extent.

### **Sykes as CAS<sup>96</sup>**

Ash wrote: 'the air service Sykes was about to inherit had endured substantial losses, poor leadership, unfavourable press reports and Parliamentary inquiries'.<sup>97</sup> He continued that 'until Sykes arrived as CAS, the RAF and the Air Ministry had failed the test of independence' and, in doing so, he underlined a lack of vision by Trenchard who had doggedly pursued his offensive-morale doctrine.<sup>98</sup> While Sykes had not contributed to the actual formation of the RAF, his time away from the RFC in the Dardanelles and had broadened his command experience and his position creating the Machine Gun Corps gave him further organisation building experience.

Sykes was not 'in a rush to be dragged into the vortex at the Hotel Cecil' where the atmosphere was 'not a happy one'.<sup>99</sup> The aerial services had been transformed since Sykes' departure. In addition to the vast increase in size, the new transition to being independent saw the RAF and the Air Ministry beset with issues.

---

publication is in Royal Air Force Quarterly, April 1936, pp.152-159. Slessor had not heard of him whilst at Staff College in 1924. Slessor, *The Central Blue*, p.41.

<sup>96</sup> Sykes was CAS from April 1918 to January 1919.

<sup>97</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.208 and p.206 p.106. For an example of press coverage on the Air Ministry see RAFM AC73/35 Vol III Part I 'Air Service Organisation', *Daily Telegraph*, April 15, 1918.

<sup>98</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.112. For insight into Trenchard's view on offensive action see RAFM MFC76/1/73 'Offence versus Defence in the Air' and also Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.105.

<sup>99</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.217. Hotel Cecil was the Air Ministry.

The Air Ministry was a place of friction, excessive committees and was prone to overbearing treasury interference. For all of its intrigue and subterfuge, it earned the moniker 'House of Bolo' after the spy Bolo Pasha.<sup>100</sup> Sykes lamented the quality of civil servants at the Ministry and also noted the number of older officers 'with a tradition of the air' were not sufficient to conduct necessary work. Sykes perceived that he had three tasks ahead of him:

(1) The Amalgamation of the R.F.C. and the R.N.A.S. into the R.A.F.... (2) The formation of an independent air force' and (3) The evolution of the Air Service of the future.<sup>101</sup>

In June 1918, he articulated his immediate concerns in 'Review of the Air Situation and Strategy' and wrote a second, more comprehensive, document entitled 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire' in December 1918.<sup>102</sup> The latter envisaged both military and civil air power being used to unify the Empire. It is largely dismissed by the historiography simply for being unaffordable in the face of fiscal adversity compared with Trenchard's plan.<sup>103</sup> However, James highlighted, with the benefit of hindsight, the fact that numerous elements of the document would be 'found relevant and resurrected'.<sup>104</sup> Devine wrote that 'it is only in the light of after-knowledge that Sykes' plan is seen to possess virtues that were lacking in

---

<sup>100</sup> Bolo Pasha was a Frenchman but also a German agent who was shot in 1918. Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, ed Paul Beale (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006 [1937]), p.111.

<sup>101</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.219-220. Sykes, 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the information of the Imperial War Cabinet', Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.544-554.

<sup>102</sup> 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the Information of the Imperial War Cabinet', Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.544-554, TNA Air 8/6 Sykes, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire'.

<sup>103</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.176. Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.329. Malcolm Cooper, 'Blueprint for Confusion: The Administrative Background to the Formation of the Royal Air Force, 1912-19', *Journal of Contemporary History* (Vol 22, No.3, July 1987), p.437. Jordan, 'Sir Frederick Sykes', p.78.

<sup>104</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.83.

Trenchard's brusque memorandum'.<sup>105</sup> Cox highlighted a more fundamental point; Sykes had originally proposed 154 squadrons but had already revised that down to 62 Squadrons by January 1919.<sup>106</sup> The plan that Trenchard proposed to Churchill in February 1919 actually required 82 squadrons.<sup>107</sup> Sykes also clearly articulated some of the enduring tenets of RAF doctrinal thinking such as the fundamental basis of centralised control, doubtless formulated through his experiences in France and the Dardanelles.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the commonly accepted view that Sykes' plans were extravagant compared to Trenchard's is wrong. Sykes' philosophy of utilising civil and military air power to underpin the economic and military security of the Empire was far more exploratory than Trenchard's narrower plans that only explored the military application of air power. However, Cox pointed out that Sykes already had a reputation for extravagance based on his original figures and also, probably more fundamentally, he was simply not viewed as the right man for the job.<sup>109</sup>

While Sykes' tenure as CAS was short, a great deal of progress was made regarding organisational development that is almost entirely overlooked by the historiography except by Cox and Ash, neither of whom broached the cultural significance of his achievements.<sup>110</sup>

Sykes' roles and responsibilities were specifically established by the Air Council on 8 June 1918 and included developing policy, advice on conduct of air

---

<sup>105</sup> Devine, *The Broken Wing*, p.151. For similar positive assessments of Sykes' Memorandum see James, *The Paladins*, pp.81-82

<sup>106</sup> Sebastian Cox, 'Swords into Ploughshares? A Historical Perspective on Air Force Leadership in the Aftermath of the First and Second World Wars' in *Air Force Leadership: Beyond Command?*, eds John Jupp and Keith Grint, (Cranwell: Royal Air Force Leadership Centre, 2005), pp.92-105.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the Information of the Imperial War Cabinet' in Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.553.

<sup>109</sup> Sebastian Cox, 'Swords into Ploughshares?'

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* and Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*.

operations, handling of the press and interviews, censorship and publicity, air organisation, employment of Air Signal and Meteorology Departments, schemes for development of the Air Force, Air Force organisation, training policy and Air Staff publications.<sup>111</sup>

Sykes' purview was vast and required him to bring the RAF into being whilst fighting the First World War. Inspection of Air Council minutes revealed that many aspects of early RAF development arose during Sykes' tenure and also involved deep discussion between the Air Council and CAS. For instance, it was during Sykes tenure that RAF Uniform, establishment of the Chaplain Department, RAF Ensign, RAF cap badges, RAF training policy, RAF Bands, the RAF Standard, appointing Sir Walter Raleigh to write the RAF history, growth of facial hair, RAF pay and RAF disciplinary policy were all agreed.<sup>112</sup> Many of these aspects were his areas of expertise from having contributed to establishing the espoused cultures at the MW and the Machine Gun Corps.

The most pressing of all tasks was to attempt to reduce losses of men and machines.<sup>113</sup> Sykes, recognised that improvements in training policy would reduce both combat and accident losses. The need to institute reforms in the training system stemmed not only from concern amongst aircrews and the press, but was

---

<sup>111</sup> AHB, Air Council Minutes, 8 June 1918. Annex B.

<sup>112</sup> Examples from AHB, Air Council Minutes: Uniform: Air Council Minutes 10 May 1918. Air Council Minutes 23 May 1918, Air Council Minutes 8 June 1918, Air Council Minutes 21 June 1918. RAF cap badges: Air Council Minutes, 14 June 1918. RAF Bands: Air Council Minutes, 10 May 1918. RAF Standard: Air Council Minutes, 21 June 1918, Air Council Minutes, 18 July 1918, Air Council Minutes, 1 August 1918. Growth of Facial Hair: Air Council Minutes, 8 August 1918, RAF Chaplain Department: Air Council Minutes 21 June 1918. RAF History: Air Council Minutes, 21 June 1918, Air Council Minutes, 1 August 1918. Pay: Air Council Minutes, 14 June 1918, Training policy and responsibility: Air Council Minutes, 8 June 1918.

<sup>113</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.220.

probably influenced by a concerning aspect of Rothmere's letter to him when he took command.

One day soon I will tell you some facts (added later) – I believe them to be facts –about training that will require inquiry and action. They are of such a damning nature that if any way true that I have refrained from incorporating them in any Government minute.<sup>114</sup>

In the early RFC days, Sykes had advocated robust training and, as CAS, he reinstated that. Initially, he concentrated on aircrew training and results were quickly felt with 'a reduction not only in casualties, but in what had been one of the most tragic results of the previous policy, crashes behind the lines'.<sup>115</sup> By the time Sykes and his staff prepared 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire', his ideas on training had been developed and included: 'pilot training (including the training and tracking of commercial pilots), technical officer training, Air Staff and administrative officer training and training of the 'rank and file'.<sup>116</sup>

Unlike Trenchard, Sykes placed no emphasis on establishing a separate RAF college for training officers.<sup>117</sup> However, he did plan to establish a separate RAF Staff College.<sup>118</sup> Trenchard was doubtless aware of 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire' and, given the similarity in themes, it is likely that Trenchard's plans built upon those that Sykes proposed.<sup>119</sup>

In 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire', Sykes proposed two alternative terms of service to cover a post-war environment including national service and voluntary service. Volunteers would be employed in a way that would be 'attractive

---

<sup>114</sup> RAFM AC73/35/3/4/3 Letter Lord Rothmere to Sykes dated 26 April 1918.

<sup>115</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.221.

<sup>116</sup> TNA AIR 8/6 Sykes, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire', p.15.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. See also Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.261. Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.216.

<sup>118</sup> TNA Air 8/6, Sykes, *Air Power Requirements of the Empire*, p.15. This will be explored in more depth later.

<sup>119</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.



and to carry substantial pension rights' to satisfy the underlying technical needs of the RAF.<sup>120</sup> The technical needs of the Service would subsequently be central to Trenchard's philosophy. Additionally, Sykes proposed to recruit Boys of 14½ to 15 for three years technical training. When Trenchard introduced the 1919 Memorandum 12 months later, it would include both a proposal for reserve service and a very similar proposal to train boys under an apprentice scheme. The latter proved to be probably one of the most successful and innovative aspects of RAF training both for the RAF and for the British aviation industry. The apprentices would be called 'Trenchard's Brats' overlooking their original inspiration.

Trenchard, had concentrated on tactical support to the Army for the majority of his time in France.<sup>121</sup> While three Squadrons had been established in Oct 1917 dedicated to long range bombing, the creation of the RAF demanded a much greater emphasis on the use of strategic bombing.<sup>122</sup> Sykes developed concepts for strategic action for the RAF and by June 1918 laid this out in Chapter IV of the 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the Information of the Imperial War Cabinet'.<sup>123</sup> His views on the strategic application of air power were subsequently further developed in 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire': 'Highly specialised air forces are now essential components of all fighting efficiency, and aviation also provides a distinct and separate striking force of tremendous potentiality'.<sup>124</sup> With a detailed explanation of the increasing potential of aircraft capability, likely continuing instability and the ability of aircraft to strike at the 'nerve centres, the armies and

---

<sup>120</sup> TNA Air 8/6, Sykes, *Air Power Requirements of the Empire*, p.16.

<sup>121</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.124.

<sup>122</sup> TNA AIR 8/2 CAS Archives, 'Separate Air Force', Section 5, 'Committee on Air Organization and Home Defence Against Air Raids', p.3.

<sup>123</sup> Sykes, 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the information of the Imperial War Cabinet', Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.544-554.

<sup>124</sup> Sykes, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire', p.1.

navies of the opponent, the population as a whole, his national moral and the industries, without which he cannot wage war'.<sup>125</sup>

In addressing the potential and problems associated with strategic air power, he recognised both a need for offence and defence but also formally expressed a distinctly strategic outlook. For offence, he advocated 8 squadrons of day bombers and 9 squadrons of night bombers with an additional 3 squadrons of flying boats to cover the needs of the British Isles. His highly detailed scheme also provided a blue print for the strategic needs across the entire Empire. In order to defend against strategic attack he advocated 20 squadrons 'on a cadre basis' would be required.<sup>126</sup> This established probably one of the most enduring RAF policies that gave the RAF its real *raison-d'être*. Independence would become one of the deepest facets of both espoused and culture-in-action of the Royal Air Force for the next two decades. The ability to conduct independent and strategic action would delineate the RAF and air power's place as a separate entity within the British military rather than simply an adjunct to land and maritime activity.

As has already been pointed out, his plans for the third task of building the RAF for the future were cut short by his move sideways by Churchill to allow Trenchard a second chance as CAS. Trenchard, upon his return, took over an RAF that was in better shape than it had been when he left; Sykes' penchant for organisation and vision for policy had delivered. Indeed, had Sykes not been appointed as CAS, the RAF might have withered on the vine with Trenchard's approach to the Service and apparently limited doctrinal vision during his first short tenure. However, Sykes' less well developed leadership skills and inability to avoid

---

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

intrigue meant that Trenchard was probably a better prospect for the long fight for survival. The latter simply fitted in better and his charisma as a leader ensured that people followed him.<sup>127</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The contribution that Sykes made to the RFC and also directly to the early running of the RAF and the espoused cultures of both organisations was immense and is underrated in the historiography. Throughout his career he became very experienced at setting up organisations: the MW, the RNAS in the Dardanelles and the Machine Gun Corps. He was also, in reality, the first CAS of the RAF that executed any real function.<sup>128</sup> The provenance of many of the RAF processes and practices can be traced directly back to Sykes. He ensured that the MW was highly organised with a credible and exercised logistics plan, a nascent doctrine and a set of largely imported processes and practices that made the RFC look and feel like an Army corps but with a number of modifications around which its own distinct sub-culture would grow. Sykes recognised the ‘initiative, energy and dash’ of flying and managed to fold in new elements, such as ‘Wings’, a new uniform and adapted parades to involve aeroplanes thus playing up to the aviator identity’ whilst also maintaining an acceptable framework in the eyes of the British Army. The more conservative aspects of his work revolved around his attention to detail with training, the Netheravon Concentration Camp, RFC Military Orders and MW Standing Orders. That, combined with his deft information campaign, ensured that the RFC integrated cutting-edge technology into a very traditional environment. Through his

---

<sup>127</sup> For an explanation on Sykes’ inability to fit in with the military system that explains the intrigues between him, Henderson and Trenchard, see Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.199.

<sup>128</sup> Trenchard was only CAS for 13 Days.

organisational work, training, development of clear documentation, establishment of discipline and transmission of information, he succeeded in setting in motion the necessary processes and practices for a new organisation to function efficiently.

Sykes had been concerned by Britain's poor performance going into the Second Boer War. He attributed it to poor organisation and to inappropriate training during peacetime. It is clear that his early work concentrated on the need for training and solid organisation. Both of those aspects would endure throughout his career. He was inspired by contemporary military thought and the Staff College resulting in predictable Edwardian views on moral and the offensive. However, the archival evidence supports that his views matured and gives credence to Ash's final position that he 'envisioned a new war that extended beyond the front to 'areas''.<sup>129</sup> 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire' along with much of his other work laid down air power concepts that would endure much like the organisational processes he established.

However, Sykes' uncompromising personality and unconventional arrival in the Army also meant that he was always considered an outsider. He had a habit of irritating colleagues that would hold him back, but, crucially, also stunted the development of British air power. The intrigues interfered with the senior leadership's ability to engage constructively on air power at a time when the limited capability of aircraft meant that translating the First World War experiences into coherent air policy for the future was a difficult task. Had Trenchard, Sykes and Henderson been better able to manage their relationships, British air power could have been more constructive than it was. Many of Sykes' processes, practices and

---

<sup>129</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*, p.206.

concepts laid the foundations of RAF espoused culture but have, subsequently, been attributed to Trenchard. As Ash pointed out, 'ironically much of Trenchard's success resulted partly from the efforts of Sykes'.<sup>130</sup> Of his own achievements, Sykes said:

I could claim to have been the original founder of the R.F.C, and I had gone with it to France with a favourable position; during the last year of the War, as Chief of the Air Staff, I had been instrumental in the transformation of the Royal Air Force into a third Service of immense and far-reaching potential.<sup>131</sup>

Much of what he said in that statement was true, however, his unabashed self-promotion grates with the reader. And therein lies the issue with Sykes that lost him recognition: he was a prickly character with a tendency to say the wrong thing, although he also had the misfortune of sparring with Trenchard and Henderson. It is a shame that Sykes was unable to control his own personality. He did a good job of promoting the RFC but with his personal relationships within the service he did not fare as well. And that is what robbed the man who was such an important influence on the RAF of the recognition he deserved.

---

<sup>130</sup> Ash, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard', p.162.

<sup>131</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.269.

## CHAPTER V

### TRENCHARD

Trenchard was an overbearing, thick-skinned officer with little academic education who had appalling communication skills, entertained some dubious ideas about the employment of air power and had not been considered as a high flyer in his early Army career. Yet he drifted into the newly formed RFC, rose to its highest command, reigned over the RAF as its CAS of the RAF for 11 years, became a peer, grew to be one of the most influential leaders of the British fighting forces in the Twentieth Century and assured the survival of the first independent air force that became a model for air forces around the world. In 1919, he prepared 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force', a seminal memorandum that was a plan for the physical and intellectual development of the RAF and of great importance to RAF espoused culture.<sup>1</sup> That paved the way for the RAF to develop along traditional military lines with its own processes, practices, artefacts, traditions customs and rituals. Throughout the Second World War, 'The Few' supported by well-trained ground personnel overcame odds stacked against them and demonstrated the importance of air power to the British public. RAF culture had been tested under the most enormous strain and Trenchard had played a significant part in consciously developing the 'Air Force spirit' that contributed to it.

Following a brief examination of his early years, this chapter will explore the effect Trenchard's personality and policies had on RAF culture. It will examine the importance of the 1919 Memorandum as a blueprint for the development of the RAF and air-mindedness whilst explaining the emergence of Trenchardian thought.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cmd 467. 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

Trenchard is the RAF's most important hero and the organisation continues to venerate him with little dissent. This thesis will highlight that some aspects of Trenchard are myth but it will also examine the importance of that myth to RAF culture. Thus, in addition to providing an insight into how Trenchard set the conditions for RAF espoused culture to emerge, this chapter will also examine him from a new angle that will enrich the historiography.

### Early Years

There is a profusion of literature that covers Trenchard's early life, little of which is contested and need not be discussed in depth here.<sup>2</sup> Suffice to say, he performed poorly at school and scraped into the Army, according to Joubert de la Ferté, 'through the back door' via the crammer system as he was too academically poor to pass exams.<sup>3</sup> His path in the Army saw him serve in India where he met Churchill with whom he played polo; his later life and the fortunes of air power would become deeply entwined with Churchill.<sup>4</sup> Like Henderson and Sykes, he was wounded in the Boer War.<sup>5</sup> Following recuperation, he returned to South Africa and then served in Ireland and Nigeria. His Army career was not promising, although he had served with distinction, especially in Nigeria and the Boer War. Indeed, he had been awarded the DSO in Nigeria in 1906 for having 'commanded 800 men in the field for five months and shown energy, resource and powers of organisation far

---

<sup>2</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*. Miller, *Boom*. David Jordan, 'Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard (later Viscount Trenchard)', *Air Power Review*, Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.105-107.

'Trenchard, Hugh Montague, first Viscount Trenchard (1873–1956)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/article/36552?docPos=1>, accessed 22 December 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.18. For more on the routes into the British Army including the 'back door' route see Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, pp.35-36. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.132.

<sup>5</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.18.

above the average'.<sup>6</sup> His sporting ability earned him respect but he was, nevertheless considered somewhat odd.<sup>7</sup> Upon the recommendation of Eustace Lorraine, he tried his hand at flying and whilst a student on CFS was appointed its Deputy Commandant.<sup>8</sup>

His performance in South Africa, Nigeria and in the First World War demonstrate strong leadership skills and a determined adherence to the contemporary military doctrine of the relentless offensive.<sup>9</sup> Bowman and Connelly described forward movement as being considered 'essential for victory in any battle' while Travers wrote that 'the British Army developed no particular doctrine before 1914 except that of the offensive under almost all circumstances'.<sup>10</sup> Gray also stressed the contemporary importance of offensive doctrine.<sup>11</sup> By the time he arrived in the RFC, he was an experienced soldier and leader. With the nickname, 'Boom', his drive, personality, leadership and patronage by Haig saw him ascend and become GOC of the RFC.<sup>12</sup> Ash wrote that:

By 1917 Trenchard had created a powerful following. His reputation was such that he could survive scandals; but he had not obtained that status on his own. Trenchard had the wisdom to recognize his limitations and surround himself with capable people'.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *The London Gazette*, Sep 18, 1906, No 27950, p.6312, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27950/page/6312>, accessed 22 Dec 2016. Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.18.

<sup>7</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.18-19.

<sup>8</sup> Macmillan, *Sir Seton Branker*, p.30.

<sup>9</sup> The importance of the offensive was highlighted in the last chapter concerning Capper's teaching in Quetta.

<sup>10</sup> Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.97. Travers, 'The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918', p.216.

<sup>11</sup> See also Peter Gray, 'British Air Power from Potential to Fully Fledged Service, 1914-45', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol 159, Iss 4 (2014), pp.36-43.

<sup>12</sup> For details on patronage see Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.75

<sup>13</sup> Ash, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution 1912-1918*, p.198.



Baring and Spaight, in particular, were sources of advice and helped him frame his message and compensate for some of his weaknesses.<sup>14</sup> Despite their best efforts, Trenchard's weaknesses were still obvious.<sup>15</sup> His almost divine status in the RAF is, therefore, somewhat perplexing and deserves some explanation. Morris provided the following insight into Trenchard's visits to the squadrons during the First World War:

Trenchard's tours were never light-hearted occasions. He had no small talk, and could deal with work only in clipped and barely intelligible terms. Blame was apportioned in that terrible boom, praise blurted in sixth-form jargon...To many a youngster he was marked as the snorting brass hat who had sent the subaltern's best friend to death in flames hours before. But others drew strength from, and felt abiding affection for, this indifferent flyer who by courage and perseverance had gained RAC ticket No 270 at twice their age.<sup>16</sup>

He was a man of his era; he grew up in the hierarchical British Army of Empire that should be considered contextually. Bowman and Connelly contested Edmonds' official history of operations on the Western Front which claimed that the BEF was: 'incomparably the best trained, best organized, and best equipped British Army which ever went forth to war'.<sup>17</sup> The British Army had undergone significant modernisation including the Cardwell and Haldane reforms. However, Bowman and Connelly highlighted problems in the officer corps including a poor standard of training at Sandhurst and Woolwich, talent in the ranks remaining untapped due to the need for an officer to have an income supplement, a promotion system that was

---

<sup>14</sup> Baring was Henderson's and Trenchard's Staff Officer in France. Spaight was a lawyer who worked in the Air Ministry and became a Principal Assistant Secretary. For more detail on Spaight's influence on Trenchard, the RAF and the RAF Staff College see Gray, *The RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, pp.54-56 and also Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, pp.53-54. See also Meilinger, 'The Historiography of Airpower', pp.484-485.

<sup>15</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 12:17-12:19 and IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 1330:13:33

<sup>16</sup> Morris, *Bloody April*, p.82. For a similar view see also Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.305.

<sup>17</sup> Edmonds in Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.3.

tied to seniority combined with patronage and the fact that regular army officers came from a very narrow section of British Society.<sup>18</sup> The British Army was an organisation set in a class-conscious Britain that viewed everything through the lens of the World's largest Imperial power. The British military was emerging from a tradition of purchase of commission, and comprised regiments and corps that were extremely traditional in outlook and tradition.<sup>19</sup> Army life was harsh; in 1881 flogging was replaced by Field Punishment No 1, that was, in itself, a brutal punishment, and was part of a disciplinary process that included court martials, fines, detentions and the death penalty. According to Sheffield, 'the Regular Army combined exemplary paternalism with a rigidly hierarchical approach to discipline and distant, although generally mutual respectful, relations between officers and men.'<sup>20</sup> Trenchard's gruffness should not, therefore, be overly conflated or misconstrued as bad leadership for the era. When measured against his peers he was, in fact, a progressive leader for his time despite having a bark that had earned him the nickname 'Boom'. James wrote that Trenchard:

...did what the other Heads of Arms did, and spent a great deal of his time visiting the subordinate formations but with a difference. His colleagues kept visiting at a high level, Army, and perhaps Corps. Trenchard visited squadrons. The Chief, Royal Artillery, for example, did not talk with the troops: he might talk to them, in set piece speeches at parades and great occasions. He might occasionally be affable to such low life as battery

---

<sup>18</sup> Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.8.

<sup>19</sup> Field Punishment No 1 was administered on 60 210 occasions during the First World War, Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front* (London: Harper Collins, 2004), p.558. For further background detail on flogging, punishment and barrack life in the Victorian British Army, see Peter Burroughs, 'An Unreformed Army? 1815-1868', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, eds David Chandler and Ian Beckett (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.169-178.

<sup>20</sup> Sheffield, *Command and Morale*, p.176. See also Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Men Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

commanders, but like other generals he did not associate with the men who did the actual fighting.<sup>21</sup>

James suggested that it might even have been Army policy to maintain a distance following Buller's unwillingness to press the attack home in Natal while watching British casualties being brought back from the front in the Boer War.<sup>22</sup> However, James wrote of the RFC:

The men who did the fighting were few in numbers, and almost all were officers. Trenchard visited squadrons, and let it be known early in his command that when he did this he did not want brigade staff getting in the way...the pilots felt they knew him. He was their commander, they were his pilots, in a way in which no one else above battalion commander had his own men. It was Trenchard who created the atmosphere of the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>23</sup>

According to Boyle, he attended briefings, learned the names of the aircrew and would frequently stay up to await their return.<sup>24</sup> Trenchard's gruff but personal humour was underlined when he told Parker he was 'a bloody fool' for returning from Paris after only one day of leave and that 'if there had only been one cloud in the sky I should have had an excuse for staying longer'.<sup>25</sup> The fact that he visited his fighting men was of note in an era when, as Sheffield wrote when referring to Haig: 'the informal style of mixing with his men adopted by Montgomery in the Second World War would not have worked in 1914-18 when social conventions were very different'.<sup>26</sup> Trenchard clearly understood that his tactics were sending aircrew to their deaths and it weighed heavily upon him. In his own words, he recognised that his airmen had been 'tossed head first into the most impersonal

---

<sup>21</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.58.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>24</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.305.

<sup>25</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, *Memoirs Vol 1 (1962)*, p.67.

<sup>26</sup> Professor Gary Sheffield, 'Has History misjudged the Generals of World War One?', BBCiWonder production, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zq2y87h#zxs3wmn>, accessed 7 Jan 2016.

type of battle any group of men had ever faced in history which helped them rise above the risks and write their own traditions in the skies'.<sup>27</sup> He intuitively understood that a different leadership style needed to be adopted. This strong, instinctive leadership is, doubtless, why he was considered as the obvious choice to be the first CAS. Jordan wrote: 'Trenchard's success and reputation as the leading airman of his day led to his appointment as the first CAS of the Royal Air Force'.<sup>28</sup>

Trenchard's apparent lack of academic talent and his appalling communication skills are frequently referred to throughout the archives, personal accounts, the historiography and, indeed, by himself.<sup>29</sup> Slessor, who worked for him in the Air Staff said of his academic prowess that 'he was not by any means a clear thinker'.<sup>30</sup> Slessor continued that 'he was almost unintelligible' and that the 'process for writing papers involved writing them, having Lady Trenchard provide corrections until they were right'.<sup>31</sup> Trenchard was terse, taciturn, lacked the ease of expression one would expect of a great leader and had an apparently chaotic mind. His life-long rift with Sykes demonstrates that he also bore a grudge. Nevertheless, his personnel appeared spellbound by his strangely charismatic and strong leadership. Meilinger wrote that 'Trenchard has attained near mythic proportions in the literature and traditions of the RAF'.<sup>32</sup> Slessor, for instance, displayed an almost unquestioning faith in Trenchard as he underlined Trenchard's role in the battle to

---

<sup>27</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, pp.304-305.

<sup>28</sup> Jordan, 'Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard', p.105.

<sup>29</sup> See for example, Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, p.19. Trenchard referred to his own poor writing skills in TNA AIR 8/179, CAS Archives, 'Interview with Lord Trenchard 12/30-3pm on April 11 1934 (Dictated Notes by H.A. Jones on Policy of Independent Air Force, April 1934', p.5. See also Macmillan, *Sir Sefton Branker*, p.70. Meilinger, 'Historiography of Airpower', p.481.

<sup>30</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 14:06-14:12

<sup>31</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 12:17-12:19 and IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 1330:13:33

<sup>32</sup> Meilinger, 'Historiography of Airpower', p.481.

defend the RAF whilst acknowledging how unrealistic some of the strategic posturing of the RAF had been:

At that time we were mainly mainly [sic], I think I would say, mainly concerned in defending the existence of an independent Air Force, which I always disliked the word, against the attacks of particularly the Navy and I mean, if it hadn't been for Boom we should have lost that battle. No doubt about it. But looking back on it it [sic] is quite extraordinary to think how we exaggerated in our own minds about what the air could do with the weapons it then had.<sup>33</sup>

Harris, meanwhile, said that 'for nearly 20 years I watched the Army and the Navy... engineer one deliberate attempt after another to destroy the Royal Air Force... time after time Trenchard, and Trenchard alone, saved us.'<sup>34</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, who knew him at CFS and served under him during the First World War described him thus:

Trenchard, brusque and abrupt in his manner, had little time for politics and less for people who were thus engaged. Never very clear in his exposition of a case he often confused people he was trying to enlighten or persuade. But his transparent honesty, his great admiration and his ability to come to a just conclusion by an apparently erroneous process of thought, endeared him to those who worked under him – though his manner often repelled or frightened them.<sup>35</sup>

Lawrence's *The Mint* underlines that the loyalty Trenchard engendered spread well beyond his immediate inner circle and was evident even in the junior ranks.<sup>36</sup>

Zweigle highlighted that some historians had 'begun to question how vital Trenchard was to the establishment of the RAF as an independent entity', citing in

---

<sup>33</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 9:02-10:04.

<sup>34</sup> Jarrod Cotter, ed, 'Father of the Royal Air Force', *Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years* (Souvenir Edition, Key Publishing Ltd, 2008). p.8.

<sup>35</sup> Joubert, *The Third Service*, p.19.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*. See also the reverence of the apprentices towards Trenchard in Chapter VII.

particular, Cooper.<sup>37</sup> However, Cooper's writing about Trenchard's early lack of enthusiasm for establishing the RAF should not be confused with his later dedication to the RAF and how vital he was to its survival. Archival evidence highlights that Trenchard originally objected to the Independent Force in the First World War as it represented the splitting up of air assets at a time he did not think was appropriate.<sup>38</sup> By the end of Cooper's article, Trenchard's dedication to maintaining an independent RAF was clear; Cooper argued that Trenchard and other senior airmen's fervour to develop the new Service arose because 'naval and military attacks upon the RAF actually constituted a serious threat to the development of the aircraft as a weapon of war'.<sup>39</sup> Gray similarly wrote that 'the senior staff officers had no doubt that the dismemberment of the fledgling Service would not just mean a simple return to the days of the RFC and the RNAS; air power would be totally stripped of resources so that the other two forces could fund more congenial programmes of expenditure'.<sup>40</sup>

The historiography is largely unanimous in recognising Trenchard's strong leadership skills and drive; they were amply represented through the ten-year fight for survival of the RAF.<sup>41</sup> Ash summed up Trenchard's leadership as follows: 'commanders have no business being 'one of the boys', but great commanders

---

<sup>37</sup> Zachary J Zwiegle, 'The British Royal Air Force: A Faulty Foundation and the Decision to Survive, 1918-40', *Hindsight Graduate History Journal* Vol. VI (Spring 2012), pp.96-121. See also Cooper, 'Blueprint for Confusion', p.447.

<sup>38</sup> TNA AIR 8/179, CAS Archives, 'Interview with Lord Trenchard 12/30-3pm', p.5.

<sup>39</sup> Cooper, 'Blueprint for Confusion', p.450.

<sup>40</sup> Gray, 'British Air Power from Potential to Fully Fledged Service, 1914-45.

<sup>41</sup> Ash, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard', p.164. Malcolm S Smith, *British Air Strategy between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns, 'The Trenchard Vision and its Relevance in an Age of Joint Warfare', Trenchard Memorial Lecture, *The RUSI Journal*, Vol 142 No 5 (October 1997), pp.10-16. Johns was CAS from 1997-2000. TNA AIR 8/42, meanwhile, provides detailed understanding of the effort and staff work that was invested in the defence of the RAF.

inspire a sense of respect, admiration, and even love from subordinates. Sykes did not do this. Trenchard did'.<sup>42</sup> In short order the RAF assumed a self-confidence that was instilled across the rank structure, in large measure, by its larger than life and seemingly unassailable leader.

### **The 1919 Memorandum and Spirit**

Trenchard's take on how the RAF should develop and, particularly the vigour with which he intended to do so was encapsulated in his 1919 Memorandum entitled, 'Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.<sup>43</sup> Air Chief Marshal Johns, a former CAS, said: 'his far-sighted Memorandum, setting out the framework for the post-war Royal Air Force, became one of the most constructive plans for air power ever'.<sup>44</sup> However, Higham highlighted it as a political document that 'was designed to be used on either tack' and that 'the bulk of the Memorandum is innocuous in that it deals primarily with the organization of the air services and not with their role'.<sup>45</sup> Higham's point is well made regarding the role of the RAF. As previously highlighted, Sykes' plans for the roles of the RAF were far more expansive and went well beyond the solely military sphere. However, the organisational aspects Higham referred to are precisely what made the document such a seminal one regarding the origins of the espoused culture of the RAF. As well as laying down the organisational and functional priorities that would ensure that the RAF would develop into a permanent force, it called for the development of an RAF specific culture to be formed that he called the 'Air Force spirit'. Mahoney

---

<sup>42</sup> Ash, *Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard*, p.164.

<sup>43</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>44</sup> Johns, *The Trenchard Vision*, pp.10-16.

<sup>45</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.165.

astutely identified the 1919 Memorandum as an 'important cultural artefact'.<sup>46</sup> It is clear that Trenchard believed that 'spirit' would underpin the organisation and the first of three postulates articulated in the 1919 Memorandum explicitly stated that:

Firstly, to make an Air Force worthy of the name, we must create an Air Force spirit, or rather foster this spirit which undoubtedly existed in a high degree during the war, by every means in our power. Suggestions have been made that we should rely on the older service to train our cadets and Staff officers. To do so would make the creation of an Air Force spirit an impossibility apart from the practical objection, among others, that the existing naval and military cadet and staff colleges are not provided with aerodromes or situated in localities in any way suited for flying training.<sup>47</sup>

That important postulate was the preamble that paved the way in the memorandum for the establishment of the College at Cranwell, the Air Force Staff College and an apprentice school. Those three institutions were of cultural significance; they allowed the RAF to train but also instil espoused culture in future generations of RAF personnel.

It is important to try to establish the contemporary meaning of the word 'spirit'. The word was used in military circles and more broadly in the civilian world in the Edwardian and Victorian eras to articulate the moral qualities required in a man, unit or formation to deliver success on the battlefield. The British use probably emerged from the French term 'Esprit-de-Corps'. It has been demonstrated that Sykes recognised the importance of esprit-de-corps, however, Trenchard appeared even more obsessed with developing it.<sup>48</sup> Paris wrote that Trenchard's obsession resulted in placing the need for developing an 'RAF spirit ahead of motive' in the

---

<sup>46</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.92.

<sup>47</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>48</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.343, p.362 and p.540. RAFM MFC 76/1/98 Speeches: Drafts and Notes 1919-1927, 'Independent Force Dinner Speech A'. RAFM MFC 76/1/98 Speeches: Drafts and Notes 1919-1927, 'Airship Officers' Dinner'.



War in the Air.<sup>49</sup> He frequently underlined that the 'Air Force spirit' was an extension and strengthening of that formed in the First World War in the RFC.<sup>50</sup> As late as 1944 he continued to emphasise the importance of having promoted early RAF spirit and particularly stressed the value of having established separate institutions to inculcate this.<sup>51</sup> So important was spirit to Trenchard, he was even prepared to accept a reduction in the number of aeroplanes in order to develop the training system and build the infrastructure that would allow the 'Air Force spirit' to thrive separately from the RN and the Army.<sup>52</sup> However, spirit seemed to have no precise definition in Trenchard's time. The Victorian and Edwardian middle and upper classes appeared to have an intuitive grasp of certain vague entities as commented upon by Gray referring to leadership.

In the first half of the twentieth century, leadership was more a question of what one did, rather than what was studied. Officers tended to come from a higher social class than their men and ensuring the well-being of their troops, along with achievement of the task and maintenance of discipline, was an intuitive process.<sup>53</sup>

Spirit similarly appears to be something that the contemporary officer cadre intuitively knew the value of and also how to achieve it. Robbins wrote that 'the Army's code was largely implicit and unwritten'.<sup>54</sup> Although Trenchard repeatedly underlined the importance of spirit, paradoxically, he never defined what he meant

---

<sup>49</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.8.

<sup>50</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.332, p.362.

<sup>51</sup> HC Debate. 'Defence: Post-War Organization'. *Hansard*, HL Deb, 6 Dec, 1944 Vol 134 cc131-89, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1944/dec/06/defence-post-war-organization>, accessed 27 May 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>53</sup> Gray, 'The Strategic Leadership and Direction of The Royal Air Force Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany from Inception to 1945', p.41.

<sup>54</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.5. See also Capper lecture KCLMA Liddell Hart Cappers 2/4/1, Lecture given to Senior Div, Staff College Quetta following disappointing performance on exercise, Quetta 1908. This is reflected in Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*.

by it. At the Airship Officers' Dinner, he referred to it in characteristically unclear and rambling manner:

The Air Spirit and pride in our Service is common to us all and must be cultivated by us all, and I look to you who have done so much to found this service to consolidate it and to see that its foundations are well and truly laid. We are a small Service and what we must have is the all round man capable of turning his hand to anything. You have all heard the tale of the man who built a magnificent house but made the small omission of neglecting to provide any stairs. The Air Service is like a house and we must cultivate the all round man otherwise we run the danger of having very fine rooms but no means to ingress them. If Icarus had only had a knowledge of the temperature at which wax melted he would never have got too near the Sun, his wings would not have fallen off and he might have been alive now and a Marshal of the Air at the very least. I know you realise all this and I want you to see that it is realised and to cultivate cultivate (sic) and maintain the Air Spirit and pride in the Royal Air Force which is so essential to us all.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, spirit remained poorly defined, abstract and with no apparent scientific basis. For the purposes of this thesis, Trenchard's 'Air Force spirit' has been assumed to equate approximately to espoused culture. Trenchard clearly saw the importance of culture and the need for a framework for it comprising institutions, symbols, processes, practices, traditions and even architecture. Whilst he may not have defined spirit, he intuitively understood it.

Trenchard's other postulates also called for the RAF to develop in other ways that would make important contributions to the overarching 'Air Force spirit', or espoused culture, that he searched for. The second postulate in the 1919 Memorandum read as follows:

We must use every endeavour to eliminate flying accidents, both during training and subsequently. This end can only be secured by ensuring that the training of our mechanics in the multiplicity of trades necessitated by a highly technical service, is as thorough as can be made. The best way to do this is to enlist the bulk of our skilled ranks as boys and train them ourselves.

---

<sup>55</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/98 Speeches: Drafts and Notes 1919-1927. 'Airship Officers' Dinner'

This has the added advantage that it will undoubtedly foster the Air Force spirit on which so much depends.<sup>56</sup>

Henderson and Sykes originally espoused that the RFC was a technical Service. However, Trenchard played a major role in reinforcing this as a deeply held belief this for the RAF through the 1919 Memorandum and in his ensuing years as CAS.<sup>57</sup> The apprentice scheme was an expensive way to provide technical expertise, however, it proved to be exceptionally successful and safeguarded RAF engineering practices and standards until the early 1990's by establishing deep pride and a sense of superiority amongst the boy entrants that will be examined in Chapter VI. The sense of superiority of the ORs of the RAF over the other services also became a deeply held belief structure in the inter-war RAF. Sherbrooke-Walker observed this whilst attached to the RAF.<sup>58</sup> Zwiegle contended that there was 'a deliberate attempt by the leadership of the RAF to create and nurture an attitude of unity and superiority among the men and officers of the air force'.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, James wrote, 'These fellows (soldiers) have joined up as a last resort, because they have failed and were not qualified for anything else. The airmen, on the other hand, saw their service as the beginning of a real career'.<sup>60</sup> Training the apprentices and ORs in separate RAF institutions helped internalised the belief that air power could only be conducted by a specialist and independent organisation and will be examined later.

The third postulate was:

---

<sup>56</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>57</sup> For Sykes' views on the technical nature of the RFC see: Sykes, *Aviation in Peace and War*, p.71 and pp.29-30. For Trenchard's view, see TNA Air 8/6. 'Memorandum by the Chief of the Air Staff on Air Power Requirements of the Empire'. See also Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.346 and p.542.

<sup>58</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.9.

<sup>59</sup> Zweigle, 'The British Royal Air Force', p.110.

<sup>60</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.108.

Thirdly, it is not sufficient to make the Air Force officer a chauffeur and nothing more. Technical experts are required for the development of the science of aeronautics, still in its infancy. Navigation, meteorology, photography and wireless are primary necessities for safety, even on the chauffeur basis.<sup>61</sup>

This emphasised the importance of developing technical skills in the officer corps as well as in the ranks.<sup>62</sup> But it also was clear that developing such a complex technical service would mean that officer careers would not be full term ones for all RAF officers. The short service commission system was introduced with a plan for only 50% of the officers to be given permanent commission.<sup>63</sup> The 1919 Memorandum also outlined a plan for an entry method via universities rather than via Cranwell. Given Trenchard's priority to train the officers and men of the RAF in its own institutions, this may seem counter-intuitive, however, he also sought to bring a breadth of expertise to the RAF. At a Cambridge University Aeronautical meeting he underlined that:

We want the mathematical genius – there is work for him. We want the literary genius – there is work for him, especially in my office. We want the scientific brain – there is more than enough work for him. We want the man of brains, and we want the man of common sense and little brains.<sup>64</sup>

From a cultural perspective, this would blend the officer corps intake and encourage university graduates to bring their specialist knowledge to the technical service.<sup>65</sup> Despite his own poor academic credentials, it appeared Trenchard, or

---

<sup>61</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>62</sup> See also TNA AIR8/35 Personnel Memoranda, Section 15, Minute by Trenchard with supporting Memo in response to Wing Commander Rankin's memorandum on the question of Engineer Officers, dated 20 Nov 1920. See also Hugh Trenchard, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', (Article derived from a speech given by Trenchard on 14 Oct 1920), *The Army Quarterly*, Vol 2, No1 (1921), pp.10-21,

<sup>63</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>64</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.519

<sup>65</sup> Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

perhaps the Air Staff advising him, sought to establish a well informed, thinking Service by inducting some of the brightest students in the country.

The 1919 Memorandum was also the basis for the formation of the Auxiliary Air Force. It is clear from Wilkinson's PhD that this helped establish a broader cultural base than the traditional officer intake might otherwise have provided.<sup>66</sup>

When these methods of entry were combined with a small but innovative system of assuring the best apprentices with a place at Cranwell, there emerged, in the RAF, a putative move towards a more meritocratic system than in the other services. This was visionary in the extreme and represented social engineering at a time when the British middle classes were terrified by the potential overthrow of the established order following universal British male suffrage, partial female suffrage and the downfall of traditional order in Russia, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>67</sup>

Trenchard recognised the disadvantage of being financially embarrassed following the death of his father and deliberately located the College far from the expensive temptations of London to ensure that cadets without means would not be disadvantaged.<sup>68</sup> By 1925, AP1100, *The Royal Air Force as a Career*, officially articulated that the RAF pursued a progressive approach to recruiting its officer corps and, in its opening paragraph, stressed that 'with all the vistas before him a

---

<sup>66</sup> Wilkinson, 'The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957'

<sup>67</sup> David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2000 [Yale University Press, 1998]), p.127. See also Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 [1969]). See also Waites who referred to 'suburban paranoia' about the 'threatening masses' existing even before the First World War. B A Waites, 'The effect of the First World War on class and status in England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 11 No 1 (1976), pp.27-48), p.31

<sup>68</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.362.

boy may be excused for not wishing to follow in his father's footsteps'.<sup>69</sup> It also stressed that an RAF officer career did not require a private income.<sup>70</sup> In a speech to officers in 1926, he further expounded notions of meritocracy: 'in the past the fighting services were largely drawn from and supported by what I may call the squires who had the money, the brains and the men. Now the centre of influence has shifted...we have tapped and are tapping...the scientific brains of this nation, the intelligent class who can learn and absorb quickly'.<sup>71</sup> Despite this, it will be seen later that, in reality, Trenchard, the recruiting staff and the staff at Cranwell still tried to ensure that the RAF attracted officers from Cranwell from the best public schools in the country and that notions of meritocracy would take a long time to gather pace in the RAF.<sup>72</sup>

### **Air-mindedness**

A key strand in safeguarding the RAF would be to try to educate as many people as possible to the value of air power and the need for this to be delivered by a focussed independent force. Trenchard achieved this internally through separate training as outlined in the 1919 Memorandum. This provided an environment in which Giddens's process of structuration took place.<sup>73</sup> In separate institutions across the rank structure, RAF personnel were inculcated with the idea that, as air specialists, only they truly understood the air environment and its demands.

But air-mindedness was not just something that Trenchard required of his personnel; he also needed influential decision makers and the public to understand

---

<sup>69</sup> TNA AIR10/1112, AP1100, 'The Royal Air Force as a Career', HMSO, 1925, p.3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p.8. This was also stressed in TNA AIR10/1336, 'An Inquiry into the Requirements in Officers in the Royal Air Force', Air Ministry, Sep 1928, p.4.

<sup>71</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.342.

<sup>72</sup> This will be examined in greater detail when dealing with the RAF College at Cranwell.

<sup>73</sup> See Ch I for Giddens's structuration theory.

the RAF.<sup>74</sup> Trenchard had a life-long aversion to the press and being in front of cameras.<sup>75</sup> He came from an Army background that, as Robbins pointed out, 'disliked and distrusted showmanship of the type which generals such as Montgomery would indulge in the Second World War'.<sup>76</sup> Despite this, Trenchard exploited the media with remarkable skill. Whilst everyone understood the land environment and significant numbers of the British public had experienced sea travel, the air environment was entirely alien to all but a very small group of adventuring aviators.

Two key initiatives directed by Trenchard, as part of his plan to develop air-mindedness and media exploitation, were the development of University Air Squadrons and also the establishment of the Hendon Air Pageants. These enterprises proved both effective and popular and had a deep effect on the RAF itself as well as the broader British people.

The first University Air Squadron was established at Cambridge on 1 Oct 1925 and was quickly followed by the establishment of the second at Oxford, also in 1925.<sup>77</sup> Other University Air Squadrons were then subsequently established ultimately providing coverage of all universities across the country after the Second World War. These organisations gave undergraduates an insight into the exclusive world of aviation with an opportunity to fly RAF aircraft and helped recruit the university-educated officers with the range of skills the technical Service required.

---

<sup>74</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.513.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. There is very little material available that shows Trenchard on film. During this research, only one piece of footage was discovered. 'Lord Trenchard - but rarely seen – and still more rarely heard', British *Pathé* (1934), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InCwh19ZoZg>, accessed 9 Oct 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.15.

<sup>77</sup> Hughes Gwilym, 'The History of Cambridge University Air Squadron', *Air Clues* (October 1975), pp.364-367. Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.519.

This provided a source of intelligent recruits for the technical service, but also inculcated air-mindedness in students who did not join the RAF but would become influential British establishment decision-makers. In 1935, an entry in *The Aeroplane* gave an insight into how popular they had become. It highlighted the great RAF investment of effort and influence at the Cambridge University Air Squadron Dinner that was attended by the Under-Secretary of State for Air, CAS, DCAS and Brooke-Popham.<sup>78</sup>

The second key initiative that encouraged air-mindedness was the introduction of the RAF Air Pageant that helped educate the broader public about aircraft and the roles of the RAF.<sup>79</sup> The first pageant was held in July 1920 at Hendon which was close enough for spectators to come out from London. Boyle wrote: 'The Hendon show embodied Trenchard's conception of practical propaganda at its best'.<sup>80</sup> It attracted the public and VIPs including HRH Prince Henry and Churchill.<sup>81</sup> *Flight* referred to it as 'the most successful aerial affair which has ever been held, in this country'.<sup>82</sup> Originally conceived as a one-off event it became an annual event following its outrageous success. *Pathé*, reporting on the second Pageant in 1921, noted that 100 000 people were 'thrilled at realistic

---

<sup>78</sup> Hughes, 'The Cambridge University Air Squadron', pp.295-296.

<sup>79</sup> 'Hendon Air Displays and Pageants', RAFM podcast, <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault/podcasts/hendon-air-displays-and-pageants/>, accessed 18 Nov 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.373.

<sup>81</sup> 'The RAF Pageant', *Flight*, No 602 (No 28 Vol XII) (Jul 8 1920), p.705, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1920/1920%20-%2000706.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2015.

<sup>82</sup> 'Editorial Comment: The Air Pageant', *Flight*, No 602 (No 28 Vol XII) (Jul 8 1920), p.701, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1920/1920%20-%2000701.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2015.



bombing and destruction of 'enemy headquarters' at R.A.F. Pageant'.<sup>83</sup> The pageants became increasingly professional and a 3000-person grandstand was eventually built.<sup>84</sup> In the inter-war period, pageants allowed the RAF to put on demonstrations that highlighted, in particular, imperial air policing, substitution of RN and Army roles and air defence of London thereby transmitting key messages about the RAF. In 1922, the bombing of an Eastern 'stronghold' included co-operating with armoured cars and was intended to demonstrate how the RAF responded quickly and represented value for money in the imperial policing role over more costly deployment of ground troops.<sup>85</sup> This substitution was a key principle of defence of the RAF as an independent entity. In 1924, the RAF highlighted the value of aircraft in the maritime role by bombing a model of a cruiser.<sup>86</sup> In 1937, a spectacular reconstruction of a port for the 'set piece' attack was seen by 200 000 visitors.<sup>87</sup> Overall the pageants were seen by over four million people who were influenced by Trenchard's rather clever media campaign.<sup>88</sup>

### **Trenchardian Thought**

Whether fighting in the Veld, over the Trenches or in Whitehall, the defining feature of Trenchard's career lay in his semi-hypnotic personality and ability to lead military personnel on the relentless offensive. Given the strongly hierarchical nature of the British fighting forces combined with this larger-than-life and daunting

---

<sup>83</sup> 'R.A.F. Pageant 1921' *British Pathé*, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/raf-r-a-f-pageant>, accessed 18 Nov 2015.

<sup>84</sup> 'Hendon Air Displays and Pageants', RAFM Podcast.

<sup>85</sup> 'R.A.F. Air Pageant', *Flight*, No 705 (No 26 Vol XIV) (29 June 1922), p.373, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1922/1922%20-%200373.html>, accessed 23 Dec 2017.

<sup>86</sup> 'Hendon Air Pageant 1924', British Pathé, <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/hendon-air-pageant>, accessed 23 Dec 2017.

<sup>87</sup> 'Hendon Air Displays and Pageants', RAFM Podcast.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

demeanour, it is unsurprising that the RAF developed what Biddle called Trenchardian thought.<sup>89</sup> It has already been established that his personality and leadership inspired immense reverence towards his opinions but this also served to create a vacuum in which there was very little questioning or dissent. This is where danger lay for the RAF, for Trenchard was not particularly visionary; rather he was very good at taking other people's ideas and transforming them as the previous two chapters have identified. On the subject of strategic bombing, for instance, Stephens highlighted that Smuts, Sykes and Groves all supported the idea of strategic bombing before 'Trenchard took up the cause'.<sup>90</sup> The transcripts of an interview with H A Jones, reveal he recognised his own narrowness of thought.<sup>91</sup> While he had heard that Haig was a disbeliever in the air, when discussing the plans for the battle at Neuve Chapelle, Haig's ideas on the application of aircraft were actually even more expansive than his own.<sup>92</sup> This recognition of his own conceptual weakness perhaps explains his enthusiasm at creating an RAF Staff College and how closely he followed the first courses. It has already been established that Trenchard surrounded himself with experts such as Spaight, Baring and the Air Staff. Gray wrote that 'it may be more productive to regard Trenchard as the centre point of a school of thought from which his staff officers and so forth produced a collective wisdom'.<sup>93</sup> Stephens wrote that:

It was Trenchard who adapted whatever he needed from the work of others, added his own forceful ideas and unique experience, and then provided the

---

<sup>89</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.88.

<sup>90</sup> Alan Stephens, 'The true believers between the Wars', in *The War in the Air 1914-1994*, ed Alan Stephens (Tuggeranong: Air Power Development Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2009), p.21.

<sup>91</sup> TNA AIR 8/179, CAS Archives, Interview with Lord Trenchard 12/30-3pm.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.52. Meilinger also highlighted that his staff officers probably wrote his speeches. Meilinger, 'Historiography of Airpower', p.481.

leadership which was necessary to turn beliefs firstly into policy and then into force structure.<sup>94</sup>

Trenchard hoped that the RAF Staff College would become a cradle of thought for the RAF and he called for 'free discussion with the young officer as well as with the senior officer to be encouraged just as I encourage it in my own room...'.<sup>95</sup> He appeared to show great enthusiasm for the College and closely followed the first courses. However, he simultaneously called for the RAF to speak with only one voice and strongly discouraged the publication of dissenting voices:

It is essential that the Royal Air Force should speak with one voice, and thereby assist to form opinion in the other Services...The C.A.S. looks to all officers to support him in this matter. In the present stage of the development of aviation individual ideas and opinions are of great value and their expression in the proper quarter is invited and welcomed, but outside the Royal Air Force it is essential to present a united front in support of the policy approved.<sup>96</sup>

Such was the strength of Trenchard's personality, that those outside his inner circle did not appear to recognise their part in the need for the RAF to develop an Air Force that thought deeply and questioned the nascent and untried theories and paradigms that were building around air power. Even Slessor who worked for him in the Air Staff appeared to have an unquestioning belief in his views on air power: 'he was far more far seeing than most of us were as to what it [air power] could ultimately become'.<sup>97</sup> However, his strong personality conflicted with his need to create a thinking force to counter his own lack of original and creative thought. This resulted in the emergence of unquestioning 'Trenchardian thought' that stunted

---

<sup>94</sup> Stephens, 'The true believers between the Wars', p 21.

<sup>95</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.542.

<sup>96</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/21 (2 of 9), Untitled Minute to Air and Group Commanders from the Air Staff regarding types of aircraft re-equipment for Squadrons, dated 18 Feb 1920.

<sup>97</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 3176, Interview Slessor John, Reel 1, 7:37-7:44.

the intellectual development of the RAF.<sup>98</sup> Biddle noted that the lack of challenge to Trenchardian 'tenets' contributed to flawed RAF air power thinking had significant consequence in the Second World War.<sup>99</sup> Similarly Cooper wrote of Trenchard and senior RAF hierarchy that

...their search for an independent role to give the RAF full doctrinal legitimacy drove them first to imperial policing and then to strategic bombing, operational forms in which their wartime experience was limited. The final product of this process was an air force wedded to a poorly thought-out doctrine, and dangerously isolated from the remainder of the defence community'.<sup>100</sup>

### **The Mythology of Trenchard**

Did a bobsleigh ride on the Cresta Run miraculously cure his Boer War paralysis? Did he or did he not receive a box with shoes in from Sykes in lieu of one with plans in it? Did he actually sit on a bench in Hyde Park pondering his future? Was the architect of the RAF and its Chief for 11 years really such a poor communicator? Was air power as decisive as it was made out to be in the Official History of the First World War? Such questions beg answers and despite deep research through the archival material, it is not possible to find conclusive answers to some of them.

Boyle's semi-official biography needed to be carefully interpreted when attempting to understand Trenchard. It was heavily influenced by Trenchard himself and cannot be considered impartial. While it provided a comprehensive account of Trenchard's life and appears, from cross-referencing with the archives and other accounts, to be largely true there are, some areas that cannot be accurately cross

---

<sup>98</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92. Gray, *The Leadership and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.262.

<sup>99</sup> Biddle, *Reality and Rhetoric in Air Warfare*, p.88-90.

<sup>100</sup> See Cooper, 'Blueprint for Confusion', p.450. For a similar view see Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, pp.87-88.

referenced. Boyle's style was somewhat grating and incorporated a slightly strange mix of interesting fact, with sycophancy. Jordan highlighted that 'despite the extent of the work it is not completely accurate'.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, Trenchard's hand in the writing of the official history of early air power combined with a distinct lack of directly attributable writing by Trenchard and a lack of an autobiography helped to create an aura of mystique and myth around Trenchard.<sup>102</sup> Zweigle wrote that:

The esprit-de-corps that was cultivated among the airmen and cadets was partly the result of Trenchard's mystique. Many within the air service began to form a cult of personality around him; it was as though these men saw him as a sort of deity or legendary figure.<sup>103</sup>

In this regard, Zweigle was perceptive; few other academics refer to this near-deity but it is clear that Trenchard did achieve quite a remarkable following throughout the RAF. Slessor's comment referred to in the last section demonstrates that this was the case within the Air Staff. Meanwhile, it will be seen in Chapter VI that the apprentices revelled in their moniker 'Trenchard's Brats', meanwhile, T E Lawrence's descriptions of Trenchard in *the Mint* highlight the feelings shown towards him in the ORs:

The word Trenchard spells out confidence in the RAF and we would not lose it by hearing him decried.<sup>104</sup>

While *The Mint* provided one of the few and valuable accounts of life in the RAF from the airman's perspective, it must be treated with some caution given the very strong friendship between Trenchard and Lawrence that saw Trenchard

---

<sup>101</sup> Jordan, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918', p.7.

<sup>102</sup> Trenchard's hand in the formulating of the Official History of the First World War was touched upon in the Literature Review and will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter.

<sup>103</sup> Zweigle 'The British Royal Air Force', pp.119-120.

<sup>104</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, p.95.

personally intervene to secure Lawrence's position in the RAF in the ranks.<sup>105</sup>

However, more broadly across the literature, the impact of Trenchard is clear and has endured. 'A Short History of the RAF' is an example of strong internalised hagiographic RAF view of Trenchard:

Characteristically, he cured his paralysis by taking a convalescent break in Switzerland and winning the Beginners and Freshmen's' toboggan race down the Cresta Run... However, the same spirit that had taken him to success down the Cresta Run now led him to learn to fly and he was granted his pilot's licence with a grand total of just 1 hour and 14 minutes in the air!<sup>106</sup>

Trenchard's mystique and its role in the emergence of RAF 'esprit-de-corps' played a greater role than, perhaps even Zwiegle perceived; the manner in which it emerged needs greater examination. Trenchard's hand in the myths that shaped RAF as well as influencing his own position is important. The official history written by Raleigh, entitled 'The War in the Air' was probably the first document that explained air power in the First World War including Trenchard's role in it. Jordan noted Trenchard's influence in the writing of this.<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile, Mahoney wrote of:

...Trenchard's hands on style of leadership as well as his role in controlling key 'artefacts', 'histories' and 'stories' that underpinned RAF culture. These sources ranged from formal doctrine like ASM and capstone publications like AP1300, through to external and informal 'stories', such as the official history of the RAF in the First World War, articles in JRUSI and RAFQ, and key books on air power that emerged during this period.<sup>108</sup>

The controlling influence is important because it amplified the aura of Trenchard. Paris contended that *The War in the Air* was biased by Trenchard and that Raleigh lost a certain amount of objectivity as he:

---

<sup>105</sup> Jordan commented on the depth of friendship between Trenchard and Lawrence.

Jordan, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918', p.3. See also Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.384, pp.427-428 and pp.539-540.

<sup>106</sup> 'Short History of the RAF', AP 2003, p.40.

<sup>107</sup> Jordan, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918', p.7.

<sup>108</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.93.

...became enamoured with the romantic aspects of aerial warfare. He came to feel that the 'spirit of England' was now embodied in the RAF: in the 'young gallants who were gay and reckless'. Almost certainly he came under the influence of Sir Hugh Trenchard.<sup>109</sup>

He went on to say that 'it seems likely, then, that Raleigh, an ardent admirer of the third arm and under Trenchard's influence, produced very much the history that the latter wanted – a history that would support the Service in its fight against absorption by the War Office and the Admiralty'.<sup>110</sup> As Paris pointed out:

A history which admitted that the major developments in air warfare were made by the enemy, that the RFC only revised and extended its own role as a counter measure to German initiatives, would hardly lend support to the view of a dynamic new service under the command of imaginative and resourceful men. Even worse would be to admit that theories for the offensive use of air power had been formulated before 1914 but had been ignored by those charged with developing the Flying Corps in its early years.<sup>111</sup>

The hand of Trenchard had a lasting effect upon air power writing over the next twenty years. Paris pointed out that the most influential works on British air power 'leaned heavily' upon Raleigh's work and included the J M Spaight history, the Air Ministry's *Short History*, the works of C.F Snowden Gamble, A J Chamier and Hillary St George Saunders.<sup>112</sup>

However, an organisation needs its heroes and, through manipulation of the official history and very strong leadership skills the RAF found its hero in Trenchard. The mythology that emerged about him proved to be a powerful force around which the RAF still coalesces. Nevertheless, while his leadership saved the RAF, it also induced a troubling lack of questioning in the RAF that gave rise to flawed conceptual and doctrinal thinking.

---

<sup>109</sup> Paris, *Winged Warfare*, p.4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*. p.5.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*. p.5.

## Conclusion

Trenchard transformed from an officer with little chance of progression into one of the most revered military leaders of the Twentieth Century. Despite having appalling communication skills, with the help of his staff, he succeeded in convincing people inside and outside the Service that the RAF should survive as an independent entity. A highly successful leader, he seemed, intuitively, to understand people and organisations. Despite enormous losses as he drove the RFC using the Edwardian principle of the relentless offensive, he built a somewhat extraordinary following amongst his RFC personnel. However, he was not a true visionary regarding the application of air power. Indeed, by his own admission, Haig and Henderson appeared to have a deeper understanding of its utility than he did. Sykes was also more visionary in that respect. Devine, a critic of the RAF, provided the following useful assessment of Trenchard:

In the ten years of his authority he established the existence of the Service – with the indispensable assistance of Winston Churchill – as an independent entity. He secured, by his insistence on the fundamental principle of separate training, its individuality. Its esprit de corps was built up largely out of the ferocity of his defence of its interests against threats, real and imagined, from the Army and the Navy.<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Stephens wrote that:

Under his leadership the essential building blocks were put in place or consolidated: a central flying School to set and maintain standards; research and development establishments for the technological edge; a cadet college at Cranwell to produce the future leaders; a staff college at Andover to give those leaders the finishing touches and an apprentice scheme to train the mechanics. The Trenchard model has been emulated by effective air forces ever since.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Despite having served in the RAF, the central theme of Devine's mid-1960's argument was the very creation of the RAF, as a single Service, was 'ill conceived'. Devine, *The Broken Wing*, p.174.

<sup>114</sup> Stephens, 'The true believers between the Wars', p.21.



As the previous two chapters demonstrated, the 'building blocks' were largely the ideas of others. Henderson was the visionary who foresaw the value of an independent Service and Sykes was the leader who established the majority of the processes and practices around which RAF culture would emerge. Sykes also wrote an expansive vision for the RAF in his 1918 Memoranda.<sup>115</sup> While Trenchard's 1919 Memorandum focussed exclusively on the military aspects of British air power, it was, nevertheless, an inspired blueprint centred on what appears to have been an intuitive understanding of the need to establish an 'Air Force spirit'. Although he never defined or articulate what spirit meant, his plan established an effective framework for the development of espoused culture of the RAF that held the RAF together whilst under intense external attack and later in total warfare. This is probably Trenchard's biggest legacy. Indeed, the framework laid out by these three leaders remains largely intact a century later and supports Schein's argument, certainly for a hierarchical organisation, that 'cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group'.<sup>116</sup>

The 1919 Memorandum established a training environment that would allow the RAF to build an independent outlook and acculture its personnel in its own way. It provided the RAF with the basis for the deeply held belief that it was not only a highly technical force but also that entering it was, in many ways a superior career choice, particularly for the ORs. The Memorandum also introduced an element of social mobility that was ground-breaking given the contemporary fears of the middle

---

<sup>115</sup> 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the Information of the Imperial War Cabinet', Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.544-554, TNA Air 8/6 Sykes, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire'.

<sup>116</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, p.2,

classes.<sup>117</sup> Trenchard's aloof persona, a clever media campaign and the determination he displayed in the fight to keep the RAF alive served to enhance the mythology surrounding him. That semi-divine status spread through the ranks of the new Service and gave it what appeared to be a clear mission, confidence and a sense of permanence. Indeed, the plan forsook aircraft in order to build both figurative and real foundations upon which the Service could be considered permanent and also upon which it could be enlarged thanks to developing its own training system, a reserve and a strong body of internally trained mechanics and specialists.

Trenchard hoped to establish a thinking Service particularly through the separate training structures, especially the Staff College. However, his personality clashed with that ideal. The result was that thought and doctrinal development were stifled by hierarchy. Thus, the RAF developed into an organisation that subscribed to a fairly narrow body of Trenchardian thought. While the RAF survived and developed a very strong culture that would see its personnel fight the Second World War with immense pride and courage, it also arrived in that conflict with some questionable strategies and equipment.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p.127. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society*. Waites, 'The effect of the First World War on class and status in England', p.31.

<sup>118</sup> These will be examined later.

## **PART III**

### **PROCESSES AND PRACTICES**

Part I established the importance of organisational culture to a military organisation such as the RAF while Part II demonstrated the important role of the leaders in setting the conditions for RAF espoused culture to emerge. Part III will examine some of the specific processes and practices that rapidly gave rise to a distinct RAF organisational culture. Chapter VI will examine the elements of training that were responsible for the indoctrination of new RAF recruits as well as the on-going training of senior RAF officers at the RAF Staff College. Chapter VII will examine RAF artefacts that set the conditions for the emergence of a distinct identity. Chapter VIII will explore how custom, ritual and tradition affected the development of the RAF. Part III will continue to consider elements of espoused culture but will also highlight the power of culture-in-action and its effect on RAF norms, attitudes, values and deeply held beliefs that had both positive and negative outcomes for the RAF.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Chapter IX will examine RAF architecture which had a strong influence on the organisation's culture.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**TRAINING THE NEW ENTRANTS:**  
**APPRENTICES AND THE RAF COLLEGE**

Trenchard's 1919 Memorandum advocated that an apprentice school be established at Halton and an RAF College at Cranwell.<sup>1</sup> Those two institutions acted as powerful RAF symbols of independence both to serving members of the RAF as well as to the outside world. In both the apprentice system and the RAF College, processes and practices emerged that played a significant role in developing the deeper values and beliefs within the institutions themselves as well as more broadly across the RAF. Francis referred to the speed at which the RAF developed 'a distinct culture and ethos' and that 'the RAF adopted a highly self-conscious aura of modernity'.<sup>2</sup> He pointed, in particular, to the contribution of the officer training at Cranwell and the apprentice system in the development of that culture and ethos.<sup>3</sup>

The RAF officer cadre that emerged from the RAF College was conservative but inculcated with an air-mindedness that underpinned the RAF's *raison-d'être*. The College was also partly responsible for the reinforcement of the aviator identity within the RAF given the centrality of flying skill in the syllabus of the College. Training RAF personnel separately was deemed essential by Trenchard in the 1919 Memorandum in inculcating an 'Air Force spirit'. In addition to moulding new entrants into the RAF system, the imposing buildings of these two institutions were

---

<sup>1</sup> In the 1919 Memorandum, Trenchard referred to Halton alone. However, the apprentice system comprised a number of schools based at various locations. Halton was, however, the flagship of the apprentice schools. Cmd. 467 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>2</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

also physical manifestations of RAF permanence and independence. Within the walls of these institutions, meanwhile, culture-in-action would emerge; distinct sub-cultures and counter-institutional activity would take place at both Cranwell and Halton.

The RAF College represented the RAF's method of demonstrating parity with the other services, thereby explaining its traditionalism. The apprentice scheme however, expressed the opposite. The apprentice scheme was a revolutionary development that helped underline the technical expertise of the RAF and affirm a deep sense of superiority over the ORs in the other services.

### **THE RAF APPRENTICE SYSTEM.**

The RAF apprentice system was a progressive innovation of the training of boys established under the RFC. The centre of gravity of the apprentice system was already at Halton, but apprentice schools also existed at Flowerdown, Cranwell, Ruislip, Cosford, Hereford, Locking and Eastchurch.<sup>4</sup> But it was not simply the establishment of an apprentice system that made such a significant contribution to RAF culture over the next 70 years, but the innovative manner in which it was done. Trenchard would later refer to Halton as having been an experiment as it departed from the existing Army and RN programmes both in terms of scale and the way the programme was run.<sup>5</sup>

When it was realised that a limiting factor hindering expansion in the First World War was a lack of trained aircraft mechanics, the RFC introduced Boys'

---

<sup>4</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.79. A full list of training schools in 1919 can be found at TNA Air 8/19 'Memorandum on the Shortage of Rank and File Personnel of the Royal Air Force, Annex B: Schools at Home'.

<sup>5</sup> HC Debate. 'Defence: Post-War Organization'. *Hansard*, HL Deb, 6 Dec, 1944 vol 134 cc131-89,

Training.<sup>6</sup> Adverts appeared in the May 1917 *Aeroplane Magazine* for boy service between the ages of 15 and 17 leading into four years in the colours followed by an additional four years in the reserve.<sup>7</sup> Initially boy mechanic training in the RFC was spread across different sites but mainly at Blandford and Farnborough. 400 boys enlisted at Farnborough in May 1917 while another cohort started at Blandford at about the same time with Blandford gaining a reputation for extremely poor conditions.<sup>8</sup> The disparate and dislocated boy's apprenticeships became more coherent following Brancker's decision to consolidate training at Halton.<sup>9</sup> On 20 June 1917, the Farnborough boys arrived at Halton and were greeted by Regimental Sergeant Major whose appearance, according to Ross:

...frightened us to the tips of our army boots. He was the first RSM of the Boys Section at Halton and scared us all by his tremendous military bearing and disciplinary demands'.<sup>10</sup>

A programme that involved severe discipline was established, was passed on to the RAF and remained its feature until it ended in the early 1990s.<sup>11</sup> The School of Technical Training at Halton initially involved no technical training as 'there was not an aircraft within miles, no aircraft parts, not a spanner or even a file'.<sup>12</sup> However, the boys were schooled in elements of military discipline, drill, PT and fatigues. Ross contended that the origins of RAF drill were established in the first Boys Section of the RFC by disciplinary NCOs who pooled different regimental drills

---

<sup>6</sup> RAF apprenticeships were not new when Trenchard outlined his plans in his 1919 Memorandum, however, the commonly held RAF narrative tends to overlook this. 'Short History of the RAF', AP 2003, p.53-54

<sup>7</sup> Armitage, 'The Origins of the Boys' Service in the RFC and the RAF', p.29.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.29.

<sup>10</sup> Ross, *The Royal Flying Corps Boy Service*, p.54.

<sup>11</sup> This is a common theme in personal accounts of apprentices held at the Trenchard Museum spanning this entire period.

<sup>12</sup> Ross, *The Royal Flying Corps Boy Service*, p.73.

from their respective cap badges in order to provide the Boys with a common drill standard.<sup>13</sup> Ross also wrote about the first apprentice songs being written as well as the formation of a band being formed and a Camp March being created.<sup>14</sup> These were the precursors to the band and songs books that were artefacts indicative of the strong culture that emerged in the apprentice system. Years later, they formed part of the entertainment for the apprentices that also reinforced their sense of belonging within their austere environment.<sup>15</sup>

Following the First World War, Sykes expressed the need for Boys' training to be continued.<sup>16</sup> However, the vigour with which Trenchard promoted the apprentice system resulted in him receiving the credit. It did not take long for apprentices to become known as 'Trenchard Brats'.<sup>17</sup> This is an example of unofficial culture-in-practice that made apprentices feel they had a direct link to CAS. It also amplified Trenchard's aura among a significant body of personnel by giving the impression that he, personally, was sponsoring them. The following highlights Trenchard's reason for placing such emphasis on Halton in the 1919 Memorandum:

The most difficult problem of all in the formation of this force is the training of the men. Demobilization has removed most of our best mechanics, and the efficiency of the squadrons to be formed depends on the most thorough instruction of those who are to take their place.<sup>18</sup>

There had also been some significant labour frictions during the First World War that made internalising as much aircraft engineering as possible an attractive

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.71.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.78.

<sup>15</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive Library *Original Halton Songs*, unaccessioned. It holds 74 of what it terms 'original Halton Songs' along other more broadly sung contemporary songs.

<sup>16</sup> TNA Air 8/6 Sykes, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire', p.16.

<sup>17</sup> The term 'Trenchard's Brats' was widely used see, for example Weston, *A Trenchard Brat*.

<sup>18</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

proposition. Indeed, Brancker advised 'not recruiting from the classes who are protected by the trade cards'.<sup>19</sup> Trenchard's aim was to:

...enlist the bulk of those belonging to long apprenticeship trades as boys, who will undergo a course of three years' training before being passed into the ranks. With a preliminary training of the nature contemplated and the practice of their trade during their subsequent service, it is confidently anticipated that these mechanics on passing to civil life will have no difficulty in securing recognition as skilled tradesmen. This is an important consideration since any tendency for the Air Force to be regarded as a blind alley occupation, would be fatal'.<sup>20</sup>

Halton was conceived as a training programme but soon became a tangible demonstration of RAF technical pre-eminence in the armed forces. This was a source of great pride for the ORs in the RAF who began to place themselves socially above the 'Brown Jobs' in the Army and especially the 'PBI' (Poor Bloody Infantry).<sup>21</sup> Entry to the apprentice school was highly competitive.<sup>22</sup> Bishop wrote that 'the high standard at entry meant that many of the mechanics servicing the aeroplanes would be educationally equal, and superior in mechanical skill, to the men flying them'.<sup>23</sup> The Highest performing boys would then receive either rapid promotion to corporal or be commissioned and attend Cranwell.<sup>24</sup> It will be seen that as well as creating a cadre of highly trained mechanics, the apprentice system

---

<sup>19</sup> Macmillan, *Sefton Brancker*, pp.147-150.

<sup>20</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>21</sup> For example: Emm T *Tales of an Ancient Airman*, *Trenchard Museum, Hand written personal account (n.d.)*. *Trenchard Museum Archive, unaccessioned, p.17*. Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered*. Porter, *One of Trenchard's Brats*. Rawlinson, *Chronicle of a Trenchard's Brat, 24<sup>th</sup> Entry by 565663*.

<sup>22</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'. TNA AIR2/129. Air Ministry Pamphlet 'Entry of Boy Mechanics to the Royal Air Force', October 1919 outlined the entry requirements for boy mechanics that was already underway when Trenchard wrote 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force': see Larkin Min Gp Capt, 'The RAF Halton Aircraft Apprentice Scheme', *Old Haltonians*, <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/news/Halton%20Story.pdf>, accessed 21 Oct 2017. For original suggestions for admission policy see Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Suggestions Regarding the Entry of Boys as Mechanics in the Royal Air Force', 12 May 1919, unaccessioned.

<sup>23</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*, pp.33-34.

<sup>24</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.



also began a movement of increasing meritocracy which had far reaching cultural consequences for the RAF.

## **Recruitment**

The RAF wanted candidates who had 'received a good general education such as will enable them to undertake with profit the course of technical and general education included in the apprenticeship training'<sup>25</sup> Local Education Authorities were contacted to help promote the scheme in 1919 with selection held in London and 14 other centres around the country. The first intake of 235 boys began training at Cranwell in January 1920 while permanent Halton buildings were erected.<sup>26</sup> The vision was for the boys to complete an apprenticeship in only 3 years, compared to the usual 5 that it took in the civilian world, in order for them to then form 40% of the RAF groundcrew and 60% of its skilled tradesmen.<sup>27</sup> Trenchard later articulated the importance of this training in defence of proposed Geddes cuts. In his mind, the plan satisfied both the need to meet the demand for mechanics and also to help build an 'Air Force spirit'.

From the point of view of the future efficiency of the R.A.F. the system of boy training is vital. Under the system we exercise considerable control over enlistment by obtaining the large majority of the boys on the individual recommendation of local education authorities throughout the country and have charge of them for three years during the most impressionable age between 15 and 19½. We can thus improve them both mentally and physically, and can imbue them with an esprit de corps and pride in their service, which will not only be of the greatest value during their subsequent career in the R.A.F. but will make them better citizens when they return to civil life. If, on the other hand we rely on the enlistment of skilled men, assuming we could obtain them, they would have already been imbibed with the spirit of trade unionism, which, in its present form at all events, is neither

---

<sup>25</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive (loose document - not accessioned), 'Regulations in Regard to the entry and Training of Aircraft Apprentices', Royal Air Force, AM Pamphlet 15. 4th edition, August 1927.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, *Halton and the Apprentice System*, p.11.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

conducive to keen endeavour nor easily compatible with the necessary discipline of the fighting services.<sup>28</sup>

The aim was to attract boys of good character and the recruiting drive unashamedly targeted their parents by offering a high quality of education. By 1927, interest in the scheme was such that Candidate Porter, who would later become Air Marshal Sir Kenneth Porter, was surprised at how stiff the competition was to gain a place on the 17<sup>th</sup> Entry.<sup>29</sup>

Bishop wrote that 5000 applicants responded to the initial adverts for the scheme and noted that 'they were mostly boys from the lower middle and upper working classes who saw the RAF as a means of advancement and a gateway to the intoxicating world of aviation'.<sup>30</sup> The Character Book supports Bishop's demographic assessment; apprentices largely came from the upper echelons of the working class as well as lower middle class backgrounds.<sup>31</sup> Examination of trades of fathers of the apprentices in the RAF College Cranwell Character Book shows only one gentleman with the majority of the fathers being either small businessmen (butchers, bakers, tobacconists, confectioner and a draper), officer workers (civil servants, clerks, registrars), middle management (Assistant Manager estates, GPO Officer, Supervisor Mechanical Engineer, Insurance Broker), non-commissioned and commissioned officers, commercial travellers and farmers.<sup>32</sup> There were very few apprentices from working class backgrounds; all of those according to the Character

---

<sup>28</sup> TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Section 4, Appendix to 'Memorandum on the Recommendations of the Committee on National Expenditure Prepared by The Air Ministry for Mr Churchill's Cabinet Committee', p.12.

<sup>29</sup> Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered*, p.1.

<sup>30</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*, pp.33-34.

<sup>31</sup> RAF College Museum, CRN/D/2011/71, RAF College Character Book.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Book were skilled working classes: a joiner, a waggon lifter and two chauffeurs.<sup>33</sup> Before the First World War the class system was highly complex with many complicated stratifications existing between upper, middle and working classes. A common delineation between upper working classes and lower middle classes, for instance, was not based on income but whether the employee worked with his or her hands.<sup>34</sup> According to Waites, that class system simplified between 1910 and 1920 when a three-tiered class system emerged.<sup>35</sup> However, it is clear that there was a significant class differential between those boys at Halton and the boys recruited to Cranwell. It will be seen later that the RAF actively targeted the best public schools in the country when choosing boys to become cadets at the RAF College. Therefore, apprentices selected for the RAF College were from a noticeably lower social background compared with their colleagues. Thus, it will be seen that Trenchard's plan to send the highest performing apprentices to the College at Cranwell and the later moves to give apprentices opportunities to transfer to flying duties represented the innovative beginning of an officially sponsored means of social mobility that was rare in the services and, indeed, in contemporary British society.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Waites used the social position of the clerk to outline this. Waites, 'The Effect of the First World War on Class and Status in England', p.45.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. For additional material on inter-war aspects of the British class system see Robert, Snape 'The New Leisure, Voluntarism and Social Reconstruction in Inter-War Britain', *Contemporary British History*, Vol 29 Iss 1 (2015), pp.1-33. See also Cannadine, *Class in Britain*.

## Processes and Practices

A good account of the life at Halton in its early days can be gleaned from articles, orders and personal accounts.<sup>36</sup> Known to apprentices as The System, apprenticeship involved a short sharp shock to the new arrival.<sup>37</sup> Like most arrivals into a military system, the apprentice was exposed to drill, marching on camp, communal living in a barrack room, cleaning or 'bull' of the barracks, regimented arrangement of personal effects and group punishment for the errors. This lasted for three years and, in the 1920's, the suspension rate was high.<sup>38</sup> The severity of the system is epitomised by an account with drawings in the Trenchard Museum that highlights a punishment ceremony involving 1000 apprentices paraded in order to witness a corporal beating of a boy who had stolen food.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, The System would be considered brutalising by today's standards. Such was the hardship, Group Captain W.T.H. Nichols, who spent much of the Second World War in a Japanese POW Camp said 'after three years of *that*, the N\*\*\* [contemporary derogatory term for Japanese] could not shake me'.<sup>40</sup> There were, doubtless, many boys who were adversely affected by the hardship of The System, however personal accounts are remarkably positive about the overall experience. Indeed,

---

<sup>36</sup> 'No 1 School, Halton. The Technical Training School for Aircraft Apprentices (R.A.F)', *Flight*, No 771 (No 40 Vol XV), (October 4 1923), <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1923/1923%20-%2000612.html?search=halton>, accessed 26 January 2016. Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Standing Orders for Apprentices' Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927'. See also Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered*, p.7. James also referred to the social complexities of the Apprentices, James, *The Paladins*, p.110.

<sup>37</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.102.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix I – F540 RAF Halton copy in Trenchard Museum Archive.

<sup>39</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive unaccessioned. Drawing is by W G Rogers, apprentice on 23<sup>rd</sup> Entry Jan 1931-Dec 1933. Descriptions of similar events by Kimber and are also in the Trenchard Museum Archive by Kimber (possibly from the same event). Additionally, a further unaccessioned Trenchard Museum Archive personal account by TG Mahaddie details a public caning.

<sup>40</sup> That referred to his time on the 9<sup>th</sup> Entry at Flowerdown. Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.107.

the hardship appears to have had a unifying effect. It should be noted, however, that the accounts available are only from those who successfully passed their apprenticeships. There is no apparent archival material that exposes the brutalising effect of the system on those that were suspended.

Life at Halton was all consuming. Apprentices had free time only on Saturdays from mid-day until 2100 hours and on Sundays from after church parade until 2100 hours.<sup>41</sup> They were only allowed off the camp on Saturdays and Sundays and restricted to a radius of 5 miles and were only allowed to smoke outside the camp with a smoking 'chit' at age 18.<sup>42</sup> The Halton Camp routine published in Standing Orders 1927 gives an idea of the standard day for both apprentices and the ORs.<sup>43</sup> By today's standards both groups had limited freedom, although the apprentices were kept on a tighter leash than the airmen. The room inspection routine was probably the most shocking initial experience for a boy arriving from a normal home environment. All clothing was set out in regulation manner in open cabinets as Fig 4 demonstrates.

---

<sup>41</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.41.

<sup>42</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Standing Orders for Apprentices' Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927', p.16. For restrictions see also Tams, *A Trenchard Brat*, p.31.

<sup>43</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Standing Orders for Apprentices' Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927', p.23.



**Fig 4 - McDonald bed at Halton 'made up' for inspection in the morning.**

An apprentice 'Macdonald' bed was 'made up' for inspection in the morning by reducing it in size by sliding the slightly smaller half of the bed under the other half. The 'biscuits' that formed the mattress were then arranged on the reduced bed size in regulation manner. The reverse process was conducted when 'making down' the bed to sleep upon at night.<sup>44</sup>

The Halton Magazine in 1939 shows that there was time for some fun within the programme and also that the editor appears to have a genuine interest in the

---

<sup>44</sup> For more detailed description see: Trenchard Museum Archive, Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered*, p.2 and Trenchard Museum Archive, Porter, *One of Trenchard's Brats*, p.2. For the daily routine see Appendix II.

activities that he was set.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, the anonymous poem *Barrack Room Thoughts* from 1932 includes the following verse:

But money does not matter here – friendship takes its place.  
We face our daily duties with a cheery smiling face.  
Halton life is wonderful, although we grouse of “binds,”  
We do our work and have our fun and rest with peaceful minds.<sup>46</sup>

Apprentices were allowed to hold dances in their dining halls and institutes at which they were required to wear regulation service dress, however, perhaps disappointingly for them orders dictated that ‘no females are allowed to attend the A/As dances’.<sup>47</sup>

The Halton Magazine was published from Spring 1924 until the Second World War.<sup>48</sup> It gives an insight into the breadth of both espoused culture as well as culture-in-action that emerged at the Station. Articles written by, and for, apprentices include a wide variety of subject matter: engineering and service related subjects, popular subject material, sports, poetry, cartoons, book reviews and information about entertainment and events on the Station.<sup>49</sup> The magazine reflects that the education received by the boys was broad and not limited purely to engineering.

Apprentices were part of formal and informal hierarchies and practices.<sup>50</sup> The staff/student divide was very clear from most of the personal accounts examined. Similarly, there existed official apprentice/apprentice stratification

---

<sup>45</sup> ‘An Aircraft Apprentice’s Day’, *The Halton Magazine*, Vol XI, No 2, (Christmas 1939), p.22.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Barrack Room Thoughts’, *The Halton Magazine*, *The Daedalus* (Christmas 1932), p.31.

<sup>47</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, ‘Standing Orders for Apprentices’ Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927’, p.23.

<sup>48</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.116.

<sup>49</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive holdings include a full set of Halton Magazines.

<sup>50</sup> For useful theoretical understanding of formal and informal hierarchies see Kirke’s ‘Army Organizational Culture’ model in *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.33.

between the different intakes. Kimber wrote of a Leading Apprentice cubicle in the barrack rooms of the lower intakes.<sup>51</sup> The Leading Apprentice from a higher intake had official powers over subordinate apprentices.

Despite the austere environment and the very formal stratification that existed between the different intakes as well as between staff and apprentices, informal and unspoken rules existed that bonded these different groupings. These occurred particularly during recreational activity or during intermissions between the more formal aspects of training. Out of the informal and unspoken rules, a rich humour and language emerged that is a clear indication of the depth of the culture-in-action in the apprentice system. Despite very distinct formal distance between various groups, it is clear from magazines and personal accounts that they were bound by a common purpose. This highlights the importance of unwritten rules and informal bonds identified by Kirke.<sup>52</sup> Informal structures and processes, including slang (erk, brat), humour and songs, emerged between apprentices and staff would play out to strengthen this sub-culture, in line with Giddens' structuration theory, that helped external manifestations of culture, values and deep beliefs to emerge and become reinforced. The resulting sub-culture was marked, strong and very clear in the archives. Taylor referred to the 'Halton Tradition' as follows:

As old as the RAF itself, Halton has inspired a strong and creative tradition of many facets which refuses to be bound by rank, time or service. It is difficult to define that tradition, which is in part the sense of belonging to a club or society...In most ex-Haltonians there is gratitude: there is pleasure: there is pride.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.39.

<sup>52</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.33.

<sup>53</sup> Taylor, *Halton and the Apprentice System*, p.29.



Hobbies and leisure activities were wide and varied and included sport, going to the cinema, billiards.<sup>54</sup> Some were closely interlinked with activities on the camp at Halton such as taking part in 'shows', practicing for the various bands, speaking in the Debating Society or activities such as making amateur film plays.<sup>55</sup> A curious development at Halton was the development of pipe bands which became a part of official life and seemed to feature in many aspects of life such as during drill, marching around the camp and also for official functions.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the Halton Light Aeroplane Club saw apprentices designing aircraft such as the Clarke Cheetah and the HAC3 Meteor.<sup>57</sup> Apprentices taking part in such activities engaged in informal structures as they worked and played alongside serving officers either from the staff or from the wider station community at Halton.

Such was the feeling of association with Halton, an Old Boys Association (OBA) was formed with a 'two-fold object of keeping in touch with one another ex-Aircraft Apprentices from Halton, and of looking after their interests throughout their Service career'.<sup>58</sup> Originally established as the Old Haltonian Association it was changed to be known as the OBA to incorporate all ex-apprentices who had taken part in other apprentice locations.<sup>59</sup> The OBA briefly published its own magazine called the *Daedalus* from Summer 1927 until November 1928 when it joined forces with the Halton magazine. The *Daedalus* included articles, poems, obituaries, and

---

<sup>54</sup> 'An Aircraft Apprentice's Day', *The Halton Magazine*, p.22.

<sup>55</sup> 'Suggested Amateur Film Play', *The Halton Magazine* (Christmas 1932), p.27.

<sup>56</sup> In 1939 'An Aircraft Apprentice's Day' described apprentices being marched back to duties in the afternoon. *An Aircraft Apprentice's Day*, p.22. The emotional importance of the pipe bands is clear in 'Mater's Day at Halton' *The Halton Magazine. The Daedalus*, (Christmas 1932), p.41. See also IWM Audio Files Ellwood Catalogue 3167 Reel 3 8:40.

<sup>57</sup> The Clark Cheetah was an air worthy aircraft. Taylor, *Halton and the Apprentice Scheme*, p.14.

<sup>58</sup> 'R.A.F. Old Boys' Association', *The Halton Magazine*, Vol III No 3 (Xmas 1926), p.67.

<sup>59</sup> 'Editorial', *The Halton Magazine*, Vol III No3 (Xmas 1926), p.5.

accounts of current life through the RAF aimed at maintaining links between the ex-apprentices. The articles also give an insight into the lived experience of the ex-apprentices and provide firm evidence of how deeply the experience at Halton affected the boys.<sup>60</sup>

The apprentices wore a service pattern uniform in order to make them easily recognisable from the ORs given that some were not far removed in age from the regulars also at Halton, the uniform gained some delineating adornments. A brass badge was worn on the left sleeve and authorised by Air Ministry Order 17 April 1919.<sup>61</sup> Metal numbers were attached to the hat/beret badge denoting the wing to which the apprentice belonged and different coloured hatbands were introduced to denote the wing they belonged.<sup>62</sup> Halton orders highlighted that 'unauthorised alterations to clothing are forbidden' yet it was commonplace for apprentices to 'adjust' their uniform and caps.<sup>63</sup> Such counter-institutional expression within a uniformed organisation is an important aspect of culture-in-action and will be discussed in chapter VIII.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Iconic First Engineering Task**

The indoctrination of a military recruit often involves executing tasks that have little actual application or purpose but become rites of passage. Apprentices were required to 'bull' barrack blocks, conduct drill, maintain regulation standard personal spaces and conduct themselves as many other basic military recruits from

---

<sup>60</sup> For an example of poetry, see: Anon, 'Barrack room Thoughts', *The Daedalus* (Christmas 1932), p.31. For an insight into life including some linguistic oddities see Halton see 'Other Annoyances', *The Daedalus* (Summer 1927), p.18.

<sup>61</sup> Taylor, *Halton and the Apprentice System*, p.12-13.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Standing Orders for Apprentices' Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927', p.15.

<sup>64</sup> The significance of uniform alteration will be discussed in Chapter VIII.

any service would need to do. However, the first engineering task that the apprentices were presented with took on special significance. It was a path along which every apprentice would need to embark to belong to an elite team. Deere, a former apprentice, wrote that it came in the form of 'a piece of cast iron and a lump of brass of roughly cubical shape, with sides measuring something over an inch'.<sup>65</sup>



**Fig 5 - The brass cube and steel block: Exercise Number One**

The apprentice would use all the issue tools to produce a one-inch brass cube that could pass through a machined hole in the piece of iron without rattling. Deere speculated about the somewhat pointless nature of the task and the:

...whereabouts of thirty-five thousand brass cubes, which perhaps are buried somewhere in the area. It would have been sensible if each Entry's finished cubes were then melted down to be re-cast in time for the next entry<sup>66</sup>

Kimber referred to how this particular rite of passage:

---

<sup>65</sup> Deere, *A Brat's Progress*, p.28. See also Trenchard Museum Archive, Blacklock, *Half a Life, Half Remembered*, p.7.

<sup>66</sup> Deere, *A Brat's Progress*, p.28.

...brought training and skill in the use of the hacksaw, cold chisel, hammer, files of different cutting surfaces and marking-out tools. At the same time, and without being aware of it, we were unconsciously being introduced to the disciplines of patience, self-control and tenacity'.<sup>67</sup>

This task taught the apprentices self-discipline and allowed them to explore all of their tools and also introduced a knowledge of tolerances which is an important part of many trades' apprenticeships. Such was the iconic association of this task among the apprentices, it formed the basis of a sculpture known as 'The Tribute' that was unveiled by HM Queen Elizabeth II on 31 October 1997 at Halton as a lasting memorial to the 35 000 successful candidates who passed through the apprentice system.<sup>68</sup> It is a strong delineating symbol of the apprentice sub-culture that bonded apprentices throughout their Service lives.

## **Humour**

Humour is a very strong trait of the Service. It is often dark but it also demonstrates how informal structures exist alongside formal ones. Humour can often transcend rank and social class barriers within the RAF. For instance Boyle, as Marshal of the RAF, in his otherwise serious foreword to Hering's book, chose to make reference to the apocryphal airman who thought that the RAF Motto, *Per Ardua ad Astra* meant 'by hard work to the cinema'.<sup>69</sup> That someone of that rank should choose to lightly mock the organisation's motto is indicative of irreverent RAF humour.

Similar manifestations of humour are clearly evident throughout the Halton and the Old Boys' magazines as well as in the personal accounts held in the

---

<sup>67</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.46.

<sup>68</sup> The *Tribute* statue is located at RAF Halton.

<sup>69</sup> Many RAF Station cinemas were called 'The Astra'. Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p vii.

archives. The 1933 *Halton Magazine* shows an example of irreverent humour whilst also highlighting apprentice irritation about smoking restrictions.

Officer (pointing to cigarette): "Is that yours?"  
A/A on fatigues: "No sir! Not if you saw it first."<sup>70</sup>

The magazine readership included Station Commander, staff and apprentices and demonstrated that humour transcended barriers of rank and also that it was acceptable to the hierarchy that the apprentices had a slightly rebellious side. The poem *The "Old Boy"*, meanwhile, shows that the humour remained with the old boys after they left:

The ex-apprentice quits the School,  
Where life, he thought, was "ard and crool,"  
And, filled with vitamins and pep,  
Enters the world with jaunty step,  
To taste that glory justly due  
To L.A.C. (or A.C.2).<sup>71</sup>

Further evidence that humour crossed the staff/apprentice divide was evident in Borg's book *Stop Cryin' in the Rear Rank*.<sup>72</sup> He referred to an apprentice passing out parade in which following the official march past, the apprentices reformed and, dressed in home-made top hats and tails, marched past the crowd, tapping canes in unison and performing a dance. They then proceeded to the corner of the parade square and formed up to pull a howitzer that 'for many years had been anchored by rusty steel chains to shackles embedded in the concrete'. Having previously partially sawn through the chains and oiled the axles, when they pulled in unison, the Howitzer broke free, trundled across the parade ground and passed through two walls of the gymnasium. Despite the material damage, and in front of the crowd

---

<sup>70</sup> Cartoon in *The Halton Magazine. The Daedalus* (Summer 1933), p.55.

<sup>71</sup> 'The "Old Boy"', *The Daedalus* (Summer 1927), p.12.

<sup>72</sup> Borg, *Stop Cryin' in the Rear Rank*.

watching the passing out parade, 'all the officers and the Air Chief Marshal were laughing and cheering the lads on'.<sup>73</sup> Humour is usually shared and is, therefore, one of the important contributors to structuration as it helps reinforce acceptance of changing cultural norms within a culture. Humour forms part of RAF culture-in-action underlines both the presence and importance of informal structures.<sup>74</sup>

### **Importance of Halton to the RAF.**

In 1921, the total cost per apprentice for three years was £237 per annum, including maintenance of land and buildings but excluding capital cost.<sup>75</sup> The boys were paid at a rate of 1/6d per diem.<sup>76</sup> This was expensive and exceeded fees for an elite public school education.<sup>77</sup> Thus, Halton came under intense scrutiny during the first Geddes assessment of the RAF. The following letter shows the deep concern of the Air Staff and CAS that Halton was likely to come under further attack and highlights the importance of Halton to the Service:

The C.A.S. is quite confident that the result of the Geddes Committee's Report will be entirely favourable to the R.A.F. At the same time he would like you to be prepared for an attack on Halton, from the point of view of its expense...The C.A.S. is very strongly of opinion that Halton, and the system of enlisting and training recruits for which it stands, is essential to the real efficiency of the R.A.F. The C.A.S. has no faith whatever in the assumption that it is possible for the R.A.F. to enlist its skilled personnel in the same way in which the Army and Navy enlist their personnel. The R.A.F. requirements are too different. The R.A.F. require the finished product ...efficiency is absolutely essential, and efficiency can only be obtained by highly skilled

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Ch 2, p.1.

<sup>74</sup> For more on informal structures see Kirke Red Coat, Green Machine.

<sup>75</sup> TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Geddes Committee Memoranda Air Ministry 'Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure', October 1921, Section V, p.31.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. See also See also TNA Air 8/42 CAS Archives, Section 4, Appendix to 'Memorandum on the Recommendations of the Committee on National Expenditure', prepared by The Air Ministry for Mr Churchill's Cabinet Committee, p.12.

<sup>77</sup> 'Effective Striking Strength', *Hansard* (HC Deb 25 February 1926 vol 192 cc820-824), [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0\\_19260225\\_HOC\\_402](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402), accessed 19 May 2015

personnel, which, in its turn, can only be obtained under existing conditions by the system of which Halton is the embodiment.<sup>78</sup>

Trenchard and the Air Staff's submission to Geddes was unequivocal about the value of Halton and expressed both economic and the wider value of the system:

The original decision to adopt a system of boy training was not based on the high rate of wages prevailing in civil life at the time but on the conviction that the highly skilled mechanic who had passed through a civil apprenticeship would always command wages which, combined with the other advantages of civil employment such as freedom of movement and avoidance of service discipline, would, except in a comparatively few cases, outweigh any advantages offered by the R.A.F.<sup>79</sup>

The report went on to say that: 'There is no reasonable doubt that the abandonment of the scheme at this stage would strike a fatal blow at the future efficiency of the R.A.F.'<sup>80</sup>. It recommended:

- (a) that skilled men could not be enlisted in anything like the numbers required:-
- (b) that even assuming they could be enlisted there would be a large capital loss by the abandonment of Halton and no compensating economy, but rather the reverse in recurrent expenditure;
- (c) that, even if skilled men could be enlisted and economy result, the curtailment of boy training to the number which can be accommodated at Cranwell would have a disastrous effect on the future of the R.A.F.<sup>81</sup>

CAS' defence of Halton to the Geddes Committee was, ultimately successful, although some economies were demanded. The careful articulation by the Air Staff

---

<sup>78</sup> TNA AIR8/42 CAS Archives, Vol 3 Letter from Air Staff to Sec State, dated Dec 3 1921.

<sup>79</sup> TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Geddes Committee Memoranda Air Ministry 'Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure', October 1921, Section V, p.29. For more detail on the presentations made in the defence of Halton see also TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Section 4, Appendix to 'Memorandum on the Recommendations of the Committee on National Expenditure', prepared by The Air Ministry for Mr Churchill's Cabinet Committee, pp.9-10.

<sup>80</sup> TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Geddes Committee Memoranda Air Ministry 'Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure', October 1921, Section V, p.31.

<sup>81</sup> See also TNA Air 8/42 CAS Archives, Section 4, Appendix to 'Memorandum on the Recommendations of the Committee on National Expenditure', prepared by The Air Ministry for Mr Churchill's Cabinet Committee, p1.3.

ensured that the principle of the apprentice system was understood and vindicated on economic grounds by the Geddes Committee. However, attacks on Halton would continue as they did on the RAF more widely. In 1926, Sir Frank Nelson complained, to the House of Commons, that the cost of the apprentice system at £230 per annum was well in excess of the amount that he was paying for his children to attend Winchester at a cost of £60-70 per term.<sup>82</sup> He pointed out that 7000 teas had been served to the parents of the apprentices on Families' Day and also believed that the pay of 1s per day was excessive.<sup>83</sup> This was despite his admission that Halton was delivering probably the best apprentice training in the world.<sup>84</sup> The Under-Secretary for State, Major Sir Philip Sassoon's reply was robust:

The hon. Member for Stroud asked me a few questions about Halton. So far as I can remember, one of the questions was the disproportionate amount of staff as compared with air apprentices there. He will, of course, remember that Halton is a very special school. There are so many highly technical and various schemes of training going on at once that those can only be carried out by very small classes. It is also in process of expansion, and at the end of this year there will probably be 3,000 apprentices there. He will be the first to realise that it would not be fair to compare a school of that kind with an ordinary public school, where the curriculum is less variegated.<sup>85</sup>

Trenchard's vigorous defence demonstrates the extreme importance of Halton to the RAF. It was essential for producing suitably qualified personnel but it was also an essential part of Trenchard's plan to develop the 'Air Force spirit' and appeared to be recognised as the best apprentice system in the country.

---

<sup>82</sup> 'Effective Striking Strength', *Hansard*, cc820-824,

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*



## Silos

The creation of apprentices was not all positive and resulted in frictions and cultural silos emerging in the RAF. As the first apprentices went into the wider RAF, they began to mix with, and overtake, other personnel who had not been through the scheme. Taylor attributed the nickname 'Brat' having its origins in existing tradesmen finding them to be like a 'troublesome child'.<sup>86</sup> The friction between apprentices as they worked with existing tradesmen was also highlighted by Lawrence in *The Mint*: 'the kid is clever with words, and has passed out L.A.C. from school: the old hand can hardly spell, and will be for ever an A.C.2. He teaches his better ever so grumpily'.<sup>87</sup>

Apprentices were also inculcated with a sense that they were superior which could ruffle feathers of their superiors as the poem *The "Old Boy"* highlights:

The ex-apprentice runs his Flight;  
He puts the Sergeant Major right;  
With self-assurance hard to match  
He keeps the Air Force up to scratch,  
Well knowing that, if he did not,  
The bally show would run to pot.<sup>88</sup>

This sense of expertise in the hangar underlined the technical attitude of the RAF and reinforced the sense of superiority over ORs in the other services.

## Social Mobility

Bishop wrote that: 'the path from the NAAFI to the officers' mess was wider and more frequently trodden than any of the other services, and many a rigger and fitter ended up as a pilot'.<sup>89</sup> The RAF was not alone in this increase in social mobility in the inter-war period. Romans highlighted that RN recruitment to the

---

<sup>86</sup> Taylor, Halton and the Apprentice Scheme, p.13.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, pp.195-6.

<sup>88</sup> 'The "Old Boy"', *The Daedalus*, p.12.

<sup>89</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*, p.34.

officer cadre was increasingly meritocratic due to political pressure between 1919-1939.<sup>90</sup> The publicity material aimed at parents entitled *Starting a Career Second to None* highlights broad social mobility developments that were in place by 1942.<sup>91</sup> However, there is clear evidence that the institutionalised social mobility in the RAF started earlier for apprentices and was particularly fruitful for the boys from the apprentice system. Initially this path was limited to 6 apprentices per year attending the RAF College, however, during the expansion and Second World War years, a significant number of apprentices was selected for aircrew duties that further enhanced social mobility within the RAF for apprentices. The following statistics demonstrate the extent of institutionalised social mobility of the apprentices in the RAF: over 20% of all 50 000 apprentices who went through the scheme were commissioned. Of those about half achieved the rank of squadron leader or higher. Over 100 ex-apprentices achieved air rank. Of the rest 80% became Senior NCOs. In the mid-1980s there were 5 serving ex-apprentice air marshals including Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Keith Williamson and the Chief Engineer Air Marshal Sir Eric Dunn. 42 ex-apprentices were listed in 'Men of the Battle of Britain'.<sup>92</sup>

The Gallantry medals awarded to ex-apprentices also highlight that many served with distinction in combat and flying roles: Victoria Cross 1, George Cross 6, George Medals 6, Military Cross 2, Distinguished Flying Medals and Distinguished

---

<sup>90</sup> This was for the Executive branch. Romans noted a subtly different background for the Engineering Branch. Elinor Romans, 'Selection and Early Career Education of Executive Officers in the Royal Navy c 1902-1939', p.32 and p.35.

<sup>91</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, Hammerton, *A.B.C of the R.A.F*, p.10, Apprenticeship in the R.A.F. See also TNA AIR 10/1112 *Starting a Career Second to None* which provides a good insight into the 'offer' to parents in 1940s.

<sup>92</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Trenchard's Brats', Information sheet.

Flying Crosses 500, Military Medal 3, Distinguished Flying Medal 249.<sup>93</sup> In all, 2002 decorations were awarded to ex-apprentices and they received 2400 Mentions in Dispatches.<sup>94</sup>

The wider effects of this institutionalised social mobility are interesting. Bishop claimed that RAF ORs were less deferential to their officers than the Army whose ORs came from the 'uneducated working class'.<sup>95</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker's contemporary Second World War observations support this more relaxed relationship.<sup>96</sup> However, it is too simplistic to ascribe this entirely to the apprentice scheme. The emphasis on the RAF being a technical service and the more relaxed atmosphere that surrounded the aviator identity were doubtless also significant factors in the emergence of this more relaxed relationship. But the novel apprentice system had successfully attracted a demographic with aspirations but insufficient financial means for what amounted to a top-quality equivalent of a private school education. This helped with recruitment. Sherbrooke-Walker noted that, 'as far as "Other Ranks" were concerned, the Air Force appealed to, and secured, a disproportionate number of the intelligent type of man'.<sup>97</sup> The standards required for entry to the apprentice scheme were high. Thus, an officer on a squadron would meet and work alongside intelligent ORs and the qualification gap between them was far less marked than, for example, between a subaltern and a private in the

---

<sup>93</sup> Trenchard Museum, *Trenchard's Brats*, Information sheet. With similar statistics see also Taylor, *Halton and the Apprentice System*, p.29 and Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.94.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*, p.34.

<sup>96</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.6.

<sup>97</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.9.

Infantry. There was, however, still a gap between the type of schools they were likely to have attended.<sup>98</sup>

Lawrence articulated how the RAF prized the spread of technically minded airmen:

The Air Ministry recognises a rightness in our worship of the technical engineer, by promoting sergeant or sergeant-pilot the best men from the ranks: those who have understanding of the souls of engines, and find their poetry in the smooth tick-over. They form our aristocracy of merit.<sup>99</sup>

Deliberate commissioning from these ranks engendered a revolution in social mobility for the era that was not common place in the Edwardian Army where those commissioned from the ranks before the First World War were almost entirely sent to 'dead-end jobs'.<sup>100</sup> Whilst sending six apprentices as cadets at the RAF College was a small beginning, the apprentice system effectively created a career fast track from within the ranks that would see proliferation of the technical knowledge and understanding of the importance of maintaining engineering standards throughout the commissioned ranks.<sup>101</sup> The Cranwell College Character Book shows, for instance, that Dawson, the first apprentice to commission, did not end up in a dead-end position. Educated at Sunderland Technical College, he achieved the rank of group captain in 1941 and was appointed CBE in 1943.<sup>102</sup> Both the Character Book and the RAF Cranwell Cadet Register of 1931 entry show that the system of sending apprentices to Cranwell worked well with apprentices achieving impressive

---

<sup>98</sup> The interwar norm for RAF College cadets to be from a public school background is clear from the Character Book and will be discussed later in this chapter. RAF Cranwell College Archive, CRN/D/2011/71, Character Book.

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, p.195.

<sup>100</sup> Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.29-32.

<sup>101</sup> The numbers of aircrew and air rank officers who had an apprentice background was a significant factor in this and will be discussed later.

<sup>102</sup> RAF Cranwell College Archive, CRN/D/2011/71, Character Book, Entry dated 26/8/20.

final rankings and pursuing fulfilling careers.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the apprentice scheme initiated a gradual move towards meritocracy in the RAF.

The system also offered apprentices an opportunity to become airmen aircrew following training thereby enriching the non-commission aircrew cadre with a deep understanding of aviation engineering.

## **Conclusion**

In a speech in The House of Lords on 6 December 1944 Trenchard referred to the impact that the spirit that emerged at Halton:

I feel justified in saying that the experiment has richly justified itself. There is no doubt at all, in my opinion, that Halton and the Halton spirit have been a pillar of strength to the Royal Air Force all over the world. The Halton-trained men have provided the nucleus on which the great expansion of the Air Force was centred. They have set and maintained an extraordinarily high standard of efficiency. You only have to look at the promotions and the honours gained. Over 1,000 high honours have been gained, and a large number of those men are very senior Air Vice-Marshals and Air Commodores, running the highest technical offices in the Air Force. Surely the efficient maintenance of aircraft has also been one of the outstanding features of this war and that has been made possible by the Halton training of our men.<sup>104</sup>

The evidence from the archive is that the Halton experiment did, indeed, have a profound cultural impact upon the RAF. It provided the very solid basis of technical excellence that facilitated RAF expansion necessary to fight the Second World War. However, it provided more than that. The harsh regime instilled grit and determination into a group of very young boys at a most impressionable stage of life. The loyalty towards the RAF as well as their colleagues and even Halton itself was immensely deep. Earl Mountbatten underlined the cultural effect in the review of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Entry:

---

<sup>103</sup> For example: RAF Cranwell College Archive, CRN/D/2011/72 Cadet Register, 1931 Entry. 1<sup>st</sup> (Pope), 3<sup>rd</sup> (Robinson), 5<sup>th</sup> (Patmore) and 6<sup>th</sup> (Porter). The success rates of the apprentices who continued on to the RAF College will be examined later in this chapter in more detail.

<sup>104</sup> 'Defence: Post-War Organization', *Hansard*, cc131-89

...one thing is absolutely true, the Battle of Burma was won here in the classrooms and workshops of Halton: won not just by the knowledge and skill that your maintenance crews produced, it was won by the spirit that Halton produce.<sup>105</sup>

Kimber wrote of the deep feeling that the 'System' inculcated:

Halton might have been located anywhere. It was never a place but an experience. It was an anvil on which a generation of young boys were forged and hammered out to their manhood; shaped and tempered to meet the demands and the holocaust of war. We came to Halton as callow, young boys and left it as men...When we lift our heads with pride and say 'I was there', remember those who forged us and inscribed within us a meaning of service and tradition.<sup>106</sup>

Bishop wrote that: 'Trenchard was as proud of Halton as he was of Cranwell.

He was aware that by engineering a new class of educated other ranks for the first time in British military history, he was doing something radical, almost revolutionary'.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, James referred to 'the innovation of an educated body of non-commissioned officers and airmen was itself a social revolution. It was very much a favourite project of Trenchard, and it is unlikely that he failed to understand the implications'.<sup>108</sup>

The Halton apprenticeship scheme was probably the most successful element of the training schemes that Trenchard advocated for establishing the 'Air Force spirit' in his 1919 Memorandum. Trenchard's vision and drive regarding the apprentice scheme had a marked impact on the resultant espoused culture at Halton as well as more widely across the RAF. However, the way the apprentices interpreted and reacted to their environment also demonstrates the power of culture-in-action.

---

<sup>105</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, p.xix.

<sup>106</sup> Kimber, *Son of Halton*, pp.103-104.

<sup>107</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*. p.34.

<sup>108</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.111.

## ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE CRANWELL

Royal Air Force College Cranwell is a most striking institution; The main building is high domed with a clock tower topped by an incongruous inland lighthouse whose sweeps can be seen from many miles. Designed by James West the building draws on the influence of Sir Christopher Wren's Royal Hospital in Chelsea.<sup>109</sup> It boasts imposing colonnades, large faux Georgian windows and is set in well-tended grounds with an impressive red parade ground and cricket pitch known as the Orange. Architecturally, it is impressive and is on a par with Sandhurst and Dartmouth. Cranwell was preferred, as a location, by Trenchard due to his concerns about the RAF not being an attractive option for the upper and aristocratic classes. According to Boyle, Trenchard said that it was:

Marooned in the wilderness, cut off from past-times they couldn't organise for themselves, they would find life cheaper, healthier and more wholesome. And they'd have less cause to envy their contemporaries at Sandhurst or Dartmouth and acquire any kind of inferiority complex.<sup>110</sup>

There is no doubt that the College has had a significant long-term impact upon the culture of the RAF. Trenchard succeeded in creating an almost hallowed centre of initial indoctrination for the RAF officer corps which endures, as demonstrated by the following recent comment about the college by a wing commander who has not served there for more than 20 years: 'I have an ingrained respect for the place as I see it as the guardian of RAF ethos'.<sup>111</sup> In the introduction to his history of RAF Cranwell, Haslam highlighted: 'This narrative seeks to tell the

---

<sup>109</sup> 'RAF College Cranwell. Building the College', <https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/recruitment/buildingthecollege.cfm>, accessed 27 May 2017.

<sup>110</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.361.

<sup>111</sup> Interview on Attitudes Towards Training Institutions Wg Cdr P Godfrey, Jul 2010. Statement made by Wg Cdr P Godfrey 13 Jul 10. Godfrey is now an Air Commodore.

whole story of Cranwell which together with Halton has been one of the enduring centres of tradition in the Royal Air Force'.<sup>112</sup> Bishop, meanwhile, claimed that

Cranwell succeeded from the start in generating an air force spirit, the cadets knew what was wanted. Aerial warfare they understood, had created a need for a hybrid warrior who combined the mastery of the latest technology with the mental bearing of a classic champion. It was a new military caste and Cranwell was its spiritual home.<sup>113</sup>

This section aims to highlight how the College at Cranwell achieved this and to distil the key effects that the College had on the culture aside from providing the RAF with an impressive edifice.<sup>114</sup>

Having articulated the need for a separate College in the 1919 Memorandum, Trenchard and the Air Staff remained resolute in the desire to guard separate training and also to ensure that the College would be as grand as possible befitting the new service.<sup>115</sup> In the first edition of the College Magazine, Trenchard and Churchill wrote missives to the new cadets. Trenchard's was as follows:

It was decided to form this Cadet College because it was realized from the first that such a College was the essential foundation of a separate Air Service. This College, in conjunction with the School of Technical Training for Boys at Halton, will have the making or marring of the future of our great Service, which was built up during the war by all the gallant Pilots and Observers and other ranks who fought through it, and won a name in the air second to none in the world'.<sup>116</sup>

The College was established at Cranwell, in Lincolnshire, which had previously been the RNAS Central Training Establishment under Commodore Godfrey Paine.<sup>117</sup> By 1917 the Station had expanded and was a busy aerodrome

---

<sup>112</sup> Haslam, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell*, p.xi.

<sup>113</sup> Bishop, *Fighter Boys*. p.33.

<sup>114</sup> A picture of the impressive colonnaded RAF College is at Fig 6 in Chapter XX.

<sup>115</sup> Cmd 467. 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>116</sup> RAF College Archive Collection, 'Message from Trenchard', *Royal Air Force Cadet College Magazine*, Vol 1, No 1, (September 1920) not accessioned.

<sup>117</sup> 'A Brief History of Cranwell Station', *RAF C Pamphlet*, p.2. Also available online:

[https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/rafcms/mediafiles/95781F3A\\_5056\\_A318\\_A87B3](https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/rafcms/mediafiles/95781F3A_5056_A318_A87B3)



operating both fixed wing and lighter-than-air craft. Cranwell had become the key training facility for the RNAS flying training and, in addition, delivered observer, wireless operators, mechanic and engineer training.<sup>118</sup> This was an RNAS facility and its processes and practices reflected that. In 1918, on amalgamation of the RNAS and the RFC, change would be inevitable. Given its naval roots, it would retain a few vestiges of naval heritage, notably the names of some of the roads and some of the original naval buildings. When the College was built, the clock tower design included a nod to its naval heritage, a lighthouse that shines out over the fields of Lincolnshire that is reputed to be the most inland lighthouse in Britain.<sup>119</sup>

### **Target Audience**

Unlike Halton, the cadets were charged a fee to attend the College. The resultant make up from 1920 until 1938 was boys predominantly from public and independent Schools.<sup>120</sup> Of the British Army, Bowman and Connelly noted that 'reinforcing the class consciousness of the Edwardian officer corps was the small number of schools which cadets came from'.<sup>121</sup> The RAF similarly actively targeted a narrow range of schools. In consequence, its permanent officer cadre, destined for high command, was drawn from a very narrow section of society. Indeed, a

---

C17C8FEA187.pdf, accessed 27 May 2017. Commodore Paine had previously been the first Commandant of CFS and would later become the 5<sup>th</sup> Sea Lord. He transferred to the RAF on amalgamation in the initial rank of Major General. His last post was as the Inspector-General of the RAF. 'Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Paine biography, <http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Paine.htm>, accessed 2 Feb 2016.

<sup>118</sup> Haslam, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell*, pp.7-12.

<sup>119</sup> This is included as part of the guided tour information at the College.

<sup>120</sup> In 1938 when the College syllabus and intake was suspended and the College transformed into a Flying Training School in order to build up aircrew numbers in accordance with expansion requirements. 'A Brief History of Cranwell Station', p.9.

<sup>121</sup> Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.10.

public school background was considered the assumed path for the leaders of the Empire.<sup>122</sup> As Mahoney pointed out:

The Victorian Army, despite meritocratic aspirations through the abolition of purchase in 1871, maintained a socially restrictive officer class that remained in place throughout the Edwardian era, as upper class, and by default public school educated, recruits were perceived as having natural leadership abilities.<sup>123</sup>

The importance of public schools in Edwardian psyche was further underlined by Kirke who noted that:

In Edwardian Britain, for example, the public schools were considered to be the best source of leaders of all kinds (political, military, diplomatic, colonial and so on) for the prosperity and expansion of the Empire. Some of these leaders naturally went into the Army and as a consequence, the vast majority of individuals joining to be officers came from public schools.<sup>124</sup>

Slessor, a Haileybury Old Boy who was CAS from 1950-1952 had strong upper middle-class views about public school and high-level leadership:

The glory of the public school system in the past and its prime justification today is that it is the best known method of producing leaders of men. It is unfashionable nowadays to talk about an Officer Class. No-one will be so bold or foolish as to deny that, in horses, breeding and training are indispensable if one wants to produce winners; and I have never been able to make out why anyone should think that does not apply equally to men. I am sure it is a good thing that we should have broadened the base from which we draw our officers...some of our greatest military leaders have risen from the ranks but if we believe in the public school system, if we continue to claim its privileges, let us admit that it does, and I believe always will, produce a very high proportion of the best leaders of men in Britain.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Henderson GFR provided useful context about views on recruitment and training of the British Army that bears this out. Henderson GFR, *The British Army in The Science of War*, pp.387-399.

<sup>123</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.157

<sup>124</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.190.

<sup>125</sup> Slessor, *The Central Blue*, p.4. He noted Haileybury had 'more than its fair share of men who were to achieve some distinction in the Royal Air Force' of which six were present at Exercise 'Pandora' in 1948. Brooke-Popham and Leigh Mallory were also from Haileybury, p.3

Further reflecting the accepted upper middle-class norms of the era, he went on to say that 'one of the best possible methods of selection of officers is by selective and controlled nepotism'.<sup>126</sup>

The RN was much less wedded to public school influence than the British Army or the RAF; it preferred to take its future officers in at a much younger age. The Fisher-Selborne Scheme that ran from 1902 until 1939 took 13-year-old cadets in for a four-year training course; the bulk of the RN officer corps entered service in this manner.<sup>127</sup> From 1913, a small proportion of Naval officers entered via the Special Entry Scheme that took 17 year-old boys into the RN for an 12 or 18 month course before they were made into midshipmen.<sup>128</sup> There was also a small Mate scheme, introduced in 1913, that allowed ratings to become officers.<sup>129</sup>

Much like the British Army, at the beginning of the twentieth century RN officers came from the upper and upper middle classes, although, Romans noted that there was an increase in meritocratic approaches to recruitment from 1919-1939.<sup>130</sup> Robbins wrote that the British Army officer cadre became less aristocratic in the 1930s.<sup>131</sup> However, these changes were slow. In the inter-war RAF, despite the social upheaval of the First World War and an increased social mobility due to the innovative apprentice system, great emphasis was still placed on recruiting boys from public school for the RAF College.<sup>132</sup> This is clear from the Character Book in

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p.6.

<sup>127</sup> Romans, 'Selection and Early Career Education of Executive Officers in the Royal Navy c 1902-1939', p.12.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. p.35.

<sup>131</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.7.

<sup>132</sup> For detail on social upheaval in the inter-war period see Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, pp.106-162.

the RAF College archives.<sup>133</sup> This was a most useful document that tracked parental background, schooling, rank at entry and upon graduation as well as other information such as rank progression and award of decorations following graduation, psa annotation and reports those officers reported missing or KIA.<sup>134</sup> Mahoney, meanwhile, used a 1931 paper written by Wg Cdr Evill, the Deputy Commandant of Cranwell to demonstrate the RAF's preponderance towards the public school background for the Cadets.<sup>135</sup> The report divided schools up into Grade 1 Institutions eg Eton, Harrow and Marlborough; Grade II Institutions eg Mill Hill, Oundle, Fettes and Grade III institutions... 'the others'.<sup>136</sup> Thus, the RAF appeared somewhat schizophrenic in its approach to recruitment. On one hand, the RAF had a progressive approach to encouraging social mobility in its recruitment of apprentices as well as sending the best to Cranwell and encouraging others to take up flying. On the other hand, the logic behind recruiting for the College seemed to reflect an extremely traditional public school oriented mind-set as typified by the earlier Slessor quotation.

Mahoney pointed out that the Cecil Committee Report discounted the RN's method of training at Osborne and Dartmouth despite the fact the RAF was emphasising its technical nature.<sup>137</sup> The RAF thus adopted an Army model for recruiting and training for its future leaders.<sup>138</sup> Higham wrote that before the Fisher-

---

<sup>133</sup> RAF Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2011/71 RAF College Character Book.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. The psa post-nominal designation means passed staff college.

<sup>135</sup> RAFM, AC 74/8/27, An Analysis of the Cranwell Entry, 16 November 1931, p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.161

<sup>137</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.157. For the full Cecil Report see AIR 2/100, Preliminary Education of Candidates for the Royal Air Force.

<sup>138</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.159.

Selborne reforms, RN Engineers were 'hardly considered officers'.<sup>139</sup> However, following the reforms in 1902 that emphasised science and engineering, the RN came to recognise the value of engineer officers and a more progressive and slightly more meritocratic view of backgrounds emerged within the RN than the British Army.<sup>140</sup> This supports Roman's view of recruitment of the RN officer corps becoming gradually more meritocratic.<sup>141</sup> Meanwhile, Higham noted that 'in the British Army of the interwar years gunners, for instance, were a lesser breed of officers and "did not hunt".<sup>142</sup> This reflected traditionalism and rejection of technical trades in the Army. To an extent, the RAF officer cadre appeared to cling onto that traditional mind-set regarding officer recruitment and training despite being entirely founded on technology. The traditional mind-set endured throughout the interwar period in the face of some quite compelling evidence that suggested that coming from a top public school was not necessarily a precursor to good performance at Cranwell.

Between 1920 and 1938, the best performing group of students came not from Evill's first or second groups but from the apprentice cadre that was, itself, to be found within school group three: 'the others'.<sup>143</sup> With only two or three airmen apprentices on each Cranwell intake, it is startling to see how well they performed at the College at Cranwell. The Character Book identified that airmen apprentices

---

<sup>139</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.21.

<sup>140</sup> See Romans, *Selection and Early Career Education of Executive Officers in the Royal Navy c 1902-1939*, p.13.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p.35.

<sup>142</sup> Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.20.

<sup>143</sup> It should be noted that 'the others' itself included a good proportion of what would be termed today 'Independent Schools'.

came top on 17 of the 37 courses that ran between 1920 and 1938.<sup>144</sup> That is all the more impressive, given that airmen apprentices were not present for five of the courses and also numbered only 124 out of a total of 1173 attendees of the College or 10.5% between 1920 and 1938. Meanwhile, of the 464 boys or 39.5% who attended the Class I and Class II Public Schools (228+236 respectively), only 9 achieved first place on the course. Of the remaining 50% of the overall intake for the period which came from tier 3 or 'other schools', 11 achieved first place positions on the course. Additionally, throughout the period, the airmen apprentices rarely fell below the rank of 10th for each course indicating that their quality was reliable.<sup>145</sup>

From Evill's report, the apprentices' 'average place on graduation' was 5.7 with Grade III schools 13.2, Grade II schools 14.0 and Grade I schools 15.2.<sup>146</sup> Evill wrote that 'whatever the cause, apprentices have established a remarkable lead over the school-boys, whose results vary inversely with the grade of school from which they come'.<sup>147</sup> Evill's report broke down two other aspects of the course: 'Officer-like qualities' and Flying skills.

For 'Officer-like qualities', 68% of apprentices achieved a 'Class A', Grade II Schools 53%, Grade 1 Schools 51% and Grade III schools 39%.<sup>148</sup> The apprentices were clearly well in the lead in that respect, yet Evill chose to discount their performance in that area highlighting that more Class I schooled cadets had been appointed as under-officers or sergeant cadets thereby underlining their suitability

---

<sup>144</sup> There were no airmen apprentices on 5 of the first 6 courses. RAF Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2011/71 RAF College Character Book.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> RAFM AC 74/8/27, Evill D (Assistant Commandant RAFC Cranwell), 'An Analysis on the Cranwell Entry 31 Nov 1931', p.2.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p.3.

for leadership. The report highlighted that 33 % of Class I schooled cadets were under-officer or sergeant cadets vice 25% for apprentices.<sup>149</sup> However, given the very small numbers of apprentices, Evill's figures in this respect are a little misleading. Had only 3 more apprentices been given such leadership positions, they would have equalled the Grade I schoolboys. Choices for under-officer and cadet sergeants at the college may also have been influenced by ingrained social bias of the Directing Staff rather than on evidence of marks achieved in 'Officer-like qualities' of the cadets.

In flying performance the Class I cadets did perform best: 58% of Class I schooled cadets achieved 'above average', Class II schooled cadets 55%, Apprentices 42% and Class III schooled 38%.<sup>150</sup> Once again, ingrained social bias in the one-on-one flying environment could have resulted in improved scores for the public schoolboys given that their instructors most likely came from a similar public school background.

The strength of contemporary belief in the public school system's ability to prepare an individual for leadership and command is demonstrated by the conclusions drawn by Evill. Despite the overall poor performance of the Class I schooled cadets Evill wrote: 'boys from the higher grade schools, whether due to heredity or training, have in particular valuable qualities which the service must still seek, and it seems that the answer to the question at the end of para. (2) is that we must still seek to maintain a high proportion of these boys at Cranwell'.<sup>151</sup> Evill

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>150</sup> RAFM AC 74/8/27, Evill D (Assistant Commandant RAFC Cranwell), 'An Analysis on the Cranwell Entry 31 Nov 1931', p.3.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p.4. The question at para 2 was: 'Have those Flight Cadets arriving from the better-known schools proved themselves to be better material for training as officers than the

chose to concentrate upon the statistics for flying and leadership in order to qualify his statement. However, that is somewhat flawed. It should be remembered that Cranwell was designed to select and train officer for permanent commissions, hence, higher command positions. Thus, while flying was an important aspect of the training, probably the most important aspect should have been on the leadership and staff work aspects of the course; the purist flyers were to be provided by the short service commission system. The best performing in Officer-like qualities were, clearly, the apprentices. This suggests that, despite the conscious moves by the RAF towards being more meritocratic than the other services, the deep class biases of the inter-war society remained ingrained in the RAF officer cadre. A truly objective conclusion to be drawn from Evill's paper, without considering contemporary class pre-dispositions, would have recommended that the Grade I schooled cadets should have been offered short service commissions to make use of their better pure flying skills while more apprentices should have been channelled to the College at Cranwell. However, when viewed through a 1930s lens, such was the strength of contemporary culture with respect to public schooling, it is understandable that Evill drew the conclusions he did and that the report was accepted and recruitment from Class I schools continued. The safest option for recruiters at the time was to recruit from the tried and tested public school pipeline that was perceived to be the best preparation for future leaders of Empire.

A demographic group that the RAF failed to attract in any numbers was the aristocracy.<sup>152</sup> Trenchard was frustrated by the:

---

remainder?' see RAFM AC 74/8/27, Evill D (Assistant Commandant RAFC Cranwell), 'An Analysis on the Cranwell Entry 31 Nov 1931', p.1.

<sup>152</sup> RAF Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2011/71 RAF College Character Book.



...patronising view of the R.A.F. held by people in the upper spheres of society except in some of the Auxiliary Air Force squadrons. It was a common whisper that “nobody who was anyone” would disgrace himself or his family by joining, or encouraging a near relative to join, this “upstart Cinderella of the services.”<sup>153</sup>

This concern is vindicated in the Character Book that lists few parents as ‘gentlemen’. The vast majority of cadets were either sons of military families or from the upper middle classes that were able to pay for the public school education as well as for Cranwell.

During the inter-war period, and as the RAF arrived in the Second World War, the RAF officer cadre was, then, distinctly middle class and traditional in social outlook. However, some chimeric attitudes emerged in which very traditional standards of behaviour were juxtaposed against the romanticism and devil may care approach to danger that emerged from the aviator identity that imbued the Service. James wrote that that officers ‘were in manners and behaviour rather stuffy: this stuffiness even underlay the rake-hell image cultivated by the short service officers’.<sup>154</sup> However, even very traditional officers such as Brooke-Popham appeared to derive a sense of freedom from flying as the earlier reference to flyers being like Peter Pan indicates.<sup>155</sup>

As the reserves built in numbers, the complexity of the social make-up of the RAF increased further. Wilkinson pointed out that the ‘the prevailing thesis is that the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) was a “gentleman’s flying club”’ and that, due to the AAF being unable to recruit to a sufficient level that ‘a new reserve, the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR), was then developed to remove the social and

---

<sup>153</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, pp.358-9.

<sup>154</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.171.

<sup>155</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham 9/6/35, Brooke-Popham, ‘Notes on the Traditions of the Royal Air Force’, ATCP No 55, April 1944, p.3.

class barriers to recruitment which those choosing to enter the AAF faced by creating what was to be a “citizen’s air force.”<sup>156</sup>

The popular view of the AAF is likely to have grown from personnel of 600 and 601 Sqns in London that Wilkinson noted ‘had been educated, in the main, within the public school sector and had been groomed to fulfil leadership roles’ and were employed in well paid city jobs and often took part in elite sports such as rowing, polo flying and racing car driving’.<sup>157</sup> However, her research, which is the most comprehensive demographic study of the reserves to date, demonstrated that nationally, ‘the Auxiliaries were less exclusive than previously suggested while the RAFVR were in fact more exclusive than had been thought’.<sup>158</sup> She highlighted that 20% of the AAF were from public schools with 19% Oxbridge educated which does not conform with the commonly accepted view associated with the Millionaire Squadrons of London. Meanwhile a rather surprising 39% of the RAFVR were publically schooled with 54% Oxbridge educated indicating a relatively high number of upper middle classes in the organisation that is commonly considered to be the people’s Air Force. Throughout Wilkinson’s thesis, the personal accounts from the inter-war period, describe social conventions that were in common with those of the regular service in which the officer cadre were separated from the ORs.<sup>159</sup> However, the accounts also reveal that the aviator identity had spread beyond the regulars and that attitudes towards flying and discipline were comparable and that counter-institutional behaviour was similarly prevalent.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Wilkinson, ‘The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957’, p.106.

<sup>157</sup> Wilkinson, ‘The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957’, pp.121-122. For detailed accounts of life on 601 Squadron, Tom Moulson, *Millionaires’ Squadron* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2014).

<sup>158</sup> Wilkinson, ‘The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957’, p.170.

<sup>159</sup> Wilkinson, ‘The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957’.

<sup>160</sup> Wilkinson, ‘The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957’, p.9, p.134, p.255,

In the regulars, the system was not yet ready to gamble the entire future of the RAF leadership based entirely upon increased meritocracy. Trenchard referred to Halton as an experiment and so was the idea of sending its top few apprentices to Cranwell. However, contemporary wisdom still saw a public school background as a pre-requisite for high command. Only once those early apprentices reached air rank and proved themselves in high command, however, would their true value be demonstrated. The effect of the apprentice system in this regard was significant but it was not the only factor for this move towards increasing meritocracy, the influx of officers from the dominions and from a broader cross-section of society in the late expansion period and during the War also demonstrated that flying and leadership were not only the preserve of public school officers. Additionally, the short-service and reservist system helped diversify the officer cadre. Furthermore, following the Second World War, the RAF would become gradually less wedded to the notion that a public school background was an essential criterion for high command. Kirke pointed to a 'Cultural Stripe' effect of wider society being responsible for a declining emphasis by the 1980s on the need for publically schooled officers for high command in the British Army. However, the empirical results show that this was much more marked in the RAF.

However, the starting point for the RAF, as was demonstrated by the RAF Cranwell Character Book, was that 50% of Cranwell cadets were from tier 1 public schools with the vast majority of the rest from other fee paying schools. By 2005, out of the 10 most senior staff in the three services, 9 out of 10 in the Army were

independently schooled, 6 of 10 in the RN and only 3 out of 10 in the RAF.<sup>161</sup> In 2006-7, of those chosen for Advanced Command and Staff Course, an 'indication of the likely composition of the future leadership of the Services', 58% of the Army, 70% of the RN and 75% of the RAF attended state school.<sup>162</sup> Thus, the RAF, having been broadly similar to the Army in demographic make up in 1918 has evolved in quite a different manner.

### **Syllabus and Life at the College**

The 1919 Memorandum proposed a 2-year course at the College followed by an air pilotage course at Andover before progression to a squadron that they 'can regard as their home...as the sailor does his ship or the soldier his regiment'.<sup>163</sup>

Life at the College at Cranwell between the wars was rather like an extension of public school. Indeed, in *Reach for the Sky*, one of Bader's new colleagues commented on the first night: 'like school, isn't it'.<sup>164</sup> The two-year course was divided into two terms, a short one comprising a '12 week session' starting in September and a second longer term comprising two '12 week sessions' starting in February in order to make use of the better summer flying weather.<sup>165</sup>

Upon arrival, cadets underwent induction that had a different emphasis to that of the apprentice school. Boyle's account of life at Cranwell indicated that this was a much more gentlemanly affair than Halton. In Boyle's years of the College,

---

<sup>161</sup> 'Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces', The Stationary Office, Thirty-fourth Report of Session 2006-7, (2007), p.14.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Cmd 467. 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'. The idea of having a squadron as a home would morph. The squadron never became a permanent spiritual home of an individual in the regimental sense. Allegiance would be fierce for the duration of a tour but was temporary nevertheless.

<sup>164</sup> P Brickhill, *Reach for the Sky*, (London Collins, 1954) p.30.

<sup>165</sup> TNA Air/1/2082/206/1 Royal Air Force (Cadet) College, 'Provisional Syllabus of the Course of Instruction', p.3.

the batting staff conducted duties such as polishing the linoleum and keeping the First World War huts clean, although the cadets would later do that.<sup>166</sup> Cadets dined in mess kit four or five times each week.<sup>167</sup> They were also issued with a Service motor bicycle in order to learn about maintaining combustion engines.<sup>168</sup> Cadets also conducted drill training and spent significant amounts of time on the parade square.<sup>169</sup> Much like in the apprentice system, an official cadet/cadet hierarchy was instituted with the establishment of the cadet ranks of Under Officer and Cadet Sergeants through which the cadets maintained their own discipline.<sup>170</sup> This was not far removed from a school prefect system and was open to similar bullying and self-imposed rules seen in public schools.

The overall aim of the College at its inception was articulated as follows: 'The object of the training given to a Flight Cadet is to fit him in every way to take his place as an officer in the R.A.F.'.<sup>171</sup> It aimed to give 'the Flight Cadet a thorough grounding in Aeronautical and Service subjects as a basis for further instruction given at the College'.<sup>172</sup> Imparting the Air Force spirit was outlined to instructors in the third paragraph of the Introduction to the Provisional Syllabus:

The Staff and Instructors at the College have also to keep constantly in mind the importance of establishing and maintaining a high standard of esprit-de-corps and professional keenness amongst all ranks at the College. These qualities, allied with self-respect and reliability are essential to Officers of the Air Force and therefore form a most important part of the education of an Air Force Cadet. The reputation and efficiency of the Force depends almost entirely upon the conduct, bearing and ability of the permanent Officers to

---

<sup>166</sup> Boyle D, *My Life. An Autobiography by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Dermot Boyle*, self published edition, Central Flying School archive, unaccessioned, p.20

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> TNA Air/1/2082/206/1 Royal Air Force (Cadet) College, 'Provisional Syllabus of the Course of Instruction', p.2.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

whom the remainder of the Service look for example and leadership. In no other Service is high morale, esprit-de-corps and an unfailing sense of duty more essential than in the Royal Air Force.<sup>173</sup>

The majority of the cadets were probably attracted to join the RAF to fly.<sup>174</sup> However, in 1921 the Commandant highlighted that being an RAF officer meant far more than simply being a pilot: 'although an officer who could not fly was useless to the Air Force, yet the mere ability to fly by no means qualified an individual to become an officer in the Royal Air Force'.<sup>175</sup> This was borne out by Boyle, who would later become CAS, in his biography:

Although I went to Cranwell because I wanted to fly, probably that activity was the least important of the lessons I learned. I left with an absolute dedication to the Royal Air Force which I retain to this day. It was made quite clear to us why the new service had come into being, what was expected of it and the part we had to play.<sup>176</sup>

The idea that the individual was an officer first, and a pilot only by specialisation, would become an enduring feature of RAF officer employment that exists today. In the early days of the RAF all officers were part of the General Duties Branch and were also all to be pilots.<sup>177</sup> Cranwell targeted the half of the officer corps that were offered permanent commissions and who would be the officers who were needed to rise to the highest ranks in the RAF and run the organisation. That required more than just being a pilot; those who just flew were the short service commission officers. However, this notion was somewhat turned on its head as new branches were established in the 1930s and some officers belonged to non-flying branches. It soon became clear that pilots were considered

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> See, for example, Boyle D, *My Life*, p.23.

<sup>175</sup> RAF College Archive, RAF College Magazine April 1921. Also, Haslam, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell*, p.32.

<sup>176</sup> Boyle D, *My Life*, p.23.

<sup>177</sup> Cmd 467. 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

first among equals with all other branches having a glass ceiling in terms of progression to the top command jobs.<sup>178</sup> Mahoney highlighted the General Duties Branch was of major cultural significance in that it underlined the pre-eminence of pilots within the Service in what he termed the 'Pilot Ethos' of the RAF.<sup>179</sup> He proposed that the GD Branch was, in many ways, similar to the development of the divisional branches of the RN and that the 'evolving branch system that sought to bring together the best of the Army's and RN's systems while avoiding the pitfalls'.<sup>180</sup> However, the GD branch also brought together pilots who 'held a shared identity, encouraged by pilot ethos'.<sup>181</sup> That paved the way for pilot pre-eminence in the eyes of the Service that remains a feature of RAF culture today.

The syllabus set out to produce a balanced officer who could fly. But Cranwell required more than a syllabus to achieve this. Cranwell was an immersive experience for both the Cadets and the Staff. Military service at the time was far more all-consuming than it is today. Haslam wrote that :

Oral testimony from surviving members of the early courses at Cranwell is unanimous in its acclaim of the full life they led – mainly extrovert, fit young men proud of the new way of life they were exemplifying and eager to join the squadrons in the Royal Air Force...The priorities were clearly defined. First came flying, then came physical fitness and discipline, and drill, and then came academic subjects especially those supporting the skills of aviation'.<sup>182</sup>

Sport was of great importance at the College and the emphasis came from the very top. Trenchard thought that Rugby "was the best game on earth" for

---

<sup>178</sup> Although Air Marshal Peach, a Navigator, recently served as Chief of Defence Staff, to date, only pilots have been appointed as CAS.

<sup>179</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.106

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p.108.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Haslam, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell*, p.32.

developing team spirit and manliness'.<sup>183</sup> He wrote to all RAF Commanders encouraging them to help their men develop a taste for winter sports and believed that 'silver trophies were more than prizes for skill and ability in his eyes. They were symbols of permanence, possessions to be coveted and treasured'.<sup>184</sup> In *Odd Hint to the RAF*, the anonymous author referring to the expense of drinks, wrote that that officers should prioritise sport and that 'every officer should be an all-round sportsman. Drink is optional'.<sup>185</sup> This importance placed on sport was also clear from the archival records in which judgement was passed on each cadet in the Cadet Archive on arrival. Sporting ability appears as the main frame of reference in these single line cadet summaries:

Hardy S, 1923 Entry: 'Clifton XV. House XI Cricket. Swimming. VG Type. Should do well'.

Ford R, 1923 Entry: Soccer XI + Cricket XI. Sgt OTC. Not Bright.

Williams R 1926 Intake: 'Rugger (scrum) Sailing a little. Quiet. Nice type'.

Worstell W, 1926 Entry: 'Rugger and Soccer at Boys' Wing (King's Cup Team). Very keen and intelligent. Should do well'.<sup>186</sup>

The College occasionally exhibited a more perceptive and broader view of its cadets and succeeded in identifying skills other than sporting ones. Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet engine was described thus:

Whittle F 1926 Entry: 'Aeroplane designer. Squadron Commander should watch him carefully. Should ultimately specialise in engineering'.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.359. Robbins highlighted the importance placed on sport in the British Army in 1914. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, pp.5-6.

<sup>184</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.359.

<sup>185</sup> *The Odd Hint to the RAF*, written in the early days of the existence of the RAF, provided a valuable insight that traces the origins of the Customs of the Service from 1918. 'Wing Commander', *The Odd Hint to the RAF* (n.d. although a handwritten date of 1918 is in the cover of RAFC Archive copy), RAFC Archive unaccessioned.

<sup>186</sup> RAFC Cranwell Archive, CRN/D/2011/72 Cadet Entry Book. 1923 and 1926 entries.

<sup>187</sup> RAFC Cranwell Archive, CRN/D/2011/72 Cadet Entry Book. 1926 entry. Sir Frank Whittle went on to invent the jet engine.



Whilst this may have been extremely perceptive, it is one of the few isolated comments in the Character Book that refers to qualities other than sporting excellence. This highlights an espoused culture amongst the officer cadre that was very traditional and did not really embrace engineering to the same extent as the ORs in the RAF. The sporting bias was very evident in the College magazines throughout the inter-war period with traditional sports including horse riding, hunting and rugby being of particular importance.<sup>188</sup> Cranwell expected to develop an officer cadre in line with the other two colleges. This was an officer class which would maintain the spirit and traditions of the Royal Air Force that were recently inherited from Britain's Air Services in the First World War. The idea that the College was on an equal with Sandhurst and Dartmouth and also the importance of the history of the First World War were clearly articulated to the cadets by Churchill in his address at the College in December 1920 by Trenchard's message in the First College Magazine and by Haig's 1921 letter to the Gentlemen-Cadets of the RAF Cadet College.<sup>189</sup> Cranwell was intended to be a centre from which the RAF Spirit would grow. Time has demonstrated that it did just this, although it created an inter-war officer cadre that was surprisingly traditional in outlook.

---

<sup>188</sup> For a brief history of the Britannia Beagle Pack see 'Full Cry: A Hound Blog', <https://houndwelfare.wordpress.com/tag/britannia-beagles/>, accessed 7 Mar 2016 while that of the Sandhurst Hunt can be found at: 'Staff College & Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Draghunt', <http://www.sandhurstdraghunt.co.uk/about.html>, accessed 7 Mar 2016.

<sup>189</sup> 'Trenchard's Message'. *Royal Air Force College Cadet Magazine*, Vol 1 No 1 (Sept 1920), p.5. RAFC Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2013/37 Haig D, 'To the Gentlemen of the RAF Cadet College, Cranwell'. R.A.F Cadet College Cranwell Record March 1920-July 1932. 'Report on the Inspection of the RAF (Cadet) College December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920 by the Secretary of State For War (the Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P.)', CRN/D/2013/37, R.A.F Cadet College Cranwell Record March 1920-July 1932.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that the RAF College and the Halton apprentice school were two extremely powerful symbols of RAF independence and expressions of RAF technological pre-eminence. Whilst they represent outer layer Roundel Model symbols, their effect was much deeper. They helped to reinforce deeper attitudes and assumptions of independence and air-mindedness for the Service. That unique air-mindedness helped form part of the case for continued independence of the Force and was, therefore, an extremely important message to transmit, symbolically, to politicians, the public, the press as well as internally to RAF personnel. The internal message that the institutions highlighted to the personnel of the RAF was that it really was standing on its own two feet and was not reliant on the other two services to train its people. The informal and less formal processes that were clearly evident from archival evidence are particularly indicative of how deeply the institutions affected RAF culture. The bands, sporting activities, the formation of the OBA, magazines and humour that suffused both Halton and Cranwell are evidence that the two new RAF institutions were succeeding in developing a deep and all-embracing culture and that they were indeed far more than symbolic edifices.

The processes and practices that emerged at both institutions had a deep effect on their respective cultures. The formal processes of military indoctrination were traditional and strong, as is to be expected at any first point of entry into a military system, and included wearing of uniform, drill, discipline and exposure to formal command structures. These resulted in development of the usual military values such as loyalty, leadership, respect, selflessness, integrity, determination

and teamwork. In that sense, both institutions were traditional in their approach. For the College, traditionalism was particularly important. The dome, columns, parade-square and pack of hounds of the RAF College were affirmation of a traditional approach for the cadets. At the deeper cultural levels for the officer cadre, the college inculcated a feeling that the RAF was on a par with the other services; rather than being trained by and, therefore, subservient to, the other two services; the RAF was able to go it alone. The College also had a defining 'value added' feature: air-mindedness. This is what gave the RAF College a cutting edge over Dartmouth and Sandhurst and, indeed, would become one of the central pillars in the explaining why the RAF should exist as a separate service.

Meanwhile, the apprentice system was probably the best and most expensive one in the country. It attracted a very high calibre of personnel that gave the ranks in the Service a higher intellectual status than the majority of those of the other two services. Thus, while Halton, externally, was a symbol of RAF engineering excellence, at the deeper cultural levels, it embedded a belief of technological superiority in the organisation. That, in turn, equated to a deep-seated sense of perceived superiority and pride in the RAF ranks.

RAF College recruiting deliberately targeted public schools in accordance with the contemporary belief that a public school education was the best preparation for the future leaders of the Service.<sup>190</sup> This was in line with Trenchard's thinking; he wanted the RAF to be considered a suitable career for the very best young men. Inter-war RAF officers with permanent commissions were from a very traditional public school background, which rendered them rather 'stuffy'. However, Chapters

---

<sup>190</sup> Slessor noted a disproportionately high number of RAF high commanders had come from Hailerbury including himself and Brooke-Popham. Slessor, *The Central Blue*, p.3.

II and VIII highlight that the aviator identity also encouraged a carefree youthfulness. Thus, RAF behavioural patterns exhibited an interesting duality in which traditionalism was counterbalanced by an exuberant modernity combined with occasional youthful humour. The extra-curricular activities, notably sport, also underlined that the RAF College had an emphasis which was not dissimilar to that of the Edwardian Army; both in terms of academic approach and the idea that sport helped inculcate notions of the relentless offensive in this new officer cadre. When those junior pilots matured and it came to leadership and running the organisation, it was clear that the product of Cranwell was quite homogenous and conservative in outlook. In terms of deeply held beliefs, therefore, it is not surprising that conservatism was a feature of the leadership at headquarters, stations, squadrons and in messes. That also extended to thinking matters; the bounds of doctrinal thought in the inter-war period were somewhat limited by the narrowness of the officer cadre. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. It would take an influx of new blood during the final period of expansion and then during the Second World War to alter that. The exception, of course, was the ten per-cent of Cranwellians who had come up through the apprentice system. The performance of the ex-apprentices spoke for itself. The selection and training they had been through proved to be very successful and vindicated what was a revolutionary idea of promoting the best from the ranks in an organised and institutional fashion. This chapter proposes, therefore, that the apprentice system was revolutionary and that it played a role in the RAF gradually becoming an increasingly meritocratic organisation.

Another very important cultural aspect of the Service shaped by the aviator identity was the fact that all officers were to be pilots in the General Duties Branch.<sup>191</sup> It set in motion a very deeply held and immutable belief within the Service of the importance of the General Duties branch and the need for being a pilot in order to progress. The inter-war College played a key role in reinforcing this aspect of the aviator identity. The College syllabus underlined the importance of flying for those chosen to progress to the highest ranks. It became a mantra such that when the new branches were eventually formed, once Trenchard had left the Service, there remained a deeply held belief that only pilots should be in a position to reach the very highest levels of the RAF. That institutional belief remains intact in the RAF today.

A final point worth mentioning is that both institutions developed their own humour and language. This was taking place across the entire RAF and will be discussed later. However, the extent of this was clearly evident in the magazines and personal accounts at both Halton and Cranwell. It is a clear indicator of the time that cadets and apprentices spent in each other's company, the pride they had in their own institutions and also the depth of their cultural engagement in their respective organisations.

This chapter has demonstrated the powerful cultural effects of the both the RAF College and the apprentice system. Both institutions were far more than symbols, they were responsible for developing deep beliefs and values both in those who would be selected for high command and also in those who would have a

---

<sup>191</sup> Mahoney offered a useful view on this in which he refers to the pilot ethos of the RAF. Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', pp.206-210.

profound influence on the way engineering would develop. These two institutions did, indeed, play a major role in developing an 'Air Force spirit' in a largely positive manner, although they both set the stage for some negative cultural developments.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STAFF COLLEGE

The 1919 Memorandum established that forming an RAF Staff College was a priority. 'An Air Force Staff College must be formed as soon as possible'.<sup>1</sup> The RN and the Army had their own staff colleges at Camberley and Greenwich. Establishing an RAF one was a logical extension in establishing independent institutions to express the individuality and permanence of the new Service. The Staff College also offered an opportunity for the RAF to explore air power and to create a bespoke school of thought within the RAF. The Staff College has been examined in the historiography, albeit in a limited manner, however, its impact on RAF culture is almost entirely unexplored.

Bond wrote that 'in considering the influence the Staff College on commanders and chiefs-of-staff in the First World War there is little point in going beyond the Spring of 1915' due to the 'annihilation' of the officer cadre.<sup>2</sup> However, for the RFC this was not the case. Henderson, Sykes, Brooke-Popham, Brancker, Musgrave and Ashmore were all Staff College graduates who survived beyond 1915. Pugh highlighted, that they had a deep influence on the RFC that resulted in 'a remarkably cohesive philosophical outlook, based in no small part on the influence of the Staff College experience'.<sup>3</sup> It has been established that Sykes, in

---

<sup>1</sup> Cmd 467. 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>2</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p.305. Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins Of The Control Of The Air', p.90.

<sup>3</sup> Brooke-Popham would go on to be the first Commandant of the RAF Staff College, Sholto-Douglas and Salmond G would become Marshals of the RAF, Musgrave was the officer in charge of technical experimentation in the RFC and Ashmore was in charge of London Air Defence Area in the First World War. Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', p.88-89.

particular, was profoundly influenced by his Staff College experience at Quetta.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to the majority of the narrative in the historiography, including the Staff College Operations Book, it was during Sykes' tenure as CAS, rather than Trenchard's, that a separate RAF Staff College was suggested.<sup>5</sup> Mason incorrectly wrote of Sykes' 'Air Power requirements of the Empire' that: 'there is no mention anywhere of the establishment of a Staff College'.<sup>6</sup> However, 'Air Power requirements of the Empire' specifically referred to an RAF Staff College.<sup>7</sup> James also incorrectly attributed Trenchard with the idea in *The Paladins*.<sup>8</sup> It appears that Mahoney is the only academic in the historiography to have acknowledged Sykes as being the first to recommend an RAF Staff College.<sup>9</sup> It was, however, Trenchard who implemented the plan. Staff College had a valued place in the British Army, consequently, Trenchard, or possibly his Staff, considered it an essential institution for the new Service. However, this seems at odds with the British fighting forces in which intellect was not widely cherished. An examination of the Staff College tradition in Britain will provide useful context prior to exploring how the RAF Staff College grew and the impact that it had on the RAF Culture.

---

<sup>4</sup> For his views on his own Staff College experience see Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.70-73. Copies of his work at the Staff College in Quetta are available in RAFM Sykes Papers along with a letter from Capper. RAFM Sykes Papers AC73/35/1/Vol I, 'Letter from Brigadier General T Capper to Captain F Sykes, December 1909'.

<sup>5</sup> TNA 8/6 TNA Air 8/6 'Air Power requirements of the Empire', Part III, Dec 1918, p.15. According to Sykes, he proposed this in June 1918, although this is not present in the document to which he referred in Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.261. However, an RAF Staff College was being openly discussed between the War Office and the Air Ministry in Dec 1918, see RAFM Sykes AC73/35 Vol III, War Office Letter to the Air Council dated 13 December 1918, signed by B B Cubitt.

<sup>6</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> TNA 8/6 TNA Air 8/6 'Air Power requirements of the Empire', Part III, Dec 1918, p.15.

<sup>8</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.150.

<sup>9</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.216.



The historiography provides significant evidence of an amateurism and anti-intellectualism that suffused the British Army and the RN throughout the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.<sup>10</sup> In *The Education of a Navy*, Schurman wrote that 'until 1867, naval history, other than a record of battles, could hardly be said to have existed'.<sup>11</sup> Mahan similarly underlined the RN's unwillingness to engage with the theory of warfare compared with the French who 'had devoted themselves to the careful study of their profession' and that, referring to the RN and French Navy respectively in the US War of Independence, 'the practical and the theoretical man were pitted against each other'.<sup>12</sup> Bond wrote that: 'to be sure, intellectuals and cultured types were rather rare in the pre-1914 British regular Army'.<sup>13</sup> However, while anti-intellectualism was significant in the early Nineteenth Century, there was not a total void of intellectual thought concerning military matters. Military thought in British Society was evident in some measure following the Napoleonic wars. Randall wrote of a 'home grown body of authors of military theory' such as Sir William Napier, John Mitchell, Edward Yates and some British military professionals, such as Wellington, who took a deep interest in their

---

<sup>10</sup> Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, pp.10-11. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.91. Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939', p.99. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.132. Slessor, *The Central Blue*, p.83.

<sup>11</sup> Schurman, *The Education of a Navy*, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Mahan, "'Theoretical" versus "Practical" Training. A Historical Instance' in *Mahan on Naval Warfare* ed Westcott, p.9. For a useful synopsis of British naval thinking, see Till, 'British naval thinking a contradiction in terms?', pp.1-18

<sup>13</sup> Bond Brian, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), p.269.

writings.<sup>14</sup> Randall, noted that Napier, in particular, would heavily influence Mahan.<sup>15</sup> He also demonstrated that:

There was a (sic) wide reading and debate concerning Jomini's *Treatise of Grand Military Operations* and, to a lesser extent, Clausewitz's *On War* in Great Britain during the period. Additionally, a native body of theoreticians existed who attempted to examine military theory in the light of the experiences of the Napoleonic Wars. This demonstrates that there was a genuine effort to engage with contemporary military theory in Britain'.<sup>16</sup>

Although public interest and writers were present in Britain what was missing were the institutions for the British fighting forces to encourage intellectual thinking compared, for example, to France and Germany.<sup>17</sup> The Army Staff College, for instance, did not form until 1858 and the RN lagged further behind. The Naval College at Greenwich that opened in 1873 concentrated on scientific study until 1902 when the War Course was established to examine broader strategy.<sup>18</sup> It was not until 1912 that the Naval staff course for lieutenants, lieutenant-commanders and commanders was established and in 1919 the RN Staff College was finally established.<sup>19</sup> The lack of an RN War Staff until 1887 and an Army General Staff until 1906 also caused a lack of oversight of intellectual, strategic and doctrinal development.<sup>20</sup> However, the Boer War at the beginning of the Twentieth Century,

---

<sup>14</sup> Peter Randall, *Changes and Obstacles in Reforming the British Army, 1815-1854*, in Eds Locicero M, Mahoney R, Mitchell S, *A Military Transformed? Adaption and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945* (Solihull: Helion, 2014), p.45.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.44-45.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.43.

<sup>17</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, pp.8-21.

<sup>18</sup> Till, 'British Naval thinking: a contradiction in terms?' p.12-14. Lambert 'Education in the Royal Navy: 1815-1914', pp.49-55. The Naval War Course transferred to Portsmouth in 1906.

<sup>19</sup> Staff College establishment date from Till, 'British Naval thinking: a contradiction in terms?' p.14.

<sup>20</sup> For establishment of the Army General Staff see Halik Kochanski, 'Planning for Wars in the Final Years of the Pax Britannica, 1899-1903', in *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation 1890-1939* eds David French and Brian Holden Reid (London & Portland, Or: Taylor Francis e-library, 2005 [Frank Cass Publishers, 2001]), pp.8-22 (Staff College date

combined with a strategic pivot away from the Great Game towards possible Continental conflict demonstrated that such a system needed to be changed. The Haldane reforms and introduction of the General Staff gave the Army Staff College a more important role: to prepare Army officers for staff roles.<sup>21</sup> While the anti-intellectual tradition in the services endured, attendance at Army Staff College would become increasingly important for progression, particularly after the introduction of the policy of requiring members of the General Staff to be Staff College graduates.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Robbins pointed out that Staff College was a passport to high command.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the fact that attendance was selective gave the Staff College an additional 'prestige' that helped career progression.<sup>24</sup> For a small body of officers, there was a genuine interest in intellectual aspects of warfare in the Victorian and Edwardian Army and RN. For instance, Capper, GFR Henderson, Wilson, Rawlinson and Fisher were all deep thinkers.

Of note, none of the higher echelons of RNAS officers had attended a staff course which, perhaps, explains why the RAF Staff College would resemble the Army colleges rather than the more technical Naval Staff College.<sup>25</sup> The RN appeared to attribute less importance to the broad intellectual education of its

---

specifically p.21). For Establishment of RN War Staff see Lambert 'Education in the Royal Navy: 1815-1914', p.48.

<sup>21</sup> For Haldane reforms see Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army*, pp.205-212. See also Edward M Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980). See also Simon Higgins, 'How was Richard Haldane able to Reform the British Army? An Historical Assessment Using a Contemporary Change Management Model', (Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.10. Higgins, 'How was Richard Haldane able to Reform the British Army?', p.37.

<sup>23</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.10. See also Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', p.77.

<sup>24</sup> Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.42.

<sup>25</sup> Pugh, 'The Conceptual Origins of the Control of the Air', p.162.

officers than the Army. Pugh highlighted a 'technologically based ethic' thereby explaining Lambert's view that 'the work of the Royal Naval College before 1914 was limited, dominated by technical issues and made little contribution to the development of naval thought'.<sup>26</sup>

In the Army, the Wilsonian era at Camberley and the role of the Staff College in supplying officers for the General Staff was important.<sup>27</sup> According to Bond, Wilson was pre-eminent in emphasising the term 'School of Thought' at Camberley and highlighted that this involved 'training of a body of staff officers imbued with uniform methods of work and a common approach to staff problems'.<sup>28</sup> This supported the goal of the Army Staff College to produce efficient staff officers to man the newly established General Staff. Jeffrey wrote that the 'School of Thought' established 'common, and constructive, habits of thinking and working throughout the staff'.<sup>29</sup> Bond underlined Wilson's ideas of developing a 'School of Thought' at the Staff College went far beyond the functional aspects of staff officer training and was intended to prepare officers for higher command.<sup>30</sup> The provenance of the idea that Staff College should be a broadening experience is clear from GFR Henderson who wrote of the Army Staff College: 'something more than the regimental experience was indispensable for those who provided the brains of the Army'.<sup>31</sup> From 1906-1910, Wilson, in particular, encouraged thinking at the Staff College that, somewhat controversially, involved going beyond studying within the confines of

---

<sup>26</sup> Pugh, *Oil and Water*, p.130.

<sup>27</sup> Wilson arrived as Commandant at Camberley on 1 January 1907. *The London Gazette* No 27982, p.32, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27982/page/32>, accessed 26 April 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p.259.

<sup>29</sup> Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.69.

<sup>30</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p.264-265.

<sup>31</sup> Henderson GFR, *The Science of War*, p.897.

military themes exploring political aspects pertinent to the era and preparing officer for their staff duties as well as for higher command further down the line.<sup>32</sup>

### **The RAF Staff College**

Documents such as the 1919 Memorandum and *Aspects of Service Aviation* indicate that Trenchard, who was not a psc graduate, was, apparently, a keen supporter of the Staff College and the potential for it to establish a 'school of thought' similar to the Army Staff College.<sup>33</sup> However, on inauguration day, on 4 April 1922, he did not make an appearance for reasons that are not clear in archival material and have not been adequately explained in the historiography.<sup>34</sup> It is possible that the enthusiasm for the Staff College in the 1919 memorandum came more from his staff. However, his enthusiasm and engagement with the first three Staff Courses suggest a genuine early interest in the potential for the RAF Staff College.

The College was established with an £18 000 budget for making alterations to the existing huts.<sup>35</sup> The result was, in Mason's words, a Staff College housed in 'scarcely elegant buildings'.<sup>36</sup> This was not an establishment with the physical presence of either the RAF College or Halton. However, having a college at least gave the RAF a physical location where air power could be discussed and taught as the dominant theme underlining both the importance of air power as well as the independence of the new force. Brooke-Popham highlighted, in his inaugural speech, that the new RAF Staff College would be unlike the other two that

---

<sup>32</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, pp.263-64.

<sup>33</sup> Trenchard, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', pp.10-21.

<sup>34</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/21 (2 of 9), 'Royal Air Force College Opened. Sir Hugh Trenchard's Address', *Royal Air Force Intelligence*, No 57.

<sup>35</sup> AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book under Nov 1919 entry.

<sup>36</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.4.

predominantly examined their respective service roles. He said that 'in ours we have to learn many details of the other two services as well as our own'.<sup>37</sup> This recognised that, as well as having independent utility, air power was likely to play an integral part in all future military and naval operations. Had there not been an independent RAF Staff College, it is highly likely that the discussions on air power at the RN and Army Staff Colleges would have continued along the lines of Joubert de la Ferte's experience in which he 'had to refute arguments against a separate Service which were both unfair and ill-informed'.<sup>38</sup> This was underlined by Boyle who referred to Wilson's contemptuous descriptions of the RAF at Camberley.<sup>39</sup>

The attitude of students towards the RAF Staff College was, according to Mason, one of ambivalence and, perhaps, not what Trenchard had somewhat idealistically hoped for. Mason quoted Air Marshal Baldwin, a first course attendee, as follows:

It would be fair to say that the majority of us approached the Course with fear and trepidation, viewing the possibility of being detailed for duty on the Staff with dismay. We were of the age and seniority group which had acquired a war time antipathy to Brass Hats and Staff Tabs.<sup>40</sup>

Parton wrote that 'the anti-intellectual bias that had always seemed to exist within the British military establishment had also found a place within the junior Service'.<sup>41</sup> However, despite such antipathy there were some thinkers in the RAF who should not be overlooked such as Sykes, Brooke-Popham and Slessor.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> KCLMA, Liddell Hart Brooke-Popham Papers 1\_5\_4, 'Address given by Commandant, 4 April 1922', p.3

<sup>38</sup> Joubert de La Ferte, *The Third Service*, p.73, also Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.3.

<sup>39</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.383.

<sup>40</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.12.

<sup>41</sup> Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine:1919 – 1939', p.99.

<sup>42</sup> On Brooke-Popham see Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Morale Bombing"', p.263. On Slessor see Meilinger, 'The Historiography of Airpower', p.485.

Referring to course content, Biddle wrote that 'the course was designed to 'draw lessons from World War One to form doctrine'.<sup>43</sup> However, that interpretation was too narrow. The *Notes on the Course of Study* clearly laid out two broader aims:

The Course of Study at the Staff College is at present devised with two objects in view; firstly to train officers in staff duties whether in peace or war; secondly, to afford a general education which will serve as a sound foundation for the building up of a school of thought in the Royal Air Force.<sup>44</sup>

Brooke Popham, in his address at the RAF College opening Ceremony, laid down three objectives of the College:

- (a) To train officers for work on the staff not only in war but in peace.
- (b) To give future commanders some instructions in the broader aspects of war whether on sea, on land or in the air.
- (c) To found a school of thought and to assist in solving problems regarding the organisation, training or employment of the Air Force.<sup>45</sup>

How these objectives were achieved is useful to the analysis of what the impact of the Staff College was on RAF Culture.

The first objective required officers to learn the skills, processes and practices for an officer to conduct RAF staff duties. The first course included subjects entitled General Principles of Organization of the Staff, Responsibilities of the Staff Officer, Orders and Instructions, Service Writing and Signal Systems in the 3 Services including codes and cyphers. It also included Air Force Organization incorporating the Administrative History of the RAF and its Predecessors, The Air Ministry, Air Force Law and Courts Martial.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Biddle *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

<sup>44</sup> AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book, 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'. Also reproduced in Annex A to Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.A-1.

<sup>45</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4, 'Commandant's Address 4 April 1922', p.1.

<sup>46</sup> AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book. 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'.

This functional training was very important to RAF espoused culture. The RAF had only recently emerged from being run as two separate organisations and this aspect of the course reinforced RAF methodology for middle ranking officers enabling cultural structuration to take place.<sup>47</sup> This helped them to align to, and reinforce, the RAF's newly formed processes and practices. Ellwood emphasised the staff training elements of the Staff College including appreciation and order writing and how useful they were to the staff officer following graduation.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the purely functional lessons, lectures on the RAF's short history also linked it to its two founder services. This helped to reaffirm the basis behind, and need for, independence of the RAF by asserting that only air-minded RAF personnel had the expertise to deliver air power and provided them with the air power training necessary to substantiate that. This all took place in an environment that viewed everything through an air power lens and was a part of RAF promotion of air-mindedness. This is in line with Gray's point that:

The central thesis behind the 'Air Force spirit' was, and arguably still is, essentially that air power, in peace and war, is best commanded and controlled by airmen who have been specifically trained, educated and have acquired the necessary experience in warfare in the third dimension'.<sup>49</sup>

The course also provided practical organisational skills and understanding for executing elements of RAF policy and doctrine.<sup>50</sup> The course syllabus taught the processes and practices that fell out of higher level doctrine and policy. These had a very real effect upon the daily running of the Service and were, therefore,

---

<sup>47</sup> RAFM AIR 69/19 'Programme of Work 1<sup>st</sup> Course'.

<sup>48</sup> IWM Audio Files, Catalogue 3167, Ellwood A, Reel 3, 13:55-17:21. See also RAFM AIR 69/19 'Programme of Work 1<sup>st</sup> Course'.

<sup>49</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare History Theory and Practice*, p.46.

<sup>50</sup> RAFM AIR 69/19 'Programme of Work 1<sup>st</sup> Course'. Also, AIR29/527 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'. Staff College Operations Record Book. See also AIR 69/30 'Programme of Work – Second Course'. AIR 69/47 'Notes on Fifth Course'.



important at staff officer level. The policy of economy was an example of this. It formed the cornerstone of how the RAF would operate throughout the interwar years and was included in Trenchard's opening address to the officers of the First Course:

Many officers will pass through this College both as instructors and pupils, and in the future from their brains, I hope, will emanate new and brilliant ideas for the development of the Air and its power...I want you to have that one thing permanently in mind in your studies for the development of the Air. That way lies in economy. I want you to think of all the possibilities of substitution of one form of force for another.<sup>51</sup>

Culturally, that policy would run deep, particularly at the RAF Staff College. As Mason noted 'that particular plea was to haunt the college for the next 50 years'.<sup>52</sup> Incorporating and examining policies such as that, substitution and independence into the course was an important part of indoctrinating the middle management and future high commanders of the RAF.

Brooke-Popham's second objective was 'to give future commanders some instructions in the broader aspects of war whether on sea, on land or in the air'.<sup>53</sup> Gray wrote that the Staff College was designed to educate and broaden future senior commanders'.<sup>54</sup> In addition to the formal lectures, the Staff College reinforced the importance of joint operations and that the RAF was technical service. The syllabus also encouraged thinking beyond the military sphere that helped contextualise air power with the political and scientific developments of the

---

<sup>51</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/21 (2 of 9), 'Royal Air Force College Opened. Sir Hugh Trenchard's Address', *Royal Air Force Intelligence*, No 57, p.2.

<sup>52</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.5.

<sup>53</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4, 'Commandant's Address 4 April 1922', p.1.

<sup>54</sup> Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.43.

era. The social aspects of the course, meanwhile, helped reinforce the relatively new norms of the young service. All these aspects are worthy of examination.

James had a narrow view of the RAF Staff College. He incorrectly wrote: ‘...the RAF Staff College trained officers mainly in the making out of Task Charts’.<sup>55</sup> The Staff College syllabus not only situated air power’s role in warfare but there were also lectures on more general scientific subjects such as: Wireless – General Principles, Aerial Transport Air and Medical aspects of flying, Photography as an Aid to Field Archaeology, The Organization for Scientific Research in Great Britain and Structures of the Atom.<sup>56</sup> Mason identified that the course involved looking more broadly at the world in order to understand ‘knowledge of scientific progress beyond the confines of aeronautics’.<sup>57</sup> Biddle saw the Staff College as a ‘disseminating station for the accepted organizational view point’ rather than a forum for constructive thought.<sup>58</sup> Parton, however, wrote that the Staff College did help identify the lessons of the First World War and that it produced a cadre officers that were able to think for themselves and that the College ‘began to lead the doctrine’.<sup>59</sup> Certainly, the Staff College concentrated on air power thinking which was the RAF’s speciality. Like the RAF College and the apprentice system, this helped propel the notion that the RAF was a highly technical service into the deeper layers of culture identified in the Roundel Model. The Staff College was also a forum for conceptual development of air power and helped develop early doctrine. However, it will be

---

<sup>55</sup> James, *Paladins*, p.150.

<sup>56</sup> RAFM TNA AIR 69/19 ‘Programmes of Work – First Course’, RAFM TNA AIR 69/30 ‘Programme of Work – Second Course’.

<sup>57</sup> Mason R, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.7.

<sup>58</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92

<sup>59</sup> Parton, ‘The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine:1919 – 1939’, p.99. p.223.

seen later that this was largely restricted to the first three courses. After that, it will be demonstrated that Biddle's view on the Staff College sadly prevailed.

The Staff College also aimed to broaden the Student's understanding of the world and military theory in order to understand how the RAF and air power fitted in and could be optimised. The early lectures on the First Course included Transportation – Shipping, Jackson's Valley Campaign Technology, The English language, Labour Problems from the Trade Union Point of View.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the Second Course clearly demonstrated a broad view was advocated with lectures including: British Foreign Policy, Islam, General strategy 1914-1918, Labour Problems and Economics. Visits to units of the other Services were also arranged.

A library list is not available in the archives, however, Brooke-Popham loaned the College a very large selection of books from his personal library that provides an insight into the breadth of some of the reading material that was available in the college.<sup>61</sup> Corbett, Ludendorff, Tirpitz, Churchill, Hindenburg, Clausewitz, Fuller, Liddell Hart, Corbett, Mahan, Wilkinson (Brain of an Army), Childers, Bismark, Lee, GFR Henderson and von Schellendorf were amongst the selection covering a wide variety of topics of both military and wider interest.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, Fuller lectured at the RAF Staff College.<sup>63</sup> Spaight was also an influence at the RAF Staff College as he was for Trenchard and the RAF more broadly.<sup>64</sup> In the preface to the second edition of *Air Power and War Rights*, for instance, Spaight highlighted the honour of

---

<sup>60</sup> RAFM TNA AIR 69/19 'Programmes of Work – First Course'.

<sup>61</sup> AIR 69/46 Letter from Veeseey to Brooke-Popham dated 20 March 1926.

<sup>62</sup> AIR 69/46 List of Books Left in the Directing Staff Room RAF Staff College by AVM Brooke-Popham, 30 March 1926.

<sup>63</sup> Fuller lectured at the College on Control of the Air, see AIR 69/50 and AIR 69/57. The earliest lecture in the archive was in week 13 of the first term of the second course on 26 July 1923, TNA AIR 69/30 'Programmes of Work – Second Course'.

<sup>64</sup> Spaight's influence was previously referenced in Chapter V.

having his book recommended as RAF Staff College material.<sup>65</sup> Of note, contrary to popular belief, it is highly unlikely that Douhet had an influence on the early years of the RAF Staff College; Higham conducted an extensive search and could find 'no evidence of Douhet's works in Britain until the mid to late 1930's'.<sup>66</sup>

The 1919 Memorandum, Trenchard's address to the RAF College on its opening day and Brooke-Popham's address all underlined that the RAF Leadership and the Commandant of the College all supported the need for joint operations.<sup>67</sup>

We must put aside from our minds any idea that we are omnipotent and that we, and we alone, are the people that cannot be argued with. For practical purposes of the defence of the Empire the three Services are really one Service, and all of you must realise that whatever happens, whatever discussions arise, it is all three that will defend this Empire.<sup>68</sup>

In terms of course content, joint activity was well represented and is further evidence that the College succeeded in broadening students' minds. Modules covering Naval and Army Organisation were taught alongside those of the RAF.<sup>69</sup> The Supply and Lines of Communication module involved understanding 'the relative strategic value of L of C [Lines of Communication] to the 3 Services'.<sup>70</sup> The Transportation module examined railways, shipping and the Army transport systems in the First World War. Modules were devoted to The Nature of War, Naval Strategy, Naval Tactics, Land Strategy, and Land Tactics demonstrating a clear

---

<sup>65</sup> Gray, *The RAF Bomber Command Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.55. Parton also provided useful detail on Spaight and the influence he had on the legal position with respect to strategic bombing. Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939', pp.141-145. See also Gray, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*, p.22.

<sup>66</sup> For Douhet, see Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.257.

<sup>67</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/21 (2 of 9), 'Royal Air Force College Opened. Sir Hugh Trenchard's Address', *Royal Air Force Intelligence*, No 57. Liddell Hart Archives, BrookePopham 1/5-7, 'Commandant's Address 4 April 1922'.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> RAFM AIR 69/19 'Programme of Work 1<sup>st</sup> Course'. AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book, 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'. See also See Also AIR 69/30 'Programme of Work – Second Course'. AIR 69/47 'Notes on Fifth Course'.

<sup>70</sup> AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book, 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'.

intent to teach broadly.<sup>71</sup> Technical developments in the other services were also considered such as radiotelephony.<sup>72</sup> It should also be remembered that significant numbers of RAF personnel at the time were involved in both RN and Army co-operation and the syllabus taught at Andover reflected that.<sup>73</sup> The output of course essays in AP 956 is also testament to the RAF Staff College not concentrating exclusively on RAF independent strategic capabilities. Of ten essays published from the First Course, only one specifically examined independent operations.<sup>74</sup>

The Staff College also encouraged development beyond the formally structured lectures, discussions, appreciations and exercises. Much like the RAF College and the apprentice system, social activities and sport were very important to Staff College life.<sup>75</sup> This was extremely important to the development of RAF culture, particularly in its early stages. It was here at Andover that many of these officers who had completed their early training with either the RN or the Army, were brought together and formally indoctrinated into an RAF way of thinking for the first time. The, social norms encouraged at the College would be important as the officers returned to the wider RAF. Given the higher rank of the officers, the social

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> RAFM TNA AIR 69/19 'Programmes of Work – First Course'. TNA AIR 69/30 'Programmes of Work – Second Course'.

<sup>73</sup> The figures from the *Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence on National and Imperial Defence* shows that the RAF, even after the Geddes cuts, in 1924 was operating 13 flights of aircraft embarked on carriers, 1 flight of Naval co-operation flying boats, 2 squadrons of UK based Army co-operation squadrons and 2 reserve squadrons that had a co-operation role *Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence on National and Imperial Defence*, HMSO, 1924, reproduced in *Air Power Review Special Edition* (Spring 2013), pp.308-309.

<sup>74</sup> Although this could have been due to many factors such as the academic quality of the essays Air Publication 956, *A Selection of Lectures and Essays from the Work of Officers Attending the First Course at The Royal Air Force Staff College, 1922-1923* (Air Ministry, 1923), JSCSC Library, Shrivenham.

<sup>75</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4 highlighted the importance of sport, particularly horse-riding and hunting. Staff College Joining Instructions for 1939 in AIR 69/291 included the sporting facilities available as Squash Cricket, Hockey, Football, Tennis and Golfing facilities available at Andover in 1939.

structure at the Staff College was more relaxed than at the other two RAF institutions of initial indoctrination; this is clear from the humour exhibited in *The Dodo* and in *The Hawk*.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, Brooke-Popham saw it as the Staff College's role to set high standards for the wider RAF to follow:

There is so much we can do by way of example...show officers how to economise on weekends, cocktails, port and cigarettes, and so save money, not to invest, not to buy a motor cycle, but to keep a horse. I hope I shall not be accused of harping too much on the question of horses. I know there are good men who don't hunt and bad men who do, but I am certain that every man is improved by hunting or even by keeping a horse and riding it.<sup>77</sup>

Mason wrote that, Brooke-Popham's 'social and military attitude' was 'firmly rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>78</sup> English, meanwhile wrote that:

As a graduate of the Army Staff College at Camberley, Brooke-Popham wanted Andover to take on some of the same traditions and gentlemanly pastimes as its sister college, such as riding, hunting, and a dinner club. He also encouraged the 'Public School Spirit', levelling, and teamwork that were fostered at Camberley.<sup>79</sup>

Consequently, despite being tasked with cogitating on the employment of cutting edge aerial technology, the RAF Staff College was set up along very traditional lines. Brooke-Popham's inaugural speech reflected of how important class was to British society and the type of man who was considered worthy officer material.<sup>80</sup> In order to earn the RAF respectability within the services, the pressure was on to make the Staff College as similar as possible to the RN and Army Staff

---

<sup>76</sup> The *Dodo* was the first unofficial Staff College magazine that was replaced by the official *Hawk*. These are held at JSASC Library, Shrivenham. Despite the humour, it is clear that a Directing Staff/Student divide existed, a feature that continues in the modern Staff College. This appears to have been good-humoured.

<sup>77</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4 'Commandant's Address, 4 April 1922', p.4. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

<sup>78</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.6.

<sup>79</sup> English 'The RAF Staff College', p.410.

<sup>80</sup> Kirke's cultural stripe theory expands on external influence of culture on a military organisation, Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.190. For comments on the importance of class within the British Army see Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, pp.14-16. See also Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, pp.8-12.

Colleges. But at the same time, Brooke-Popham did go some way towards breaking the mould.

Sheffield pointed out that 'modern scholarship has confirmed the essential accuracy of J.F.C. Fuller's view that the pre-war Regular Army was 'recruited from the bottom of society' but 'led from the top'.<sup>81</sup> Wilkinson used supporting arguments by Cannadine and Rubenstein to demonstrate that the officer cadres of in Britain's armed forces underwent a gradual reduction in the representation of the landed gentry and aristocracy between the end of the Nineteenth Century and the beginning of the Second World War.<sup>82</sup> She noted that:

Prior to World War I 50% of the officers in the army were drawn from the landed classes. However, throughout and after the war, there was a marked shortage of young men from the landed gentry and as a result, it was the new elites coming out of the public school system, made up of both landed and bourgeois families that became the new dominant social group within the army.<sup>83</sup>

Clearly, changes occurred during the First World War when the pressures of mass conscription had resulted in a much wider range of classes being given officer status.<sup>84</sup> Sheffield wrote that 'an officer's leadership skills, competence, paternalism and courage determined his relations with his men, not his social class'.<sup>85</sup> However, snobbery remained strong among the regular Army; Robbins highlighted significant frictions that emerged from members of the regular Army looking down upon their

---

<sup>81</sup> Sheffield, *Command and Morale*, p.176.

<sup>82</sup> Wilkinson, 'The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957', p.20. David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy, Grandeur and decline in Modern Britain*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.189. W D Rubenstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain, 1750-1990*, (London: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2003 [London: Routledge,1993]), pp.102-139.

<sup>83</sup> Wilkinson, 'The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957', p.20.

<sup>84</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.182.

<sup>85</sup> Sheffield, *Command and Morale*, p182.

civilian colleagues, highlighting a 'professional exclusiveness' of the old Army.<sup>86</sup>

Following the First World War, the RAF Cranwell Character Book indicates that there was a reversion to recruit the officer cadre from a 'narrow band of schools' similar to that which existed in the Army before the war.<sup>87</sup> However, an aspect that remains largely un-explored in the historiography, with respect to the RAF, is that the employment of temporary officers in the First World War had, nevertheless, broken some paradigms as Sheffield pointed out. Despite Brooke-Popham's traditionalism, he recognised that the First World War was a watershed in terms of the understanding of morale and spirit. His teachings heralded a small but significant shift that undermined the idea that patriotism and idealism were not just the prerogative of the officer classes. He noted that little real study had gone into morale but he established that 'we must, therefore, investigate the subject ourselves'.<sup>88</sup> It was not just Trenchard, then, who was promoting early shoots of meritocracy. However, Brook-Popham's teaching on morale should not be over-emphasised as transformational. This represented only a small change in mind-set. The majority of his other teaching and speeches continued to indicate he was of a very traditional mould, except, of course, his attitudes towards aviation itself and that to die would be 'an awfully big adventure'.<sup>89</sup>

In his inaugural speech, Brooke-Popham highlighted an RAF insecurity:

---

<sup>86</sup> Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, pp.14-17.

<sup>87</sup> The RAFC Character Book reflects the narrow band of schools referred to by Robbins. See also Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18*, p.11.

<sup>88</sup> AIR 69/23 Morale. 'Some Notes on Morale by Air Commodore Brooke Popham'. January, September and December 1923. p2. See also AIR 69/35 'Morale 3<sup>rd</sup> Course'.

<sup>89</sup> See Chapter II.



This reputation for being social failures still clings to us (the RAF) to some extent and is hard to kill but it is up to us to hasten its death and to ensure its speedy burial.<sup>90</sup>

It has already been seen that Trenchard had similar concerns. That insecurity was doubtless compounded by the constant state of siege under which the RAF existed in the interwar period.<sup>91</sup> And it was not just at senior levels that this instability was felt. When questioned about whether he felt that the RAF was under threat, Ellwood, a front line pilot at that time, replied: 'Yes I think we were all conscious of it'.<sup>92</sup> Joubert de la Ferté also expressed a sense of embattlement and its effect upon morale and recruitment.<sup>93</sup> Ferris also commented on insecurity as a trait in the RAF: 'RAF officers, coming from a socially insecure service, emphasized personal behaviour, sportsman-like behaviour and natty grooming'.<sup>94</sup> In addition to breadth of teaching and being the exemplar for RAF officer standards, Brooke-Popham hoped, in his final address to the First Course, that the Staff College had helped to provide continuity and tradition to the new Service:

...and I should like people to regard this place to some extent as a home in the same way Army officers regard Camberley. We lack stability in the Air Force, that's not to be wondered at when one thinks of squadrons disbanded to-day in India, re-formed tomorrow at Gosport, and split up next week into autonomous flights. But here we have something more lasting more continuous and it might well become a temple for the traditions of our service.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4, 'Commandant's Address 4 April 1922', p.4.

<sup>91</sup> This is clear from files in TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives,

<sup>92</sup> IWM Audio files, Catalogue 3167, Ellwood 13:38-14:03.

<sup>93</sup> Joubert de la Ferté, *The Third Service*, pp.72-81.

<sup>94</sup> John Ferris, 'Student and Master: Airpower and The Fall of Singapore, 1920-1941' in *Sixty Years On: The Fall of Singapore Revisited*, eds Farrell B and Hunter S, (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), pp.94-121.

<sup>95</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, BrookePopham 1/5/7, 'Final Address 29 March 1923', p.7

He also said that he had been most anxious to 'see to the right spirit develop in the College and thanked the course for their contribution to that.'<sup>96</sup> *The Hawk* demonstrated that the RAF College was certainly contributing to that spirit in a way that would not have been possible had RAF officers been trained by the other services. It showed what students and Directing Staff were writing but also provided a window on the more informal contemporary attitudes and humour of the students and staff. *The Hawk* evolved from a publication called *The Dodo*, an unofficially endorsed publication that was written by the fifth course on 1 July 1927 at Andover. The following year, it was decided to start a more formally endorsed publication that would be read beyond the Staff College. The editorial began as follows:

The Hawk opens its first page with a word in memory of The Dodo, the very entertaining magazine produced as a memento of the Fifth Course. The Dodo stands on record as the very first of its kind at Andover, and The Hawk feels a twinge of regret at replacing so gallant a pioneer.

It was felt, however, that a magazine could be produced that would be of interest to others besides the thirty or so officers on the course. Quite apart from records of domestic interest, there is a fund of material written during the course that would make interesting reading. The principle on which The Hawk has been published therefore, is that its contents shall consist, for the most part, of work produced in the ordinary run of duty at the Staff College'.<sup>97</sup>

*The Hawk* is an important publication for the modern researcher as Mahoney identified:

As well as being a useful indicator about how the RAF thought about its role, *The Hawk* also included some very helpful personal reminiscences about life at the Staff Colleges.<sup>98</sup>

The contents of the first issue included serious articles that broached air power issues, for example, Volume 1 included articles on topics such as *Aircraft in*

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> JSCSC Library, 'Editorial', *The Hawk*, Vol 1, No1, (Christmas 1928), p.3.

<sup>98</sup> Mahoney Ross, 'Useful sayings for the D.S.', 18 Feb 2016, Air Power History <https://thoughtsonmilitaryhistory.wordpress.com/2016/02/18/useful-sayings-for-the-d-s/>, accessed 22 April 2016.

*Army Exercises, A Hill Station in Iraq, The South African Air Force, The University Air Squadrons, Night Flying, H.M.S. Furious with the Grand Fleet 1918, Seaplane Patrols in the Channel, 1916-1918.* As well as items of interest to those on the course such as *Sport during the Course, The Staff College Emblem and The Staff College Dinner Club*, the first issue also included some humour such as in an article entitled “*Discussions after the Lecture*”.<sup>99</sup>

Trenchard’s interest in the Staff College Magazine and its output was expressed in the first edition:

Dear Commandant,  
I understand you are about to publish a Royal Air Force Staff College Journal. I hope this Journal will fulfil a wide felt want in the Royal Air Force, and that all ranks will find it matter that will be both interesting and useful to them. I myself shall read it with the greatest interest.  
Yours sincerely H.M. TRENCHARD.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, *The Hawk* was far more than an internal publication. It was an artefact through which developing air power ideas as well as the cultural values and beliefs of future leaders were made available to the wider RAF. The magazine helped reinforce RAF independence, co-operation with the other services as well as independent strategic action.<sup>101</sup> The magazines also showed a playful side of the RAF; that it was an organisation infused with humour and also that the RAF had its own fast emerging language. Thus, the RAF Staff College certainly succeeded in delivering the breadth of training, in the classroom and socially, that Brooke-Popham hoped for.

---

<sup>99</sup> JSCSC Library, ‘Editorial’, *The Hawk* (Vol 1, No1, Christmas 1928), Contents page.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p.4. This strengthens the argument that Trenchard’s interest was genuine, although even this was likely written by a staff officer.

<sup>101</sup> Independence when referring to the RAF is sometimes interpreted to mean independent strategic force. Here this means simply RAF separateness i.e. independence from the other two services.

Brooke-Popham's third objective was 'to found a school of thought and to assist in solving problems regarding the organization, training or employment of the Air Force'.<sup>102</sup> Trenchard and Brooke-Popham's opening speeches have caused some confusion in the historiography of the RAF Staff College regarding what they set out to achieve. In 1996, Meilinger wrote that 'the role of the Staff College in doctrine formulation and education has not been adequately examined' citing only English and Mason as subject matter experts.<sup>103</sup> Mahoney wrote that the intellectual innovation of the RAF Staff College, particularly with respect to doctrine, has been over-emphasised:

This doctrinal view emerged from a misinterpretation of a phrase in Andover's opening address, which described officers attending Andover as 'the cradle as I call it, of our brain'. Linked to the idea of a school of thought for the RAF, and while an aspect of military education, this was not Andover's primary purpose. This phrase had much broader pedagogical connotations, which linked education and leadership development by creating leaders able to lead the RAF.<sup>104</sup>

Mahoney was correct to highlight that the term 'School of Thought' referred to a broader set of principles than just the creation of doctrine. Trenchard and Brooke-Popham did indeed intend that the 'School of Thought' and the Staff College would involve intellectual exploration in order to establish well thought out air power theory, and to develop in line with the Wilsonian tradition that had been established at Camberley. In an address at the Air Conference in 1920, Trenchard had highlighted the lack of an RAF Clausewitz, Hamley or Mahan to express the principles of tactics or strategy for the air and said 'the need for a Royal Air Force Staff College to

---

<sup>102</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4, 'Commandant's Address 4 April 1922', p.1.

<sup>103</sup> Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Morale Bombing"', p.262. See also Meilinger, 'The Historiography of Airpower', p.483.

<sup>104</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.218.

analyse principles and create a school of thought is obvious'.<sup>105</sup> Brooke-Popham's inaugural address and his subsequent activity certainly encouraged innovation in the first three courses such as dissecting the newly written doctrine and passing conference papers to CAS. As Parton pointed out, the Staff College led in some key areas of doctrinal development such as air policing and control of the air.<sup>106</sup> Thus the RAF Staff College was genuinely established to have a conceptual role regarding doctrinal development in addition to preparing the students to be good staff officer.<sup>107</sup> Trenchard engaged the Staff College with the actual work of the Air Staff and used the output.<sup>108</sup> It is reasonable, therefore, to think that Trenchard, or the staff writing his speeches, really did mean that 'the cradle... of our brain' would herald the beginning of a truly thinking and questioning organisation that would contribute to policy, doctrine and strategy.<sup>109</sup> This was also backed up in his inaugural speech in which he referred both to the importance of staff work, but also introduced the idea that students would be called upon to think about much bigger issues. Regarding 'the development of the Air' he did not want pre-judged solutions but asked for investigation that 'must be carefully studied and investigated'.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Trenchard, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', *The Army Quarterly*, pp.10-21.

<sup>106</sup> Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939', p.99. p.223.

<sup>107</sup> Rewriting the doctrine was referred to in 'On The Royal Air Force Staff College', *The Aeroplane*, (13 December, 1922), p.458. See also 'The Royal Air Force Staff College', *Flight* (7 December 1922), p.720. It was also referred to directly by the students of the First Course in their end of course play RAFM Air 69/28 'No 1 Staff Course – Script of End of Course Play, 'Jenkins My Hat and Coat', 28 March 1923, p.2.

<sup>108</sup> For example, Staff College appraisals were used by Trenchard to inform discussions about the balance of fighter and bomber squadrons in the RAF in 1923. Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain*, p.177.

<sup>109</sup> See Parton, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine: 1919 – 1939' p.16. See also Trenchard, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', p.18.

<sup>110</sup> RAFM Trenchard Papers MFC 76/1/21(7 of 9) *Sir Hugh Trenchard's Address*.

Gray's view was that 'the courses were not specifically academic in nature and were certainly not the degree awarding institutions of recent years'.<sup>111</sup> The officers on the first course were experienced, meaning that their views and the discussions that were taking place at the Staff College were of use to the Air Staff and CAS. The essays published in AP 956, *A selection of Lectures and Essays from the Work of Officers Attending the First Course at the Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1923*' demonstrate that a broad range of air power topics were broached and also that the experiences from the First World War were being exchanged by airmen who had executed different roles.<sup>112</sup> Culturally, this served to encourage common understanding between these men. It appeared, therefore, that there was a genuine effort to develop intellectual thought about air power but it had more of a practical rather than an intellectual slant. According to Mason, students held conferences on Egypt, the Official Operations Manual, Fighting in the Air, Attack on Ground Troops, Home Defence.<sup>113</sup> The results of those discussions were taken to CAS conferences that Mason said demonstrated 'views of the Staff College on fundamental issues of Air Policy were both sought and listened to'.<sup>114</sup> However this did not last. Mason noted that after only 3 courses, 'The RAF discovered its own identity of form and doctrine the students would tend to become much more the learners and rather less the contributors' and that the 'Air Council does not again

---

<sup>111</sup> Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.42.

<sup>112</sup> Air Publication 956, 'A Selection of Lectures and Essays from the Work of Officers Attending the First Course at the Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1923.

<sup>113</sup> Mason R, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.10.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

seem to have sought students' opinions on matters of fundamental air power doctrine'.<sup>115</sup>

What did continue, however, was an RAF way of thinking that would still be useful to the students in future staff appointments. The College was also encouraging a deep sense of air-mindedness in which students were developing a common language regarding air power. The value of this is extremely important, as they would serve in the wider RAF where the fusion of their experiences would help to write policy and doctrine in their roles as staff officers.

However, Trenchard's obsession with reproducing RAF institutions in the image of those of the other services also ensured that many of the faults of those organisations would be reproduced. The narrow demographic pool of public schooled military men imbued with the military culture of their former service resulted in both staff and student adopting processes and practices similar roles to those at the other Staff Colleges. These included the relationship between the DS and the students, the general structure of the courses and also adopting terminology such as DS, pinks and whites.<sup>116</sup>

From the second course onwards examinations were introduced which, with time, would result in an emergence of dogmatic adherence to established doctrine and policy as the process involved cramming from the endorsed documents.<sup>117</sup> During the courses the conservatism and a formulaic approach to the course also resulted in increasing unquestioning adherence to the 'pink' by both staff and DS.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>116</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College, 1854-1914*.

<sup>117</sup> The Staff College examinations were introduced on the second course. Mason R, *The Royal Air Force Staff College, p.16*.

<sup>118</sup> The 'pink' refers to the Directing Staff approved answer. It was written on pink paper as opposed to the question which was written on white paper. See Slessor, *The Central Blue*,

Furthermore, as students returned as DS, the views that had emerged in the early Staff College years were further reinforced and the officially endorsed view of doctrine and policies became increasingly entrenched and internalized among the students.<sup>119</sup> This is another example of Giddens' structuration theory. This internalized view was then transmitted more broadly across the RAF when the Staff College students progressed to staff duties in the 'real' RAF. Real questioning, therefore, was not to prove an outcome of the Staff College beyond the first few courses.

The distribution of AP 956 and subsequent versions which had their own AP numbers, as well as *The Hawk* across the wider RAF was an intentional move to spread the 'School of Thought' beyond Andover.<sup>120</sup> That would serve to institutionalise, even further, the RAF's ideas supporting Biddle's claims that the RAF Staff College recycled 'the accepted organization viewpoint'.<sup>121</sup> She pointed out that 'internal ideologies perpetuated themselves' as the RAF Staff College matured and former students returned as instructors.<sup>122</sup> Meilinger also provided a similar view: 'Trenchard's instinctive beliefs on this subject [airpower] found form in the official doctrine manuals of the RAF. It was in turn taught and institutionalized in the Staff College'.<sup>123</sup> In some respects, perpetuation of ideologies worked well for the RAF. It helped the RAF speak with one voice, thereby ensuring that the logic

---

p89. The term 'don't fight the white' means don't fight the question, this is an example of Staff College slang.

<sup>119</sup> The schemes of work in AIR69 reveal that changes from year to year were few. RAFM AIR 69/19 'Programme of Work 1<sup>st</sup> Course'. See AIR29/527 Staff College Operations Record Book, 'Notes on the Course of Study: 1922'. See also RAFM AIR69 30 'Programme of Work – Second Course' and RAFM AIR 69/47 'Notes on Fifth Course'.

<sup>120</sup> Air Publication 956, *A Selection of Lectures and Essays*.

<sup>121</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid* p.92.

<sup>123</sup> Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Morale Bombing', p.263.



behind independence, for example, was ingrained in the members of the organisation. It also ensured that staff work conducted in the defence of the RAF was coherent during the various assaults on whether the RAF should remain as a single service. However, the conformity did little to encourage the emergence of the Clausewitz, Hamley or Mahan Trenchard desired for the RAF.

The major downside of this perpetuation of ideologies was that there was little questioning of Trenchardian thought. When the RAF arrived in the Second World War, the lack of specialised navigators and suitable navigation equipment left the RAF poorly placed, despite the parallel doctrinal emphasis within the organisation on the value of strategic bombing. Strategic effect obviously required the aircraft to reach the correct target and for the bombs to be aimed appropriately, yet that appears to have been missed, most likely due to the evolution of an unquestioning system that spoke with one voice, the Trenchardian voice, but failed to question some of the flawed logic behind it. Ayelmore, nicely summed up the operator's perspective on the poor state of navigation equipment and training, something that Biddle also referred to.<sup>124</sup>

In the years between the world wars, the RAF had not tackled the problem of developing a system of aircraft navigation for operations by day or night that could cope with the difficult European conditions. There was the vain hope that bombers would be able to defend themselves on day operations with their power operated gun turrets, and that aircraft could adopt marine navigation with Dead (ded./deduced) Reckoning (DR) and sextant. This was a difficult task at ship speed, but it was almost impossible in an aircraft for such a system to provide the precise navigation required for target finding.<sup>125</sup>

Aycliffe, a serving flight lieutenant speaking at the RAF Historical Society, attributed the deficiencies as follows: 'the real problem, I believe, lies with over

---

<sup>124</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.88.

<sup>125</sup> George Aylmore, 'The Good Guts, WW2 People's War, 9 Feb 2004, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/33/a2281033.shtml>, accessed 10 Nov 15.

ambitious RAF doctrine and dogma and with Trenchard's spirit and willpower with which the RAF was imbued'.<sup>126</sup> Jefford similarly wrote that 'had there been a sound foundation upon which to build, it might have coped, but, as a result of the neglect of the 1920s, there was not'.<sup>127</sup> The RAF Staff College was partly responsible for promoting and not questioning such doctrine and dogma. Loss of life and poor capability in the early stages of the Second World War were direct consequences of a lack of questioning in the inter-war RAF.

Free thought at the Staff College was further stifled by the following Air Staff instruction to the Staff College referred to by Parton:

The view of the Air Staff is that it is not considered advisable for serving Officers to contribute articles to the public Press. Any article so written would have to be censored, and even after that, the views set forth might have exception taken to them and raise a controversy, which at the present time is greatly to be deprecated, and in any event, *there are at present no Officers capable of writing a [sic] article in the first place, or to censor it when written in the second place.* [emphasis added by Parton].<sup>128</sup>

Parton's view of this was that 'Trenchard's oft-quoted desire to produce a Mahan of the air seems to have been at odds with the actual approach taken regarding publishing any thoughts in public from serving members of the Air Force'.<sup>129</sup>

Clearly, such censorship, combined with some of the rigid College processes and practices referred to earlier further prevented an atmosphere of genuine

---

<sup>126</sup> Alec Aycliffe, 'RAF Navigation Between the Wars' in *A History of Navigation in the Royal Air Force*, RAF Historical Society (1997), p.30.

[https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/EEA1B9D1\\_5056\\_A318\\_A88B16BD35A68C31.pdf](https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/EEA1B9D1_5056_A318_A88B16BD35A68C31.pdf), accessed 17 May 17.

<sup>127</sup> Wing Commander CG Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-pilots Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF* (London: Grub Street Publishing, 2014), p.144.

<sup>128</sup> Neville Parton, 'The Development of Early RAF Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, (Vol 72 No 4 October 2008), p.1160.

<sup>129</sup> Neville Parton, 'The Development of Early RAF Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, (Vol 72 No 4 October 2008), p.1160.

questioning emerging. This supports Gray's view that 'The consistent 'Trenchardian' doctrinal themes were reinforced through the full circle in lectures not only to the Staff College students, but also more widely'.<sup>130</sup>

Mason, English, Parton and Hall came under particular criticism from Mahoney for overly concentrating on the RAF Staff College's conceptual role: 'Distorted by a misunderstanding of its purpose, the historiography on Andover focuses on a narrow element of its curriculum; the development of air power doctrine'.<sup>131</sup> However, their writing was more nuanced than Mahoney suggested; while their output might be fairly narrow in answer to their chosen area of research, they were all clear about the overall aims of the course acknowledging that it had a broad remit and syllabus that was designed to produce staff officers and not just doctrine. Mason's writing, for instance, was about the broad nature of the course and did not overly focus on air power doctrine in *The Royal Air Force Staff College, 1922-1972*.<sup>132</sup> English specifically examined air power doctrine, however, he was very clear picture about the breadth of the course and by the time he wrote '*The RAF Staff College and the Evolution of British Strategic Bombing Policy, 1922-1929*' in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, he provided a balanced and broad ranging view of the College that largely supported the same stance that Mahoney took regarding the function of the College. Indeed, he nicely summed up the value of the Staff College:

One can say the RAF Staff College produced a 'school of thought' in a limited way. The RAF at last had a 'professional' staff qualification equal to the Army and the Navy, which helped the threatened junior service appear more

---

<sup>130</sup> Gray, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*, p.63. See also Meilinger, 'Trenchard and "Morale Bombing' p.263. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

<sup>131</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.217.

<sup>132</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.12.

permanent. From 1923 on, trained staff officers crucial to the day-to-day running of the Air Force were becoming available. These men were to fine tune and interpret the strategy that Trenchard bequeathed to the Air Force on his departure in 1929. The RAF Staff College debated, in-house, the contentious issues of the day, including strategic bombing doctrine, but produced little that was influential or significant to the world outside the RAF. But perhaps no more should be expected. The main purpose of the Staff College, after all, was to form staff officers not great thinkers'.<sup>133</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The separate RAF Staff College provided an environment in which air power could be taught and discussed as the dominant theme. This allowed future high commanders of the RAF to develop into specially trained, air-minded officers. The middle ranking RAF officers who arrived on the first courses had all originally been indoctrinated into the services through either RNAS or RFC channels and came to the RAF with preconceptions from their previous service. Thus, while the new recruits and cadets were being indoctrinated into the new RAF ways at Cranwell, Halton and various depots and flying training units, the future high commanders also needed an RAF specific indoctrination. The Staff College brought these officers together and was, for many, the first real period of RAF acculturation on an official RAF training course. Indeed, the first course was entirely protected with no exchange officers from the RN, the Army or from the Dominions present to iron out any problems to avoid embarrassment in front of outsiders.<sup>134</sup> The early courses played a particularly important role in influencing the way the middle-ranking officer of the new Service interpreted their organisation and was a major part in the structuration process for them.

---

<sup>133</sup> English 'The RAF Staff College'. p.410.

<sup>134</sup> Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, p.12. Also English 'The RAF Staff College', p.413.

Some 17 years after the establishment of the RAF Staff College, Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall said: 'the courses were regarded as the most instructive and progressive of any institutions in the country'.<sup>135</sup> Whether the Staff College helped bolster what Cranwell was doing in generating an 'Air Force spirit' amongst the officer corps is in no doubt. It provided a broad ranging education for its officers that prepared them for the staff duties that they would be required to conduct RAF following graduation. Through lectures, reflection, conferences, appreciations, exercises, sport and social interaction the Staff College reinforced RAF values and beliefs. The RAF Staff College also contributed to the permanence and stability of the RAF in accordance with Trenchard's 1919 Memorandum as a physical symbol but also, more deeply in the cultural layers, through its role in spreading the accepted doctrinal and policy views of the organisation. The Staff College also underlined the supreme importance of independence and the need for specifically trained air-minded personnel to deliver air power. The course also underlined the growing cultural belief that the RAF was a technical service. It provided a broad ranging military education that helped prepare the students for the range of modern military aspects of warfare they might encounter. This included looking at some of the latest advances in technology and science, which was an area of pride around which the RAF coalesced.

However, the structure, processes and practices at the RAF Staff College, many of which had been borrowed from Camberley and Greenwich, reinforced traditionalism both in terms of behaviour and intellectual freedom among the officer cadre.

---

<sup>135</sup> 'RAF Staff College' *The Times* (Mon Jul 17, 1939), pg 3 Issue 48359; Col E.

The RAF Staff College did succeed in establishing a 'School of Thought'. However, after the third course, Biddle's view that it served 'more as a disseminating station for the accepted organization viewpoint than it did a centre for critical thinking' became increasingly true.<sup>136</sup> The limited nature of free thinking within the college probably came about for two reasons. Firstly, the RAF's leaders were paranoid about the external threats to the Service. Thus, questioning accepted RAF principles and policy was actively discouraged. Secondly, the RAF inherited both the 'anti-intellectualism' and conservatism from its parent services. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the RAF actively tried to emulate many of the processes and practices associated with the other Staff Colleges such as the language used, the entrance examination process and also the methodology surrounding exercises and discussions. That proved extremely useful in aligning views where they needed to be aligned, especially for subjects relating to the continued independence of the RAF and staff work processes. However, the exploratory aspect of the course seemed to be stultified and the Staff College contributed little to the immediate development of policy and doctrine the exploration after the third course.

Thus, the Staff College proved to be more than just a symbolic artefact; it was an institution that reinforced many elements of RAF culture through social as well as professional interaction. The Staff College 'School of Thought' also played its part in spreading beliefs, attitudes and assumptions well beyond Andover. Furthermore, the inter-War Staff College graduates would become the key leaders

---

<sup>136</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

during the Second World War. However, it was not the intellectual powerhouse that Trenchard envisioned.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ARTEFACTS

The RAF quickly acquired an array of formally endorsed artefacts such as buildings, ranks, uniforms, RAF, unit and squadron badges, coats of arms, flags, colours, an Ensign, bands, music, mascots, medals, art work and memorials.<sup>1</sup> In addition to creating new artefacts, it also continued to use ones that were previously in use by the RNAS and the RFC: the RFC motto, the “Wings” badge, the aircraft roundel, RNAS style buttons and RNAS officer cap badges.

Vigorous debates took place about what artefacts the RAF should and could adopt involving the King, Cabinet, the Air Council, the Air Staff, RAF personnel and the other services. This highlights the importance of artefacts to the military establishment. This chapter will not provide an exhaustive list of all RAF artefacts; Congdon, Hering, the RAF Museum and the archives cover this most adequately albeit with little analysis.<sup>2</sup> However, it will explore some of the key artefacts that provide meaning and help explain the emergence of the distinctive RAF culture.

#### Ranks

RAF ranks needed to be sufficiently different to underline independence from the parent services yet also needed to fit in to RN and Army equivalents within the established military hierarchy. The subject of naming the ranks was cause of much debate; it would have a cultural effect on every person transferring to the new service. A balance needed to be struck between rank names that were suitably military, had links between the two amalgamating services and also conveyed an

---

<sup>1</sup> For Memorials see Mary Hudson, ‘RAF Heritage’, *Spirit of the Air*, inaugural edition (2005), pp.8-9

<sup>2</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*. Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*.



aerial theme. The members of the armed forces dealing with the issue felt compelled to reach out to learned members of society for advice. Lieutenant-Colonel Leetham, who had been tasked with examining the issue, contacted the Society of Antiquaries. The Secretary, C R Peel, expressed that he was 'not very sanguine' and appeared unable to offer suggestions except some words of caution advising against using the classical names Icarus and Daedalus given that they were 'the reverse of happy'.<sup>3</sup> He also advised against using the names of birds as they 'hardly seem quite appropriate'.<sup>4</sup> Field Marshal Lord Nicholson was also unable to provide Leetham with any suggestions.<sup>5</sup> Further examination of AIR1/26 demonstrated that consideration was given to a breadth of themes including classical titles and inspirations from bird life.<sup>6</sup> The ranks Reeve and Banneret from the English middle ages were also proposed along with the Gaelic Ardian, Second Ardian and Third Ardian.<sup>7</sup> The ranks considered in AIR1/26 are at Appendix III.

Despite the early work completed on rank nomenclature in 1917, it was not until March 1919 that the Air Council discussed the scheme to allocate new rank names. The President noted the importance of renaming the ranks both to highlight the need for 'preserving a separate identity for the Royal Air Force, and to giving

---

<sup>3</sup> TNA AIR 1/26, Letter from Sec Society of Antiquaries to Lieutenant-Colonel Leetham, dated 20 September. Ironically, the RNAS Station at Lee-on-Solent was named HMS Daedalus.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> TNA AIR1/26, Letter from Field Marshal Nicholson to Lieutenant-Colonel Leetham, dated 14 September 1917.

<sup>6</sup> TNA AIR 1/26. Letter dated 12 Sept 1917 to Mr Roberts. (Originator unknown)

<sup>7</sup> Reeve and Banneret were proposed for what ultimately became Wing Commander and Group Captain respectively. Ardian, Second Ardian and Third Ardian were proposed for what would become Air Marshal, Air Vice Marshal and Air Commodore. 'Ard' – Gaelic for Chief. 'Ian' – Gaelic for bird. TNA AIR 1/26. Proposed Nomenclature. Ranks and Titles for Officers of the Air Force (n.d.).

that Force separate names for the commissioned ranks which, in after years, would be valued as having arisen out of the war'.<sup>8</sup>

The Air Council determined that: 'the ranks as far as possible should correspond to actual functions' and 'that the ranks should be approximately the same in the three services and that there should be no repetition'.<sup>9</sup> The scheme that was chosen opted not for some of the very original rank titles but took a mixture of naval and army ranks and give them an aerial theme. Hering wrote that: 'centuries of tradition lay behind the rank titles enjoyed by the officers and men of the Royal Navy and of the Army, and it was the men from these two Services who would form the nucleus of the new Service. There was a natural tendency to have some regard for their feelings'.<sup>10</sup>

The decision to opt for a rank nomenclature that also implied functionality made sense in March 1919 when the assumption was that all officers would fly. However, as early as May 1919, CAS pointed out at an Air Council meeting that that the ranks of Pilot Officer and Flying Officer were not appropriate for officers of the medical and chaplain services.<sup>11</sup> CAS was overruled and the scheme, including both of those ranks, was the one that was decided upon. However, there was a certain lack of logic to the scheme. Frictions continued regarding the proposed ranks. The King expressed objection to using Marshal of the Air on theological grounds, which prompted the change to Marshal of the Royal Air Force.<sup>12</sup> The Army, meanwhile, expressed discontent over the use of Marshal at all, but Army concerns were overruled. By the Second World War, when new officer branches

---

<sup>8</sup> AHB Air Council Minutes, 81<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 18 March 1919, Item VII.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.21.

<sup>11</sup> AHB Air Council Minutes, 85<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 10 May 1919, Item II.

<sup>12</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.338.

had been instituted and there were significant numbers of non-flyers, the ranks bore little meaning to the functions that the personnel performed. This was also true for the non-commissioned ranks in which a flight sergeant would not necessarily fly and the term airman, implying someone involved either with flying in or maintaining aircraft, was to be used by all junior ranks including those who had nothing to do with aircraft at all. From the outset, then, RAF ranks were the cause of some confusion. Terraine neatly summed up the illogical nomenclature as follows:

Like every British institution, the third Service had its curiosities. It liked to emphasize its newness, and not unnaturally lost no time in giving itself new titles, some sensible, others quite amazing. We have lived now for over sixty years with an air force in which the “airmen” are the ones who do not fly; we are used to this fact, but that does not make it less odd...A “flight lieutenant is not the lieutenant of a flight; he is – or generally was – its commander. A “squadron leader” might or might not lead – or even command – a squadron’.<sup>13</sup>

To the external viewer, then, this symbol of rank led to confusion when a flying officer in the Second World War, for example, was not a flyer. Internally, however, the rank structure was quickly understood and its illogical nomenclature became a source of light humour and a cultural oddity of its own perhaps giving the RAF a sense of mystique. Choosing ranks that were a mixture of RN and Army ones with an aerial theme was quite a good choice. It provided a blend of ranks names that were both recognisable to the other services and bore direct equivalence to the existing RN and Army ones, which was important when conducting combined operations. Additionally, for the members of the new Service, the choice of recognisable ranks rather than the more esoteric ones such as Ardian and Banneret probably made the transition to the new service less of a wrench than perhaps it might have been. The RAF ranks were not, too far removed from the

---

<sup>13</sup> Terraine, *Right of the Line*, p.4.

well-established ones in the RN and the Army. Additionally, the ranks, squadron leader and wing commander had emerged during the First World War and provided historical links back to the RNAS and the RFC for the new RAF personnel.

## **RAF Ensign**

The RAF Ensign is a symbol that was appropriated from the RN and was a regular item in the Air Council Minutes over a three-year period<sup>14</sup> The historiography suggests that it was a subject of much discussion and friction between the Air Ministry and the Admiralty.<sup>15</sup> On 4 July, it was agreed that the Secretary of State would make a personal representation to the First Sea Lord 'with a view to overcoming objections which had been made by the Admiralty to the adoption of the White Ensign'.<sup>16</sup> On 16 July 1918, Paine reported to the Air Council that 'Admiralty experts were getting out a design'.<sup>17</sup> The issue of the design and tensions between the Admiralty and the Air Ministry continued. One design with a blue cross rather than a red one was flown on an airship around Windsor Castle but was rejected.<sup>18</sup> In May 1920, Prince Albert expressed concerns about the first proposal to adopt an ensign as it was white and looked too similar to the RN Ensign.<sup>19</sup> Various altered designs were subsequently proposed with the final

---

<sup>14</sup> See AHB Air Council minutes, 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting 4 July 1918 pre-meeting item. 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting 16 July 1918, Item 8. AHB Air Council Minutes, 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting, 1 Aug July 1918, Item 10. AHB Air Council Minutes, 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 22 Aug July 1918, Item 14. AHB Air Council Minutes, 47<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 5 Sep 1918, Item 14. AHB Air Council Minutes, 82<sup>nd</sup> Meeting, 24 Mar 1919, AHB Air Council Minutes, 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 8 Apr 1919, Item I. AHB Air Council Minutes, 84<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 24 Mar 1919, Item X.

<sup>15</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, pp.14-15. See also 'The Royal Air Force Ensign', <https://www.raf.mod.uk/history/theroyalairforceensign.cfm>, accessed 29 May 2017.

<sup>16</sup> AHB Air Council minutes, 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting 4 July 1918 pre-meeting item.

<sup>17</sup> AHB Air Council Minutes, 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting 18 July 1918.

<sup>18</sup> 'New R.A.F. Flag', *The Times*, 19 Apr 1919: 10. *Digital Archive*, 17 Apr 2017.

<sup>19</sup> AHB Air Council Minutes 5 May 1920, Item IV, *Royal Air Force Flag*.

version comprising the Union Flag and the Roundel on a blue background.<sup>20</sup> The Ensign was finally signed off in King's Council on 24 March 1921.<sup>21</sup> The vigour of the proposal and RN rebuffs are symptomatic of how dearly the RN held the Ensign and also demonstrate the determination of the RAF to ensure that it adorned itself with recognisable, and thereby traditional, symbols. This is unsurprising given the very narrow backgrounds and cultural pre-dispositions of those who were in decision-making positions as the RAF emerged. They wanted the RAF to conform to their own views of what a military should look like.

The final design of the RAF Ensign included a union flag that conveyed national allegiance. The Roundel made the historic link to the gallantry and sacrifice of both the RNAS and the RFC whilst the blue background evoked the sky.

In addition to being based on the original RN ensign, the Ensign is generally flown not from a vertical flagpole but from a flag mast that resembles a Naval mast. There is a 'yard' across the vertical mast, the ensign, meanwhile is hoisted using a 'halliard' to which it is attached using 'Inglefield' clips, named after their RN inventor.<sup>22</sup> The naval theme goes further, Ardley wrote that

The Ensign may be flown only at such places and on such occasions as the Air Council may direct or permit. The flying of the Ensign in the Service is regulated by certain paragraphs of K.R.s; it is flown at the Headquarters of the R.A.F., at all permanent R.A.F. formation head-quarters and Stations at home and abroad, and on certain occasions on airships (rare in these days) on flying boats at moorings and in sea-going craft in Air Force service.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> See Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, pp.14-18. *The Royal Air Force Ensign*, <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/theroyalairforceensign.cfm> accessed 17 April 2017. AHB Ceremonial Box, 'No Poaching', Article held in AHB Ceremonial Box.

<sup>21</sup> Sargent, *The Royal Air Force*, p.34.

<sup>22</sup> DIOT Drill and Ceremonial Handbook, 1991 Issue, p.1.3-1 and Annex A to Chapter 3.

<sup>23</sup> AHB Ceremonial Collection, Ardley E L, 'On Ensigns and Standards', *Royal Air Force Journal* (n.d.), p.31.

The Ensign is a good example of how a symbol can induce deeply held beliefs. A simple piece of cloth on its own has no meaning. However, in this case, a piece of cloth of naval origin was treated with reverence and raised and lowered in accordance with an intricate ceremony with a band and guard present.<sup>24</sup> That process was inherited from the 'hoisting and lowering colours' ceremony instituted in 1797 by Lord St. Vincent in response to the Spithead and Nore mutinies.<sup>25</sup> The historic symbolism and ritualistic tradition give this simple piece of cloth great meaning and clearly demonstrate how artefacts inspire deep beliefs as the Roundel Model shows.<sup>26</sup> Since its inception, RAF personnel turn to face the Ensign and pay respects by coming to attention and saluting at both the raising and lowering ceremonies that are signalled with a whistle.<sup>27</sup> This daily official reverence is testament to it being, if not the most unifying ceremonial symbol of the Royal Air Force, certainly the most widely displayed.<sup>28</sup> It is also sometimes draped over coffins of the fallen despite the use of the Union Flag being the correct protocol.

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. For 1918 RAF procedure see: RAFM, 'RAF Terminology and Ceremonial', RAF Air Ministry Weekly Orders, Order 641, 18 July 1918. See also Jarrod Cotter, ed, 'Father of the Royal Air Force' in *Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years* (Souvenir Edition, Key Publishing Ltd, 2008) p.3.

<sup>25</sup> Rick Jolly, *Jackspeak*, Cornwall, Palamanando Publishing, 2007 [1989], pp.107-108. TNA Digital Archive 'RN Slang. Colours', <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

<sup>26</sup> For a personal account of the ceremony see: Trenchard Museum, Emm, *Tales of an Ancient Airman*, p.17. Hand written personal account held in the Trenchard Archive NB the Title is not obvious – it is most easily found under *Preamble* and the author's name is at the back of the paper.

<sup>27</sup> Initially only officers saluted the Ensign, as in the RN. However, all RAF personnel now salute. AHB Ceremonial Collection, Ardley E L, 'On Ensigns and Standards', *Royal Air Force Journal*, p.31. For current RN procedures TNA Digital Archive 'RN Slang. Colours', <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

<sup>28</sup> The author lowered the RAF Ensign at Deployed Operating Base Dakar in 2014 for the final time. The emotion associated with this is deep.

## Uniform

The detailed history and precise designs of the RAF uniform is a vast subject and the chronological detail of intricate uniform change is adequately covered in specialist uniform histories, the RAF Museum and by examination of the archival record.<sup>29</sup> However, the cultural impact of the development of RAF uniform has not previously been broached in any meaningful way and will be addressed here.

Uniform is the most obvious cultural artefact of a military organisation. Used for centuries by military and para-military organisations, they distinguish between combatants and have powerful unifying effects. The uniform was a particularly powerful force in the British military psyche at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and is examined by GFR Henderson.<sup>30</sup> The leaders who determined what the RAF would wear were from that era and it is of little surprise that they placed particular importance on how the RAF should look.

The etymology of uniform is Latin; 'uni' means single and 'form' meaning shape.<sup>31</sup> A uniform is a powerful symbol in any organisation because members are required to wear it. That practice of putting on uniform represents a daily submission by individuals to rules and practices of the organisation. Nathan and Nicholas wrote: 'the uniform is a symbolic statement that an individual will adhere to group norms and standardized roles and has mastered the essential group skills

---

<sup>29</sup> Cormack and Cormack, *British Air Forces 1914-1918 (2)*, (Oxford: Osprey, Publishing, 2001). Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*. Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*. Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*. RAF Museum special collections can be viewed by arrangement. *For detailed archival record outlining the discussion and debate see particularly TNA Air 1/29.*

<sup>30</sup> Henderson GFR, *The British Army in The Science of War*, p.387.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Ortiz, 'Deconstructing the Uniform', *Psychology Tomorrow Magazine*, Issue 7 (July 2013). <http://psychologytomorrowmagazine.com/deconstructing-the-uniform/>, accessed Nov 7 2015.

and values. Gross derelictions of duty will result, at an extreme, in discharge from the group and deprivation of the uniform'.<sup>32</sup>

Hertz underlined that a military uniform is more than a symbol and is responsible for deeper acculturation: 'the common definitions of the uniform used by scholars reflect the attempted control and regulation of human bodies and minds through clothing. This objective to gain disciplined, external control over members is as much a factor of military training as it is about uniforms as symbolic markers'.<sup>33</sup>

Kreuger's chapter 'Psychological Issues in Military Uniform Design' identified other effects of uniform:

Military uniforms are standardized, distinctive forms of dress that distinguish soldiers and sailors from civilians. There are many psychological implications of military uniforms, including the importance of style, appearance and color, as well as insignia, decorations, and so on. These contribute to togetherness, orderliness and discipline, and add to the soldiers' sense of camaraderie, cohesion, and esprit de corps. Some features contribute to formal patriotic displays. Other important human factors relate to practicality, functionality, utility, comfort, and bodily protection, which may affect soldier performance.<sup>34</sup>

Ortiz, meanwhile, provided a view on the psychology of uniforms and that they convey so much about the wearer both to him/herself and others. He argued that:

The uniform and the schema behind it make life and social interactions easier, and they allow your attention to move on to something of more importance... Acquiescence is a requisite of the uniform. In this understanding, the uniform is essentially a dress code to which you agree to adhere; a schema, even if it is more cognitive than deliberate. It is

---

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Nathan and Alex Nicholas, 'The Uniform: A Sociological Perspective', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 4, (Jan 1972), p.723.

<sup>33</sup> Carrie Hertz, 'The Uniform: as Material, as Symbol, as Negotiated Object', *Midwestern Folklore. Journal of the Hoosier Folklore Society*, Special Double Issue Press, 'Costume, and Bodily Adornment as Material Culture', Indiana State University Vol 32, Nos 1/2 (Spring/Fall 2006), pp. 46-47.

<sup>34</sup> G P Kreuger, 'Psychological Issues in Military Uniform Design', in ed E Sparkes, *Advances in military textiles and personal equipment* (Cambridge: Woodhead Publishing, 2012), p.64.



understood how this schema helps us to identify who is who and what it is that they do.<sup>35</sup>

The military uniform also bears the symbols of rank that not only makes interactions and standing within the organisation straight forward, but also acts to reinforce the formal hierarchy of the organisation.<sup>36</sup>

In the early development of the RFC, the underlying importance of what a uniform meant and the impact of introducing one would have on the RFC was not lost on Sykes:

We were all in different kit and I was convinced that both for efficiency and *esprit de corps* a distinctive uniform was essential. I accordingly got the War Office to approve a double-breasted khaki uniform and folding cap...let no-one decry the real value of a well-thought-out uniform and well-worn uniform. It helps self-respect and corporate strength... The underlying thought at the time was partly reminiscent of the lancer plastron- the cavalry of the air – and partly practical utility. It had no buttons to catch in wires or other contraptions, and was a valuable chest protection in the open aircraft of those days. I have always held that it was a mistake that the double-breasted jacket was abandoned'.<sup>37</sup>

Once the RNAS separated from the RFC following Admiralty Circular Letter CW.13964/14, steps were taken to provide alternative RNAS uniforms, although they were very much less of a departure from a traditional RN uniform than the RFC uniform was from an Army one.<sup>38</sup> Existing officers of the RN adopted an additional eagle on the sleeve. New direct entries to the RNAS had eagles 'replacing the anchors on the cap badge, button, epaulettes and sword belt'.<sup>39</sup> In the run up to

---

<sup>35</sup> Ortiz, *Deconstructing the Uniform, Psychology*.

<sup>36</sup> Buss similarly commented on how deeply uniform regulates military behaviour. Arnold H Buss, *Social Behaviour and Personality, London and New York: Psychology Press, (2015), p.108.*

<sup>37</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles, p.97.*

<sup>38</sup> Admiralty Circular Letter CW.13964/14, 'Royal Naval Air Service – Organisation', Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.156. TNA ADM 1/8349/139 'Organisation of the Royal Naval Air Service' (NB various draft iterations of this are in the same file).

<sup>39</sup> TNA ADM 1/8349/139 'Organisation of the Royal Naval Air Service'. See also ADM1/8349/139 Letter Seuter to Unknown, dated 11 June 1914. Also, Roskill, *The Naval*

amalgamation, the Air Council considered the importance of imbuing the new force with spirit in Air Force Memorandum No 3 dated 18 March 1918:

The Air Council have the confidence that the whole of the personnel, officers and men, will do their duty in the new Air Force as they have done it in the Services from which they have come, and will be animated by the same spirit.<sup>40</sup>

And underlined the importance of appearance:

There is nothing that shows so much the state of order that exists in a Corps as smartness on the part of the personnel, good order in materiel, and the making and returning of proper salutes by officers and men alike.<sup>41</sup>

As the RNAS and RFC merged, uniform would prove a very important aspect of transition. The transfer was a wrench as Ellwood, a proponent of a unified Service, highlighted:

I think none of us in the RNAS wanted to be amalgamated and nor, I expect did the RFC wish to be amalgamated. We were accustomed to our own traditions and our own customs and so forth we had grown up with for the last couple of years...by that time we had learned that the air had a definite function of its own to perform apart from just supporting the Navy or the Army and that the obvious thing was to get together and make a do of it.<sup>42</sup>

All transferring personnel had previously been indoctrinated into their former respective service and the adoption of a new uniform would be the most obvious physical representation of being in a new Service. For the officers, the transition represented not only a change but also a financial burden as they paid for their own

---

*Air Service*, p.161. Also Eric Grove, 'Seamen or Airmen. The Early Days of British Naval Flying' in *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years*, ed Tim Benbow, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), p.24.

<sup>40</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, (loose document - not accessions). Air Force Memorandum No 3, dated 18 March 1918.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> IWM Audio files, Catalogue 3167, Ellwood 9:54-11:29. Ellwood retired as an Air Marshal having been Deputy Director of Bomber Operations and AOC 18 Gp in the Second World War. Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Ellwood biography, <http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Ellwood.htm>, accessed 12 April 2017. Transition was also a matter of extensive debate in the Houses of Commons. See, for example, *Transfer and Attaching to Air Force of Members of Naval and Military Forces*, HC Deb 16 November 1917 vol 99 cc749-778 also AHB Air Council Minutes Collection, 1918-1919.

uniforms. It was imperative, therefore, that the uniform appealed to both services and that it would not place an unnecessary financial strain on personnel.<sup>43</sup>

Cooper wrote that ‘the actual creation of the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918 was something of a formality. A nominal change of allegiance made little difference to front-line units, most of which were committed to intensive operations on the Western Front in the wake of the German spring offensive’.<sup>44</sup> This was reflected upon by the editor of the *Piloteer* who noted, of the day of transition, that ‘there was really nothing fearfully exciting about it’.<sup>45</sup> However, later in the same edition, the editor commented about how the RNAS uniform would soon change, highlighting the attachment that personnel feel towards uniform and also the sense of loss that the transition would bring.<sup>46</sup>

What do these flocks of tailors on the Camp portend?...As I write most of us have got the blues – on our backs and heads.<sup>47</sup> But before we go to Press the tailors will have made a change, and some well-known figures will be metamorphosed. And so on, until our copies of the R.N.A.S. *Piloteer* and an odd pair of spiral puttees...will be our sole means of contact with the Navy that flew – and flies.<sup>48</sup>

The changes highlighted in the *Piloteer* should not be underestimated.

Writing about British Army regimental mergers, Kirke wrote that:

The loss of identity of old units could arouse bitter feelings among their erstwhile members, and there could be serious barriers between the soldiers of different unit origins in the new unit. Such things can be ascribed to a forcing together of two different loyalty/identity structures.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> TNA AIR 1/29 (Buff File Original AHB Ref 15/1/141/4) D18369, Weekly Order Application Form entitled ‘Dress’ dated 23 Nov 1918.

<sup>44</sup> Cooper, ‘Blueprint for Confusion’, p.440.

<sup>45</sup> RAF College Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2013/113 *The Piloteer*. Special Souvenir Number (April 1918).

<sup>46</sup> The transition for RNAS personnel was more dramatic than for Army personnel whose uniform was khaki.

<sup>47</sup> Referring here to Navy blue.

<sup>48</sup> RAF College Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2013/113 *The Piloteer*. Special Souvenir Number (April 1918).

<sup>49</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.98.

This may go a long way to explaining why personnel were, in a lot of cases, somewhat dilatory in adopting the new uniform; allegiances ran deep. Furthermore, early changes in uniform regulations were many and somewhat vague.<sup>50</sup>

Initially RAF uniform was khaki in colour, and would be for the duration of the war, but the decision to adopt a blue uniform was promulgated in the Air Force Memorandum No 2 in March 1918.<sup>51</sup> That document highlighted that uniform elements came directly from the RFC and RNAS.<sup>52</sup> For instance:

JACKET. The pattern is that of the Military tunic Service Dress modified as follows:-

- (a) No shoulder straps.
- (b) In lieu of Sam Browne belt a cloth belt is sewn on the back of the coat, which fastens in front with a bright buckle of gilt metal.
- (c) The buttons are the R.N.A.S. type, i.e., gilt metal with Bird surmounted by Crown.<sup>53</sup>

The removal of the Sam Browne belt and introduction of a cloth belt was, according to Hering, one of the 'rare "customs" introduced by the Royal Air Force later to be adopted by another Service'.<sup>54</sup> From the RNAS, the RAF inherited the eagle motif buttons on the tunics and the officers' cap badge with eagle. Initially, the RAF officers' jacket also had gold rank braid similar to the RN with no curl. However, that was later changed to blue braid.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-pilots Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF* p.106. NB the lack of detail in TNA Air 10/172. Uniform for the R,A.F. Memorandum No 2.

<sup>51</sup> TNA Air 10/172 'Uniform for the R.A.F.', Memorandum No 2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p1.

<sup>54</sup> The Army adopted a similar cloth belt just prior to the Second World War Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.214.

<sup>55</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.209. Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.106.

The transition to the wearing of the RAF uniform was not quite as smooth as perhaps the various memoranda and orders suggested. Cormack noted of the tropical dress jacket, for instance, that:

It is more common to see incorrect transformations than correct ones. Many officers continued to wear their Sam Brownes; some changed the buttons on their jackets but not the rank badges; some removed their old rank badges but applied the new lace to the cuff not the shoulder strap. Photographs indicate that the permutations were many and varied'.<sup>56</sup>

The subject of the transition to blue uniform was being discussed by the third Air Council meeting on 11 January 1918 and was a regular item on the Agenda through 1918 and 1919.<sup>57</sup> In accordance with RAF Memorandum No 2 the blue uniform was authorised initially as optional mess dress for officers for the duration of the War.<sup>58</sup> However, RAF Memorandum No 2 was light on detailed regarding the blue uniform as its final design was still in a state of flux.<sup>59</sup>

In May 1918 a proposed uniform was paraded by a cadet and a non-commissioned officer in front of the Air Council. The latter approved the new blue design recommending only small alterations.<sup>60</sup> That design was subsequently approved by the King on 21 June 1918.<sup>61</sup> A detailed description that also showed some of the comments regarding of the evolution of the early blue uniform for Officers and Men can be found in Memorandum 4668 orders which detailed officer, non-commissioned officer and OR uniform cuts, styles and accoutrements.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Cormack and Cormack, *British Air Forces 1914-1918* (2), p.13.

<sup>57</sup> AHB, Air Council Minutes, 11 Jan 1918, Item 1.

<sup>58</sup> TNA Air 10/172. 'Uniform for the R.A.F.' Memorandum No 2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> AHB, Air Council Minutes, 30 May 1918, Item 8.

<sup>61</sup> AHB, Air Council Minutes, 21 June 1918, Item 17.

<sup>62</sup> TNA AIR 1/29 (Buff File ref 15/1/141/4) Memorandum 4668, 'R.A.F Officers Uniform', Undated (also includes all ranks uniform description and differences between RAF Officer and Sergeant and above Jackets). See also TNA AIR 1/29 (Buff File ref 15/1/141/4), Draft

The price of blue RAF material was initially extremely high, presumably given war-time shortages, and the relatively recent decision to use a blue material even though Sir Charles Sykes, the Director of wool textile production, assured that it would be possible to meet the demand for the total production of necessary material.<sup>63</sup> The final date for achieving a fully blue RAF was set at 1 October 1919 to allow for the price of material to be regulated and for Khaki uniforms to be worn out, thereby reducing unnecessary spending by officers and easing potential resistance to the introduction of the new blue uniform.<sup>64</sup>

Although RAF Memorandum No 2 indicated a high all round collar for WOs and NCOs of Sergeants, only three months later, Minute 4668 removed the high collared jacket and introduced a shirt and tie. Warrant Officers and NCOs the rank of sergeant and above thus wore the same jackets as officers with minor alterations to the hip pockets.<sup>65</sup> This rapprochement with the officer corps represented a cultural departure from the contemporary norm for the Army and was, according to James, a relic 'of the privileges of the petty officers of the RNAS'.<sup>66</sup> This underlined a greater sense of equality between the senior WOs, senior NCOs and officers in a technical organisation such as the RN or the new RAF. During the discussion on this matter, given the increased cost of the officer jacket pattern, an intriguing

---

of Proposed Air Ministry Order 'Officers Uniform – Blue to Replace Khaki, dated 4 July 1918.

<sup>63</sup> See TNA Air 1/29 Memo: 'R.A.F Officers Uniforms'. Undated but immediately precedes a letter from Dir Quartermasters Services to the Controller Wool Textiles Production, dated 29 June 1918 in buff folder original ref 15/1/141 (1-5). See also letter from TNA 1/29 (Buff folder original AHB Ref 15/1/141/4, 'Uniform – light blue to replace Khaki for officer R.A.F.', Air Ministry Orders regarding 1918-1919), Dept of Wool Textile production to the Air Ministry dated 29 May 1918.

<sup>64</sup> See TNA Air 1/29 Buff folder original AHB Ref 15/1/141/4, 'Uniform – light blue to replace Khaki for officer R.A.F.' Air Ministry Orders regarding 1918-1919. Air Ministry Order Form 53, 'Dress', dated 18 November 1918.

<sup>65</sup> TNA Air 1/29 (Buff File ref 15/1/141/4) Memorandum 4668, 'R.A.F Officers Uniform'.

<sup>66</sup> James, *Paladins*, p.182.

proposal was made in a minute that underlined the importance placed upon pilots suggesting that only WO and NCO pilots should wear the same jackets as officers.<sup>67</sup> The Minute that followed it highlighted, probably correctly, that ‘this would, it is thought, create dissatisfaction and ill-will amongst the other W.O.’s. and NCOs in the Service’.<sup>68</sup> However, the collar and tie remained for all WOs and NCOs above the rank of Sergeant.

According to Brownlow, ‘tradition is inseparable from events, facts, figures and some imaginative folklore’.<sup>69</sup> Howard, meanwhile, wrote that myth is ‘a creation of an image of the past, through careful selection and interpretation, in order to create or sustain certain emotions or beliefs’.<sup>70</sup> RAF uniform contributed to some of that folklore. The RAF ‘Rumour Mill’, or oral tradition, has it that the blue uniform was decided upon because there was a job lot of blue material, spun in British Mills and destined for the Tsar’s army, that was surplus to requirement in 1917 following the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>71</sup> The research for this thesis has uncovered no evidence of this. Indeed, the archival material points towards an entirely normal, but challenging, procurement process for the purchase of the blue cloth and there is no

---

<sup>67</sup> TNA AIR 1/29 Buff Folder Original File No AH 15/1/141/4, ‘Uniform – Light Blue to Replace Khaki for Officers R.A.F.’, Response 4 (signed by R Brunton – barely legible) to Minute 48457/1918.

<sup>68</sup> TNA AIR 1/29 Buff Folder Original File No AH 15/1/141/4, ‘Uniform – Light Blue to Replace Khaki for Officers R.A.F.’, Response 5 (signed by O W Latimer for A.A.Q.S dated 11.6.18.) to Minute 48457/1918.

<sup>69</sup> Brownlow B, Foreword to *Behind the Hangar Doors* in Congdon P, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.5.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Howard, ‘The Use and Abuse of Military History’, *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, Vol 107 No 4, (Feb 1, 1962), pp.4-10.

<sup>71</sup> Aside from this being common currency in the RAF Rumour Mill the only other references available were in Hering, who suggests this is folklore, on Wikipedia where it is an unreferenced assertion, and on the aviators’ rumour website where it also has no founding reference, <http://www.pprune.org/archive/index.php/t-69713.html>, accessed 25 March 2016. See also Congdon who refers to the early ‘Ruritania’ blue but is unable to provide proof stating ‘fact or fiction? The records are unclear’, Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.29. This myth is presented as accepted fact in the guided tour at RAF College Cranwell.

indication that a convenient supply of Russian material was available.<sup>72</sup> Thus, until positive proof can be found, this will remain one of the RAF myths along with the origin of piano burning and ghosts in control towers.

However, myths are important. Howard wrote of 'the young soldier that "myth" can and often does sustain him, even when he knows, with half his mind, that it is untrue' and that 'the myth does have a useful social function'. In the case of the RAF, such myths helped enrich RAF mystique.<sup>73</sup>

Referring to the early blue uniform, Hering pointed out that the:

...light blue turned out to be a sky blue, and with its gold lace rings were worn around the cuffs of the tunic to denote rank. The flying badge was also of gold embroidery. The combination produced what Hering and Jefford referred to as a 'Ruritanian' effect'.<sup>74</sup>

This is, perhaps, why the Tsarist cavalry myth emerged. Slessor wrote disparagingly that it 'brought irresistibly to mind a vision of the gentleman who stands outside the cinema'.<sup>75</sup> The sky blue was toned down in accordance with Air Ministry Weekly Order 1149 on 1 October 1919.<sup>76</sup>

Except for the adoption of an entirely new colour, the uniform was not a startling innovation for the Service that was at the cutting edge of technology. Indeed, it was a step backwards towards Edwardian dress compared to what the RFC had instituted. The maternity jacket, which had been specifically designed for flying and working around aircraft, was removed and in its place a jacket introduced

---

<sup>72</sup> See TNA Air 1/29 Buff folder original AHB Ref 15/1/141/4, Uniform – light blue to replace Khaki for officer R.A.F. Air Ministry Orders regarding 1918-1919. Air Ministry Order Form 53 entitled Dress, dated 18 November 1918.

<sup>73</sup> Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', p 4.

<sup>74</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.209. Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-pilots Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.106.

<sup>75</sup> Slessor, *The Central Blue*, p.31.

<sup>76</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-pilots Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.106.



that was, according to James, a relic from the Boer War.<sup>77</sup> For pilots the constrictive collars, ties and buttons were ill suited for a cockpit or for maintaining aircraft.<sup>78</sup> Specialist flying clothing was first introduced in 1912 and gradually refined until March 1917 when the 'Sidcot' suit came into production following experiments by Flight Sub-Lieutenant Sidney Coton.<sup>79</sup> This was the most effective of the suits available and was used by aircrew well into the 1930s.<sup>80</sup> However, as cockpits became enclosed and depending on temperatures, aircrew frequently wore their service dress under flying jackets or even under specialist flying kit despite how inappropriate it was.

For the junior ranks, the service dress was equally poorly suited to ground operations. The early high collar was constricting and uncomfortable, as were puttees. Local orders allowed for undress uniform to be adopted through loosening of the collar and the wearing of slacks. The ensemble was not well suited to engineering roles which often require personnel to climb into constricted spaces and conduct vigorous engineering activity. This dress continued largely unaltered until 1936 when the airmen's high collar was removed and all ranks began wearing open necked tunics with collar and tie. Puttees were also withdrawn and trousers were introduced for all ranks for formal and informal wear. The forage cap, used by the RFC, was also re-introduced in the 1930s.

---

<sup>77</sup> James, *Paladins*, p.182.

<sup>78</sup> Buttons can easily detach and cause restrictions to aircraft controls.

<sup>79</sup> IWM EQU 4015, 'Flying Suit, 1930 Pattern 'Sidcot': RAF'. See also Cormack and Cormack, *British Air Forces 1914-1918 (2)*, p.37. For a history of flying clothing in the RAF see also Graham Rood, 'A Brief History of Flying Clothing', *Journal of Aeronautical History* Paper No 2014/01 (n.d.), pp.3-54. In particular, regarding the SidCot suit and its many iterations see pp.3-15. <https://www.aerosociety.com/publications/jah-a-brief-history-of-flying-clothing/>, accessed 18 June 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Cormack and Cormack, *British Air Forces 1914-1918 (2)*, p.37.

Whilst the cut and the utility of the uniform may not have been suited to flying or maintaining aircraft, it became a strong organisational symbol. The blue was distinctive and represented the new technology of aviation that also proved popular in broader society. Viles, an apprentice, rigger and air-gunner in the RAF expressed superficially but proudly of his uniform that 'we were the elite with all the ladies'.<sup>81</sup>

Francis identified deeper sentimental effects during the 1940s:

The most beguiling emblem of the flyer's allure was their ashy-blue uniform, with the Flying Badge worn above the right upper jacket pocket. The blue uniforms of the RAF were a dramatic contrast with the drab brown uniform of the army, as resentful army officers knew only too well'.<sup>82</sup>

This is a further example of Francis' unfamiliarity with the RAF that undermines his otherwise valid argument; the Flying Badge is worn above the left jacket pocket. He noted that the uniform could have distinctly 'elitist connotations' but also underlined associations of 'heroism and sexual magnetism'.<sup>83</sup> The uniform even transformed the way that injured or disfigured pilots were viewed as an account by a double amputee, Colin Hodgkinson highlighted:

Air Force Blue at that time was the most famous colour in the world...I smoothed the wings above my left breast pocket, prinked like a mannequin up and down before a glass. My God! Nothing could stop me now. I was irresistible'.<sup>84</sup>

Following the Battle of Britain, the RAF came of age in the eyes of the British public having demonstrated the critical value of air power. Images of fearless, youthful, nonchalant pilots were very compelling and with them, the uniform became gained iconic status. Thus, a uniform based on a design for fighting in Africa at the turn of the century that was unsuitable for flying and ground operations came to

---

<sup>81</sup> IWM Audio Catalogue 4549, Viles S Interview 2:49-2:53. See similar comment in Lawrence, *The Mint*, p.45.

<sup>82</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*. p.23.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.24-25.

represent the RAF's 'finest hour' and became a symbol of the aviator identity.<sup>85</sup> However, the uniform was also ritualistically worn incorrectly; RAF personnel had a counter-institutional relationship with it that was not straightforward and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

## Badges

During the inter-war period, badges were introduced to denote rank, achievement and belonging. They were already of contemporary importance in the RN and the Army and their introduction represented an extension of and compliance with existing norms for the British fighting forces. It is not intended to describe all badges, they are adequately covered by Hobart, Congdon, Hering and Jefford. However, the cultural themes of badges are important.<sup>86</sup>

The badges of rank in the RFC were similar to those in the wider Army, although stars were introduced to differentiate between flight and squadron commanders. The RNAS, meanwhile, made use of existing RN rank but also used stars to denote flight and squadron command. Upon amalgamation, RAF rank insignia was initially based on Army rank but was then converted to a system that broadly followed the RN rank system for the officers except the bands were blue and had no RN curl.<sup>87</sup> For the ORs, the RAF ranks badges largely followed Army

---

<sup>85</sup> Winston Churchill, Speech 18 Jun 1940, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/speeches/churchill\\_finest\\_hour](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/speeches/churchill_finest_hour), accessed 15 Mar 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*. Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*. Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*. Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-pilots Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*.

<sup>87</sup> The Curl was introduced in 1856 to delineate officers of the RN executive Branch from officers of the civil branch. 'Naval Distinction Lace', Royal Museums Greenwich <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/naval-distinction-lace>, accessed 17 April 2017. See also TNA *Naval Slang*, Archived RN website <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry>, accessed 17 April 2017.

lines although Warrant Officers and Air Mechanic 1<sup>st</sup> Class had aviation related rank insignia, the former wore a gilded metal eagle and crown while the latter wore a red twin bladed propeller on a khaki patch.<sup>88</sup> The aviation theme for all ORs was reinforced with a red eagle shoulder-flash on the uniform that was originally of naval origin.<sup>89</sup> That would, later, become a light blue eagle on a blue background.<sup>90</sup> The Eagle was an intrinsic link with the air. However, the eagle motif became part of RAF folklore. A myth evolved that the bird was an Albatross that would cause significant confusion, argument and humour.<sup>91</sup> However, archival evidence is clear that the eagle was originally worn by the RNAS.<sup>92</sup> The use of the Eagle was continued and ratified by the Air Council and was approved by the College of Arms on 26 January 1923 following formal Royal approval.<sup>93</sup>

For RAF officers, it was intended that they would all be pilots, would wear “Wings” and would, therefore have a visible symbol that linked them with the air.<sup>94</sup> However, after the branch system was introduced in the 1930s, ground branch officers had no badges except the blue rank rings that have no tangible association

---

<sup>88</sup> Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*, p.25.

<sup>89</sup> AHB Ceremonial Collection, ‘RAF Airmen Lose the Eagle’, Announcement No 32 n.d. but marked ‘not for use before the Morning of April 16 1970’.

<sup>90</sup> The shoulder flashes were removed in 1973, however, such was their popularity and association, they were reintroduced on the dress uniform in 1996. AHB Ceremonial Collection, ‘RAF Airmen Lose the Eagle’. See also Hobart M, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*, p.50.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Eagles Win’, *Daily Telegraph* (20 March 1970). See also, Letter from Dr John Tanner, Director RAF Museum to *Daily Telegraph*, 27 April 1970, p.16. See also ‘Is this Air Force Bird...an Eagle...or an Albatross?’ *RAF Quarterly* (1950), pp.256-259. Held in AHB Ceremonial Collection.

<sup>92</sup> For Eagle reference see: TNA ADM 1/8349/139 ‘Organisation of the Royal Naval Air Service’ (NB various draft iterations of this are in the same file). See also Draft proposals by Captain Murray F. Seuter, for the ‘Reorganisation of the Naval Air Service’ dated 24 February 1914 in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*. p.161. See also ‘R.N.A.S and R.N.V.R Officers – Titles and Uniforms’, Admiralty Weekly Order No 756 dated 21 April 1916 in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, pp.296-297.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Is this Air Force Bird...an Eagle...or an Albatross?’, pp .256-259.

<sup>94</sup> Cmd. 467, ‘The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force’.

with flying. This presented the strange situation that ground branch officers were the only personnel in the RAF with no obvious badge linking them to flight. That they had no badges such as 'Wings' delineated them as not being members of the aircrew elite that had formed in the officer corps. This remains the case today and is a point of humour and occasionally friction. For instance, ground branch officers are known to use the term 'two-winged master race' as a politically incorrect term for aircrew.

A small number of trade badges was introduced following the formation of the RAF, the first being the Wireless Operator Badge authorised on 19 September 1918 by Air Ministry Order 1066.<sup>95</sup> This was a red fist gripping 6 red lightning flashes and was worn immediately below the eagle shoulder flash. Like the Eagle, the colour would later become blue. A brass Physical Training Instructor badge showing three arms holding Indian clubs making a circular shape was approved in 1923.<sup>96</sup> These badges served both to underline the importance with which the RAF viewed those two trades and gave personnel a symbol that set them apart. It is, a little perplexing that the obvious iniquity for the other ground trades was not addressed. During the Second World War as more specialised trades were introduced, more trade badges were introduced such as Ground Gunner in 1940 and Bomb Disposal in 1941.<sup>97</sup> However, that still left many trades un-badged creating a two-tiered system in which some trades were recognised while others were not. Sherbrooke-Walker, used to the Army regimental system, noted that RAF allegiance was not as strong as in the Army particularly for ground personnel.<sup>98</sup> Had a practice been introduced in which

---

<sup>95</sup> Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*, p.76.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.77-78.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.9.

all trades were given a badge, it would, perhaps, have enhanced the career-long sense of belonging to a trade rather than the temporary sense of belonging to a Station.

The 'Flying Badge', more commonly known as 'Wings', was introduced and worn on the left breast following a design that Sykes claimed he and Henderson drew on an office blotter.<sup>99</sup> Sykes' design may have been inspired during his visit to France by the winged arm-bands, or 'brassades', that French aviators were wearing as testament that they had their 'brevet' or certificate.<sup>100</sup> The French metal Wings badge or Macaron (Macaroon) worn on the right breast was not introduced until 1916 supporting the RAF Museum's claim that the RFC Wings were the first of such emblems in the World.<sup>101</sup>

The RFC 'Wings' were approved by the King on the 11<sup>th</sup> design presentation and were based upon those of a Swift.<sup>102</sup> The location of the RFC 'Wings' on the left breast gave them particular prominence both in terms of frontal visual impact and also being in the area normally reserved for medals and gallantry awards. This gave the Flying Badge greater currency than other badges worn on shoulders or

---

<sup>99</sup> Sykes, *From Many Angles*, p.97. The AHB has a box entitled Ceremonial and Various which includes various papers pertaining to the aircrew brevet including accounts of various myths surrounding the Flying Badge as well as cloth and metal RFC 'Wings' presented by AVM Longcroft.

<sup>100</sup> See 'Uniformes Equipements de Vol, Insigne métallique du personnel navigant', [http://albindenis.free.fr/Site\\_escadrille/Equip\\_uniformes.htm](http://albindenis.free.fr/Site_escadrille/Equip_uniformes.htm) accessed 17 March 2016. For RAF Museum claim see 'Pilot's Wings', <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/taking-flight/historical-periods/pilots-wings.aspx>, accessed 17 March 2016.

<sup>101</sup> See 'Uniformes Equipements de Vol, Insigne métallique du personnel navigant', [http://albindenis.free.fr/Site\\_escadrille/Equip\\_uniformes.htm](http://albindenis.free.fr/Site_escadrille/Equip_uniformes.htm), accessed 17 March 2016. For RAF Museum claim see 'Pilot's Wings', <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/taking-flight/historical-periods/pilots-wings.aspx>, accessed 17 March 2016.

<sup>102</sup> AHB Ceremonial Collection, Letter from Seely, War Office to the King dated 24 June 1912. Also, AHB Ceremonial Collection 'Origin of the RAF Flying Badge'.

sleeves. On transition, the RAF Wings altered slightly in shape and became those of an Eagle and the central letters RFC were replaced by RAF.<sup>103</sup>

Initially, it was intended that qualified RFC pilots would only wear the 'Wings' whilst they remained qualified as 'efficient pilots' whilst on active flying duty.<sup>104</sup>

The Air Council reserved the right to remove the Flying Badge when flying standards were breached giving the Flying Badge added gravitas. Hering, Wells and Wilson referred to, instances of Lack of Moral Fibre resulting in public degradation including the stripping of 'Wings'.<sup>105</sup> This was not official policy and Cox expressed some doubt over whether they actually took place or were myth.<sup>106</sup> The research for this thesis found no further evidence of degradation ceremonies suggesting that if they did occur, they were infrequent. Whether true or myth this further underlines the symbolic reverence accorded to the 'Wings' within the Service.

The presentation of a brevet was, and still is, one of the most memorable events in an aviator's career. Grinnell-Milne wrote of his pride when he received his 'Wings' in 1915:

The squadron commander beamed, offered congratulations. I was no more a fledgling, he said, I was a pilot, a member of the Corps, entitled to wear the badge and uniform, sic itur ad astra and so on. But to me it meant even more than that. I felt I was no longer attached to the Flying Corps; I was permanently devoted.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> AHB Ceremonial Collection, Submission Letter from War Office to the King dated 24 June 1912. See also AIR 10/172 Air Force Memorandum No 2.

<sup>104</sup> AHB Ceremonial Collection, Letter from Captain Ellington, for the Director of Military Training, to the Officer Commanding Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing), dated 17 January 1913. See also Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.105.

<sup>105</sup> The only attributed examples found during this research was the following secondary source references: Interview of Eunice Wilson, 15 June 2004 in Edgar Jones, "'LMF': The Use of Psychiatric Stigma in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War", *Journal of Military History*, Vol 70, April 2006, p.445. Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p.199. Cox reported that there was no known official NDYN Centre at Brighton.

<sup>106</sup> Seb Cox, Head AHB. E-mail with author dated 6 June 2016.

<sup>107</sup> Grinnell-Milne, *Wind in the Wires*, p.41.

Similarly, Parker wrote that gaining his 'Wings' on completion of the Central Flying School Course was the 'most exciting step' of his training and it was 'a proud moment when this distinctive feature was attached to the left side of one's tunic'.<sup>108</sup> In the Second World War, Evans, reported his feelings at his graduation parade: 'I got my coveted wings, one of the six out of ten. It was a wonderful feeling'.<sup>109</sup> The *Pathé* footage of the public award of 'Wings' in Montreal attended by guest of honour Billy Bishop VC highlights the deeply symbolic nature that the badge had accumulated as well as its historical link.<sup>110</sup> Francis, examined the significance of 'Wings' in a section of *The Flyer* entitled 'A Pair of Silver Wings: The Constituents of Flyboy Glamour'.<sup>111</sup> In addition to referencing the RAF pilots' attitudes of pride towards their 'Wings', he also referred to contemporary literature that recognised the importance of the 'Wings' to the pilots, but also highlighted the reverence with which they were viewed by wider society in novels.<sup>112</sup> Hering, meanwhile, summed up the power of the Flying Badge as follows:

Throughout the world there can be no badge which is so highly prized and so much sought after than the out-stretched wings that form the basic design of the pilot's badge.<sup>113</sup>

However, while the 'Wings' were valued as symbols, some of the processes and practices that emerged surrounding them underlined the importance that was accorded to the pilots of the RFC, RNAS and the RAF and were also the cause of

---

<sup>108</sup> CFS Archive, Memoirs of Major S E Parker, Vol 1 (1962), p.14. Unaccessioned.

<sup>109</sup> Oscar Evans, 'To Become a Wartime Pilot', *WW2 People's War*, BBC 16 December 2003, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/99/a2136999.shtml>, accessed 24 Mar 2016.

<sup>110</sup> 'Canada Bomber Crews get Wings', *Pathé 1942*.  
<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/canada-bomber-crews-get-wings/query/WINGS+FOR>, accessed 2 Mar 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*, pp.23-26.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* pp.23-26.

<sup>113</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.101.



friction. Mahoney's theme of 'pilot ethos' was relevant to the policy regarding the award of 'Wings'. The 'Wings' demonstrate the pre-eminence of the pilot and underline how one of the strongest sub-cultures of the RAF emerged in the early days of the aerial services.<sup>114</sup> Observers and other personnel who undertook duties in the air during the First World War were unrecognised until 1915 as this account by Jefford highlighted:

...there was clearly perceived to be something 'second class' about being an observer, this perception being reinforced...by the very real constraints which were imposed on his advancement by the RFC's administration'.<sup>115</sup>

In 1915 Mr Joynson-Hicks addressed the Houses of Parliament calling for observers to be recognised for their role, a position supported by *Flight* during Parliamentary discussions.<sup>116</sup> Henderson had already proposed for observers to be recognised in a letter to GHQ BEF written on 15 June 1915, a few weeks before Joynson-Hicks and *Flight* brought this into the public sphere.<sup>117</sup> However, on 23 Aug 1915, Army Order 327/1915 established an observer badge with a half wing and an 'O' at its base.<sup>118</sup> Jefford wrote that 'the not so subtle implication of a *single-winged* badge was plain enough. An observer was simply not considered to be a fully-fledged aviator'.<sup>119</sup> The badge remained in use after the First World War but Trenchard's 1919 Memorandum actively underlined that the RAF was to be

---

<sup>114</sup> Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory', p.86.

<sup>115</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.18.

<sup>116</sup> 'An Observer's Badge', *Flight*, No 348 (No 35 Vol VII) (August 27, 1915), p.624. Also, AHB Cermonial Collection, 'Origin of the RAF Flying Badge'.

<sup>117</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.18.

<sup>118</sup> AHB Cermonial Collection, 'Origin of the RAF Flying Badge'. Also see Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.18.

<sup>119</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.19.

officered only by pilots.<sup>120</sup> Thus the numbers of observers wearing the badge gradually diminished. This arose because of the undervalued view of observers in the RFC. This was less prevalent in the RNAS which conducted operations over the sea. That, according to Page, Goulter and Biddle, required much greater navigational skill.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, navigational expertise was treasured by of the Executive Branch.

However, navigation in the RAF during the inter-war period was a specialisation undertaken by pilots; the ramification of undervaluing the observer would be that navigation skills in the RAF were left to wither. This resulted in the RAF being on the back foot when navigation skills were essential to the operational effectiveness of the Force in the Second World War.<sup>122</sup> In 1934, observers were formally reintroduced into the RAF.<sup>123</sup> From 1939, new aircrew brevets were gradually introduced with a single wing and different letters at the base denoting specialisations.<sup>124</sup> However, the controversy over the single wing badge continued. In 1942, despite the then CAS, Portal, proposing that all aircrew be given a two-winged badge, the views of the five UK based AOC's opposed the idea and the single winged badge for all aircrew other than pilots was continued underlining the

---

<sup>120</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>121</sup> Page presented a paper that highlighted the differences between the RFC and RNAS attitudes to navigation. David Page, 'The Early Years', in 'A History of Navigation in the Royal Air Force', *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal*, 1997, pp.6-11. Goulter, *A Forgotten Offensive*, p.7. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.89.

<sup>122</sup> Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.89.

<sup>123</sup> AMO A.196/1934 in Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.142.

<sup>124</sup> Air Gunners (with the symbol AG, 1939), Radio Operator (RO, 1941), Navigator (N, 1942), Flight Engineer (E, 1942), Air Bomber (B, 1942) and Wireless Operator (S, 1944). Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.101.

continuing pre-eminence of pilots in the RAF, thereby reinforcing the cultural silos that existed in the Service between RAF aircrew.<sup>125</sup>

## **Decorations and Medals**

Orders, Decorations and medals are an intrinsic part of military life. Ribbons and medal are worth so little yet convey great meaning. Simple tokens or symbols to the casual observer, they have deep connotations for the wearer as well as those around him or her within a military organisation. Those awarded with gallantry awards often feel a range of deep and, sometimes, conflicting emotions including pride, incomprehension, feelings of having earned the award for the team, 'I was only doing my job' and even responsibility or guilt at having been singled out. In 1944, Churchill said:

The object of giving medals, stars and ribbons is to give pride and pleasure to those who have deserved them. At the same time a distinction is something which everybody does not possess. If all have it is of less value. There must, therefore, be heartburnings and disappointments on the border line. A medal glitters, but it also casts a shadow. The task of drawing up regulations for such awards is one which does not admit of a perfect solution.<sup>126</sup>

Frey noted how widely the giving of awards is in human cultures:

Awards in the form of orders, medals, decorations, prizes, and titles are ubiquitous in monarchies and republics, private organizations, and not-for-profit and profit-oriented firms.<sup>127</sup>

Medals and stories of gallantry, in particular, arouse significant public interest and there is a corresponding wealth of non-academic literature on the subject.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Jefford, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*, p.224.

<sup>126</sup> Winston Churchill, *War Decorations and Medals*, Hansard HC Deb 22 Mar 1944 vol 398, cc872-1002. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/sittings/1944/mar/22>, accessed 15 October 2017.

<sup>127</sup> Bruno Frey, 'Giving and Receiving Awards', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Vol 1 Issue 4 (2006), p.377.

<sup>128</sup> For instance, Graham Pitchfork, *Airmen Behind the Medals* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2015).

Much of that genre tends to have a formulaic approach of providing a basic description of the awards and medals and then giving a series of accounts of the events leading up to the award of the medal. However, they tend to celebrate the medals and awards at a superficial level concentrating on their symbolic value rather than digging into the deeper significance of what the awards and medals mean to the wearer and for the organisation more broadly.

While the popular literature market is well served, academic studies on medals and their effect on the wearer and the organisations, despite being a potentially rich area of multidisciplinary research, are surprisingly few. Frey highlighted of award giving, in general, is an understudied area in the social sciences:

Nevertheless, this kind of nonmaterial extrinsic incentive has been given little attention in the social sciences, including psychology. The demand for awards relies on an individual's desire for distinction, and the supply of awards is governed by the desire to motivate.<sup>129</sup>

However, what does emerge from the academic literature are some themes that underline the importance of medals beyond simply being symbols of 'bling'.<sup>130</sup>

Holmes wrote that:

Gallantry medals recognised brave deeds, rewarding those who performed them and encouraging others to do likewise...For all the occasional cynicism expressed by officers about decorations, there is no doubt that campaign medals and gallantry awards played their own part in the complex web of motivation.<sup>131</sup>

It was decided to introduce new RAF specific decorations and medals to bring the RAF into line with the other services, thereby reinforcing that the third service was to be on a par with the other two. The decorations and medals that

---

<sup>129</sup> Frey, 'Giving and Receiving Awards', pp.377-388.

<sup>130</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.31.

<sup>131</sup> Holmes, *Redcoat*, p.407 and p.410.

were designed for the RAF were, in both design and name, intended to underline what the RAF was all about: flying or support of flying operations.

While other gallantry decorations such as the Victoria Cross and George Cross and the Distinguished Service Order were still available to be awarded to RAF personnel, the new decorations were intended to recognise actions conducted specifically in an aerial environment. The new decorations that were introduced were the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) for 'an act of valour, courage or devotion to duty performed whilst flying in active operations against the enemy'.<sup>132</sup> The Air Force Cross (AFC) and the Air Force Medal (AFM), meanwhile, were introduced for 'an act or acts of valour, courage or devotion to duty while flying, though not in active operations against the enemy'.<sup>133</sup> These decorations were heavily adorned with symbols and motifs that represented the new aerial domain, the new Service and also portrayed the history of the aerial services from which the RAF had emerged.<sup>134</sup>

The DFC and DFM ribbons bore a distinctive purple horizontal stripe, while the AFC and AFM bore a red horizontal stripe. The stripes were later altered to the diagonal.<sup>135</sup> The DFC, DFM, AFC and AFM designs were all departures from the RN and Army equivalents and were successful in conveying the modernity of the new Service. The awarding of these decorations was tightly controlled, as it was in

---

<sup>132</sup> The London Gazette, No 31674, p.15049, 5 December 1919, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31674/page/15049>, accessed 15 Oct 2017. See also Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.138.

<sup>133</sup> The London Gazette, No 31674, p.15050, 5 December 1919 <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31674/page/15049>, accessed 15 Oct 2017. Congdon P, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.76.

<sup>134</sup> The London Gazette, No 31674, p.15049, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31674/page/15049>, accessed 15 Oct 2017.

<sup>135</sup> The London Gazette, No 31674, p.15049-15050. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31674/page/15049>, accessed 25 Mar 2016.

the other services, and could, predictably, be divisive. The crew environment was problematic and saw pilots, in particular, more likely to receive DFCs and DFMs as Aylemore summed up in his personal account:

Pilots were automatically awarded a DFC (referred to as a NAAFI gong) on the completion of a tour, whilst other crew members would only get an award for some extraordinary act or achievement'.<sup>136</sup>

While this tendency to award the pilots the gallantry decoration was largely done in recognition of their role as aircraft captains, it served to further underline the value the RAF placed on the pilot and could be a source of friction or bad feeling between pilots and the other aircrew specialisations.

In addition to services wide campaign and other medals, The RAF Meritorious Service Medal, for Warrant Officers, NCOs and Men, was also introduced in June 1918 and was intended to recognise service on the ground, bearing the words 'For Meritorious Service'.<sup>137</sup> It was replaced by the British Empire Medal in 1928.

On 1 July 1919, the RAF Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was introduced for the award to the ranks of Warrant Officer and below of 'irreproachable character'.<sup>138</sup> The conspiratorial humour of forces humour results in this frequently being referred to as 'the undetected crime medal'.<sup>139</sup>

The gallantry decorations and medals, together, helped affirm both the independence and permanence of the new Service. Made of metal of little value,

---

<sup>136</sup> George Aylmore, 'The Good Guts', *WW2 People's War*.

<sup>137</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.141 and 'UK Medals – MSM', <http://www.stephen-stratford.co.uk/msm.htm>, accessed 24 March 2016.

<sup>138</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.142.

<sup>139</sup> Christopher McKee, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900-1945* (Cambridge Massachusetts, London England: 2002), p.46. Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, p.369.

hung on colourful ribbons and identifiable at a glance to those in the know, they represent far more than their material worth. They convey the deep values of the Service and modestly acknowledge selflessness, sacrifice, duty and loyalty. Their symbolic value also extends beyond the individual upon whom they are conferred. The citations written for both decorations and medals were a means for the Service to celebrating its heroes and to allow its members to look back at those who have gone before as both inspiration and a yard-stick of their own performance. This helped maintain values and standards across time and reinforced the values upon which military service relies so much. However, they were, and are still, a source of friction.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined some of the key artefacts of early RAF culture. These easily observable features of the RAF demonstrate several features of its espoused culture. Firstly, even while the First World War was raging, the RAF rapidly created a very extensive and complex web of artefacts.

Despite the novelty of this mode of warfare, artefacts reveal an underlying conservatism in the early RAF. The rank nomenclature, for instance, could have made use of some of the more exotic proposals, however, the ones that were adopted were recognisable and conventional. Apart from the new colour, the uniform was also very conservative. Indeed, the removal of the specially designed maternity jacket could be considered a retrograde step. Despite being unsuitable either for flying or engineering work the uniform came to represent the glamour and modernity of flying with the silver 'Wings' assuming great significance, particularly outside the Service. The uniform represented submission to the rules of the Service

but also, through the various badges encapsulated both the aviator identity and the pride in different technical trades.

The artefact choices such as medals, awards and badges underline the desire by the nascent Service both to adopt the historical narrative of the RFC and RNAS and to celebrate the history of the new Service as it emerged.

Certain artefacts that have been examined reveal some of the sub-cultures and frictions that emerged very early in the development of the Service. For instance, the 'Wings', which evoked so much pride in the pilots they were awarded to, also underlined the different cultural silos that existed and served to marginalise the aircrew with a single wing or those who had no badges of belonging. The single 'Wing' issue delineated a divide between the different aircrew specialisations and underlined the special position of pilots within the Service as did the perceived process of awarding decorations in which pilots appeared to be favoured over other aircrew.

Analysis of the artefacts in this chapter has provided a valuable insight into attempts to ease the traumatic transition process for the amalgamating personnel. For instance, significant thought was invested in the design of the new uniform and the result was a fairly equitable amalgamation of RNAS and RFC features. Nevertheless, the transition was still a wrench and trench coats and vestiges of old uniform were retained by personnel for as long as they could get away with it.

The development of symbols and artefacts, while conservative, was extensive and complex. The historical record demonstrates that the Air Council and the Service invested great thought in producing an organisation that looked and felt like a fighting force. The uniform looked the part and the rank structure was both



recognisable, if not wholly logical, and fitted in with those of the other Services. The RAF quickly accumulated similar symbols and artefacts to the other two services such as the RAF Ensign, as well as Colours and Standards. With time and as the RAF proved both itself and air power, particularly during the Second World War, these artefacts began to exercise increasingly deep sentiment both within and outside the Service. This chapter has demonstrated the power that pieces of material, ribbons and small pieces of metal can have when incorporated into a web of complex processes and practices that are steeped in history. This bears out the important feature of the Roundel Model that highlights the dynamic interaction between the concentric rings. Thus, easily observable artefacts, when influenced by the processes and practices of the second ring cause deeper cultural beliefs and allegiances to emerge.

## CHAPTER IX

### TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS AND RITUALS OF THE RAF

Traditions, customs and rituals have been an obvious manifestation of military culture for centuries. Their central importance to fighting forces transcends political, religious and ideological beliefs. They have been common to the fighting forces of monarchies, democracies, oligarchies as well as armies of the people and non-state fighting and even mercenary forces such as the Swiss Guard. Deal and Kennedy, Brown and Brooks all underlined the importance of traditions, customs and ritual in organisations.<sup>1</sup> Deal and Kennedy wrote that 'without expressive events, any culture will die'.<sup>2</sup> Brooks wrote that 'rituals help give the culture its identity; they reinforce the 'way things are done around here' and indicate what is important and valued by employees'.<sup>3</sup> Brown wrote: 'rather like stories and myths, ritualised behaviour is important not just for the messages it communicates to individuals who participate in the culture but also for the power it exercises over them'.<sup>4</sup> These academics all highlighted the importance of tradition, custom and ritual, however, during the research for this thesis, it became clear that these areas of culture were relatively superficial in the civilian organisations they referred to, compared to those in the military environment. Kier underlined the importance of ceremony and ritual to organisations such as the military.<sup>5</sup> She emphasised the exclusive nature of a 'total institution', however, interestingly, she did not underline

---

<sup>1</sup> Terry Deal and Allan Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures. The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1982]), pp.59 and pp.14-15. Brooks I, *Organisational Behaviour*. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2009 [1999]), p.268. Brown A, *Organisational Culture*, p.13. These academics referred to tradition, custom and ritual in subtly different ways.

<sup>2</sup> Deal and Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures*, p.63.

<sup>3</sup> Brooks, *Organisational Behaviour*, p.268.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, *Organisational Culture*, p.21.

<sup>5</sup> Kier, 'Culture and Military Doctrine', p.69.

the fundamental reason for the importance of these elements of culture. Military organisations need to develop a very deep sense of belonging and selflessness for the simple reason that the organisation may require an individual to sacrifice his or her life for the greater good of the team, unit, or nation. With such high stakes, military organisations need to ensure that belonging and selflessness are unquestioning and, if the organisation is to be successful, these beliefs should be the deep structures as depicted in the Roundel Model. Tradition, ritual and custom play an important role in this.<sup>6</sup>

In his article 'Defining Military Culture', Wilson also emphasised the deeper importance of tradition, custom and ritual in a military context.<sup>7</sup> He highlighted the importance of official and unofficial rituals to military organisations noting that: 'all institutions depend on the interaction of their members who are guided by informal customs and procedures as well as explicit written norms'.<sup>8</sup> He also identified that military organisations are very different to civilian counterparts as their primary mission is to 'take life and destroy property'. However, he also did not address how military organisations succeed in conditioning individuals to become indoctrinated to a point that they are prepared to die for a cause. Wong et al examined the motivation for soldiers to fight and wrote that: 'social cohesion remains a key component of combat motivation'.<sup>9</sup> Tradition, ritual and ceremony play a significant role in cementing this. Wilson and Kier's views pointed towards the deep

---

<sup>6</sup> In civilian or para-military organisations such as police, fire services, lifeboat and coast guard services, tradition, ritual and custom are similarly important.

<sup>7</sup> Peter H Wilson, 'Defining Military Culture', *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 72, Number 1 (January 2008), pp.11-41.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.15.

<sup>9</sup> Leonard Wong, Thomas A. Kolditz, Raymond A. Millen et al, 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War' (US Army War College, Strategic Studies Paper, July 2003), p.13.

importance of tradition, ritual and ceremony. Kirke's approach provided a broader view of the importance of tradition, ritual and custom and incorporates deep understanding formal and informal rules regarding how military organisations work. He melded business school theory with anthropology which, combined with his military experience, provided useful analysis of British Army organisational culture and its importance at the individual level.<sup>10</sup> However, material examining such aspects of air force cultures is scarce. Lee, Wells and Mahoney are the only academics to have addressed this in any meaningful sense and their work is limited.<sup>11</sup> This chapter sets out to address this lack of material and to examine the importance of tradition, custom and ritual to the culture of the RAF.

It will be demonstrated, that informal mechanisms, in particular, played a significant role in the establishment of a new and distinctive RAF culture-in-action. The aviator identity and technical mind-set were significant influences on how those informal mechanisms emerged.

### **Formal Rituals, Traditions and Customs**

It is evident that the RAF sought rapidly to establish legitimacy by establishing or borrowing tradition, ritual and ceremony.<sup>12</sup> Sykes' original organisational influence of the RFC played a particularly strong part in this. Many aspects of the formal RAF tradition, ritual and ceremony reflected those that had

---

<sup>10</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, particularly chapters 3, 4 and 9.

<sup>11</sup> Lee, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos', Wells, 'Tribal Warfare'. Mahoney, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory'.

<sup>12</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'. RAFM MFC 76/1/98, 'Independent Force Dinner', 1919, p.7. RAFM MFC 76/1/98 'Airship Officers' Dinner', p.3 and p.5. Brooke-Popham wrote that the RAF borrowed or modified its traditions from the RN and the Army. KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham 9/6/35, Brooke-Popham, 'Notes on the Traditions of the Royal Air Force', ATCP No 55.

emerged in the RFC.<sup>13</sup> As previously identified, the adoption of processes and practices was weighted towards the Army due both to the weight of numbers of RFC personnel in the RAF as well as the fact that Henderson, Sykes and Trenchard were the key decision makers in the formation of the RAF. Nevertheless, some traditions, such as the raising and lowering of the RAF Ensign, use of port and starboard whilst flying, the RN concept of a Station Officer of the Watch, semaphore and log keeping were clearly of direct RN origin.<sup>14</sup> *The Odd Hint to the RAF*, written in the early days of the existence of the RAF, provided a valuable insight into some of the customs of the Service from 1918.<sup>15</sup> Congdon and Hering, meanwhile, both provided excellent accounts of the formal traditions, rituals and ceremonies that emerged in the RAF between the wars, they need not, therefore, be discussed in great detail here, however, the result of adopting such conservative tradition, ritual and custom is worthy of analysis. King's Regulations, Air Ministry Weekly Orders as well as lower formation orders provided an insight into the officially sanctioned traditions, customs and rituals that formed the espoused culture of the RAF.<sup>16</sup> At the time of the emergence of the RAF, Britain had enjoyed a significant period of global hegemony

---

<sup>13</sup> 'Wing Commander', *The Odd Hint to the R.A.F.* Hering, Congdon and Hobart provided excellent accounts of the formal traditions, rituals and ceremonies that emerged in the RAF between the wars Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*. Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors* and Hobart, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*. Stradling's *Customs of the Service* provided a contemporary view on the traditions and outlook required of a junior officer towards the end of the period considered by this thesis. A H S (Stradling), *Customs of the Service (Advice to those Newly Commissioned)*, (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1939 and 1943). TeeEm, the training memoranda that were designed to maintain standards in the 1940's included a guide to saluting in 1941. 'Saluting' Tee Emm, (May 1941), CFS Archive, unaccessioned, p.20.

<sup>14</sup> RAFM, 'RAF Terminology and Ceremonial', RAF Air Ministry Weekly Orders, Order 641, 18 July 1918. For RN procedure history see: 'Cable-Curry', RN Website, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry>, accessed 13 Nov 2017.

<sup>15</sup> 'Wing Commander', *The Odd Hint to the R.A.F.*

<sup>16</sup> RAFM, King's Regulations for the Royal Air Force. RAFM Air Ministry Weekly Orders, TNA AIR72/1 Air Ministry Weekly Orders 1918-1920.

and the traditions, rituals and customs were deeply entrenched in both the RN as well as the British Army. It was, therefore, natural for the new leaders to adopt the elements of established tradition, ritual and custom that they knew worked.

Thus, many aspects of the espoused culture, saw the RAF conform with existing naval and military paradigms. Kirke's work is useful in explaining the importance of the established norms of the British Army.<sup>17</sup> For example, to RN and Army officers, ceremonial drill helped underline military values and cohesiveness and had tradition within both services. Accordingly, the RAF adopted drill despite it having no real application in a modern aerial fighting force. Similarly, the RAF adopted and paraded colours and standards, thereby copying the regimental traditions that came from the battlefields where they had a previous military application. Adoption of such old-fashioned rituals and customs included mess and dining etiquette, saluting rules, Ensign ceremonies, paying of compliments, dress regulations and standards concerning appearance which reinforced the RAF's conventional military traits. This helped ease the transition for personnel from the RNAS and the RFC and it also ensured that the RAF was recognisably martial to those of the other services. However, it also resulted in RAF personnel adopting a fundamentally conservative outlook as outlined earlier in this thesis.

Given that the RAF leadership set out to replicate many of the structures, traditions, rituals and customs of the older services it would have been logical to conclude that the RAF would develop a similar culture to the Service that it took most of its cultural elements from, the Army. However, the emergence of unofficial

---

<sup>17</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*.

tradition, ritual and custom made a significant contribution to the RAF developing its own distinctive culture.

### **Unofficial Traditions, Rituals and Customs**

The aviator identity and technical mind-set of the RAF had a significant effect upon the manner in which the unofficial tradition, ritual and custom emerged in the RAF. As the unofficial aspects of RAF culture, or the culture 'between the ears of the people', evolved they, in circular fashion through structuration, reinforced both the aviator identity and technical mind-set.<sup>18</sup> This was an extremely important factor in the divergence of the RAF culture away from its parent services. Key examples worthy of discussion here are: informal ceremonies and traditions and high jinks, slang, rejection of uniform, moustaches and unofficial badges

### **Informal Ceremonies, Traditions and High Jinks**

Informal ceremonies emerged particularly on squadrons and sections surrounding arrivals, departures and marked achievements such as solo flights or promotions. The lack of funds combined with the isolation of stations, a lack of personal transportation and restrictions on leaving stations, particularly for the junior ranks, meant that such entertainment was often self-made. "Contact" described a First World War evening of self-entertainment in a mess, including cards and a gramophone that ends in a sing-song of a favourite RFC song: 'The young aviator was dying' that incorporated typically dark services humour.<sup>19</sup> Parker referred to the isolation of Upavon in 1915 and the need to 'make their own amusement which consisted mainly of drinking and larking about'.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

<sup>19</sup> "Contact", *An Airman's Outings*, (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1918), p.232.

<sup>20</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, Memoirs, Vol 1 (1962), p.11. Unaccessioned.

During the expansion period, RAF stations evolved to provide a lot of amenities, however, entertainment was still often home grown. Station newspapers and magazines, plays, sports, showing of films and sing-songs played a significant role in station life. It has already been established that singing was important to apprentices; this was an RAF wide tradition. Indeed, 'H.G.' noted that given how much singing was done in the RAF that it really should have been of a better standard.<sup>21</sup> He described well-known songs that were modernised to fit in with RAF technology such as 'The Ansons fly over the Ocean, The Ansons fly over the Sea...' to the tune of 'My Bonny Lies over the Ocean'. In his 1945 book Ward-Jackson wrote:

Why are airmen's songs written and sung? For two reasons: to entertain audiences often far removed from any sort of professional theatrical show, and to "let off steam." Almost all squadron songs belittle and laugh at death and crashes or they grouse at whatever is the cause of the singers' browned off state.<sup>22</sup>

Laughing at death and 'grousing' were a means of reinforcing the nonchalance that was a common trait amongst the aircrew fraternity and featured heavily in their language and the high jinks the younger aircrew took part in. Much is made of pilot revelry. Miller contended that the 'no empty chair policy' contributed to the 'philosophy' that 'it was considered morale-boosting for aircrew to let off steam at the end of the day and so impromptu raucous parties in themes, no matter how incongruous in the middle of a bitterly fought battle were not uncommon'.<sup>23</sup> His emphasis on the extent of the socialising was an overly populist view of the First

---

<sup>21</sup> H G, *RAF Occasions* (London: The Cresset Press, 1941), pp.130-131.

<sup>22</sup> Ward-Jackson C, *Airman's Songbook* (London: Sylvan Press, 1945).

<sup>23</sup> No empty chair policy was encouraged by Trenchard. When a pilot died the chair was removed from the Mess to prevent others from feeling morose, Miller, *Boom*, p.161.



World War that was challenged by Hamilton-Paterson and needs to be examined.<sup>24</sup>

As identified in Chapter II, there is plenty of evidence of parties. Hamilton-Patterson, Lewis, Gould Lee and Baring, all referred to raucous evenings being very much an accepted part of RFC life.<sup>25</sup> Such activity, including high jinks, heavy drinking and a peculiar dark humour became entrenched and survived the transition to the RAF. Wallace wrote an account of a drunken party of RAF officers, following the ending of hostilities, that drove a taxi into the Criterion Hotel in London where it jammed in the entrance and caught fire. They subsequently made a bonfire in Trafalgar Square. The result was that London was made 'Out of Bounds' to all officers and men the following day.<sup>26</sup> However, while raucous behaviour and rowdy nights are well-documented features of both the RFC and the RNAS, they were, by no means a daily event during the First World War. Hamilton-Patterson's chapter entitled 'How they Lived' provided several useful personal accounts depicting an aircrew life in which the pressures of fighting resulted in aircrew who were 'too exhausted or tense...to stomach revelry.'<sup>27</sup> Morris wrote of a pilot that 'the moment he pushed the throttle his survival depended on a clear mind, split second reflexes and smooth muscular co-ordination. To be hung-over on dawn patrol was equivalent to attempted suicide'.<sup>28</sup> He did, however, note that there was enough bad weather to allow the parties to take place.<sup>29</sup> Gould Lee wrote of drink fuelled

---

<sup>24</sup> Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.158.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, *The Great War Interviews*, BBC, 33:50-34:16  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbi6p>, accessed 16 Oct 2017. Grinnell-Milne, *Wind in the Wires*, p.86, p.213, p.233. Baring, *Flying Corps Headquarters*, p.83.

<sup>26</sup> Wallace, *R.A.F. Biggin Hill* (London: Tandem Publishing Limited 1975 [Universal-Tandem 1969, First published Putnam &Co Ltd 1957], p.29.

<sup>27</sup> Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, pp.151-176

<sup>28</sup> Morris, *Bloody April*, p.144.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Mess nights, however, it can be seen from the diary format of his book that they were the exception rather than the norm.<sup>30</sup>

Lewis, meanwhile, highlighted Dawn Patrol as a tempering factor that resulted in aircrew generally turning in early. He noted that because of the losses, the atmosphere in the messes themselves were not 'gay' but professional in contrast to the binges in the towns.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, he said that 'it was only in the towns that the binges occurred' particularly after a squadron had experienced a 'bad time' or a 'particularly good time'; 'either was an excuse to go in and hoop it up a bit'.<sup>32</sup> However, the binges Lewis spoke of took place two or three times a week and lasted only until about midnight.<sup>33</sup> Limitations on drinking appear, however, to have been determined by personal refrain and local habit rather than through orders or example. Parker, in a section entitled 'Heavy drinking in the Royal Flying Corps' wrote that drinking took place on squadrons 'without a word of censure from Senior members'.<sup>34</sup>

A tradition of boyish pranks emerged from the early days of the aerial services that endured transition to the RAF. During the inter-war years, according to James, the 'traditions of boyish enthusiasm and high jinks' were reinforced both through the College at Cranwell with its distinctly public school feeling and also through the reservist system which James believed created a 'rake-hell' outlook

---

<sup>30</sup> Gould-Lee, *No Parachute* (London: Grub Street, 2014 [2013]).

<sup>31</sup> Lewis, *The Great War Interviews*, BBC, March 2014, 34:35-34:42.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbj6p>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, *The Great War Interviews*, BBC, 33:50-34:16  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbj6p>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, *The Great War Interviews*, BBC, March 2014, 34:43-35:02.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbj6p>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>34</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, *Memoirs Vol 1* (1962), p.62.

particularly amongst aircrew.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, aircrew penchant for high jinks is clear from many of the personal accounts of the time. *Reach for the Sky* described Officers' Mess life as follows:

Games of rugger in the ante-room with a waste-paper basket for a ball; or highcockalorum; or "desert warfare," when they grabbed the assegais off the wall and stalked their fellow-men through the oases of aspidistras on the floor while others beat tom-tom rhythms on the table-top'. Life was idyllic, with flying, games and fellowship.<sup>36</sup>

The official position of mess rules, Kings Regulations and publications offering advice to officers such as *Customs of the Service* advocated that officers and leaders should be an example to their men. Pranks and high jinks did not, theoretically, fit into that model. For instance, both the 1939 and 1943 editions of *Customs of the Service*, officially sanctioned by the Air Ministry, advised newly commissioned officers thus:

There is no traditional custom that an officer must be a heavy drinker...by all means enjoy yourself when a special occasion justifies it...a curious custom, or rather habit, has grown among junior officers of treating Mess property in a most light-hearted manner. This is not only extremely foolish but ill-mannered and objected to by all other members of the Mess<sup>37</sup>.

However, the hierarchy was aware of, and implicitly sanctioned, such behaviour. In the First World War, for instance, Maurice Baring, Trenchard's right hand man, was regularly seen with 'a wine glass nonchalantly balanced on his bald domed head, a posture long familiar to R.A.F. officers who had ever celebrated any special occasions with him' that was, in all likelihood a version of 'The Muffin Man'.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Baring's diary entry of 4 March 1915 reveals that the Headquarters Mess of the RFC senior leadership was a place of some revelry where over the

---

<sup>35</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.171.

<sup>36</sup> Brickhill, *Reach for the Sky*, p.41.

<sup>37</sup> A.H.S. (Stradling), *Customs of the Service*, pp.12-13 and 13-14 respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.375. A bobbing action with a glass on an officer's head while others sang was called 'The Muffin Man'.

previous 2 days '16 glasses, 10 tumblers, 12 coffee cups, 12 liqueur glasses, and 1 soup tureen had been broken in the Mess'.<sup>39</sup> Patterson wrote that 'the example of heavy drinking was set by Senior officials and filtered down to the youngest and lowest ranks.'<sup>40</sup>

In the Second World War, Guy Gibson's *Enemy Coast Ahead* which highlighted a lot of parties, drink driving and general antics was officially sanctioned and Harris wrote the following in the Introduction:

It may well be that the references to "parties" and "drunks" in this book will give rise to criticism, and even to outbursts of unctuous rectitude. I do not attempt to excuse them, if only because I entirely approve of them....Remember that these crews, shining youth on the threshold of life, lived under circumstances of intolerable strain...If there is a Valhalla, Guy Gibson and his band of brothers will be found there at all parties, seated far above the salt.<sup>41</sup>

USAF pilot Burgon highlighted, in his book *Piano Burning* that many USAF traditions 'were born in the ranks of the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and subsequently passed on to the American pilots who came to join them in their efforts. British influence is seen in the traditions we honour today'.<sup>42</sup> He wrote of the tradition of alcohol related games and also highlighted the fundamental principle of fighter pilot games was based upon the need for them to express their competitive edge.

Competition is a critical part of a fighter pilot's life. Without it we would wither and die. Fighter pilots play games for one reason, and one reason only: to show you how much better we are than everyone else!<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Baring, *Flying Corps Headquarters*, p.83.

<sup>40</sup> CFS Archive, Major S E Parker, *Memoirs Vol 1* (1962), p.62.

<sup>41</sup> Guy Gibson, *Enemy Coast Ahead* (Manchester: Crécy Publishing Limited, 2007 [1986]), p.8.

<sup>42</sup> Burgon, *Piano Burning and Other Fighter Pilot Traditions*, p.18.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60.

Although he expressed a modern USAF attitude, his sentiments are very much a reflection of the high jinks behaviour in *Enemy Coast Ahead*. Piano burning is an RAF tradition that is mythologised in the modern force. Common oral mythology accounts attribute this to cadets rebelling against being forced to play pianos in an attempt to instil refined tastes whilst they were at Cranwell. Other oral accounts suggest that this emerged in the Second World War as a tribute to aircrew that did not make it back to the 'piano keys' of their home base runway.<sup>44</sup> The latter can be discounted as piano keys were not introduced until after the Second World War. It is more likely that this 'tradition' forms a mythology structure of aviator identity and was simply justification of boyish mess vandalism. For instance, Wallace wrote of officers at Biggin Hill in the First World War being charged for deliberate drunken smashing of windows during the First World War in a 'rowdy session' in the Officers' Mess that also resulted in the disembowelling of a piano the tone of which one of the officers objected to.<sup>45</sup>

The way the RAF had been formed created many discrete silos or sub-cultures either through formal structures such as Stations, squadrons or flights, or through sub-cultures that emerge for other reasons such as belonging to a different aircraft type, branch or trade. Gibson provided enlightening ritualistic differences between two of the major sub-cultures in his description of the Battle of the "Snake-Pit" in which the intense rivalries between fighters at Digby and bombers at Waddington were played out. It involved lavatory paper bombing runs over Digby, a wing commander kidnapped in a commandeered Blenheim with squadron markings painted out and made to collect the lavatory paper, extremely low 'beat ups' as a

---

<sup>44</sup> The 'piano keys' are the markings on a modern RAF runway.

<sup>45</sup> Wallace, *R.A.F. Biggin Hill*, p.49

distraction for hats to be stolen from Waddington Mess all convey the fighter/bomber rivalries.<sup>46</sup> His account also conveyed the extent to which 'high jinks' took place and the fact that they were considered amusing and even the misuse of His Majesty's aeroplanes condoned with no resultant disciplinary action despite the Group Captain knowing.<sup>47</sup> Thus, not only did high jinks occur in the bar, they were part of the daytime rituals of RAF life too.

High jinks also took place amongst the ground-crew, however, accounts are more difficult to find than for aircrew. This is because the system was far more accommodating of aircrew deviance than it was of such behaviour by the ORs. However, those that can be found, such as Ron Bower's account of dropping a thunder-flash into a pit latrine while the Sergeant 'Discip' was using it, indicate that the sense of humour among the RAF ranks was strong and similarly boyish to that of the officers.<sup>48</sup> The different trades groups in the RAF for non-commissioned personnel evolved into natural silos in which their own sub-cultures flourished with trade nicknames and their own subtly different traditions, rituals and ceremonies that defined them and were sources of immense pride. RAF armourers, for instance, like members of the artillery, adopted St Barbara as their patron saint and traditionally celebrate her saint's day on 4 December each year.<sup>49</sup> This has traditionally included significant ritualised alcohol consumption.

The sub-cultures that emerged across the different trades and branches resulted in deeply held beliefs and values that represented both strengths and weaknesses for the RAF. The strong sense of brotherhood that arose out of the

---

<sup>46</sup> A 'beat up' is a very low flypast.

<sup>47</sup> Gibson, *Enemy Coast Ahead*, p.102-105.

<sup>48</sup> R C Bowers, *Seeing Life from a New Angle* (Honiton: Courtney Books, n.d.), p.63

<sup>49</sup> 'History of St Barbara RAF Armourers', <https://rafarmourers.wordpress.com/history-of-st-barbara/>, accessed 17 April 2017.

tradition, ritual and ceremony of squadron, branch, trade or social group can equally be termed tribalism. While this exclusivity enhances unit cohesion which is considered by Wong et al as a 'key component of combat motivation', it also encourages the establishment of deeply held divisions, jealousies and mistrust across the broader organisation.<sup>50</sup> Seabright highlighted that the RAF is 'divided into a variety different branches (and sub-specializations for officers) and trade groups all focussed on their specific roles' and concluded that there are similarities with Smith's conclusion about the USAF that 'there is much less 'glue', much less single mission simplicity and less physical contact than is seen in the other Services'.<sup>51</sup> For RAF leaders it remains a challenge to understand the balance between encouraging silo rivalries and intervening to reinforce overall RAF cohesion,

### **RAF Slang**

Shared language plays an important role in any culture or sub-culture. The morphing of language from the wider culture within an organisation demonstrates exclusivity. Military organisations display a noticeably strong tendency to adapt language or slang in this manner. At transition, Air Ministry Orders officially established the blending of different terms from the RNAS and the RFC.<sup>52</sup> The majority of the choices were Army biased such as the use of cookhouse over galley and rations over victuals. Port and starboard over left and right and Air Mechanic

---

<sup>50</sup> Leonard Wong, Thomas A. Kolditz, Raymond A. Millen et al, 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War', p.13.

<sup>51</sup> Squadron Leader Anthony J Seabright, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Air Power Review*, Vol 7 No 1 (2004), p.99.

<sup>52</sup> RAFM, 'RAF Terminology and Ceremonial', RAF Air Ministry Weekly Orders, Order 641, 18 July 1918.

over Technical Private were chosen from RN lexicon.<sup>53</sup> Thus some aspects of RAF language can be considered part of the espoused culture. However, the really colourful terms emerged from culture-in-action. Partridge in his dictionary of RAF Slang suggested of the services' language that:

The richest of all is that of the Army; yet the Army has added only a small number of words and phrases to those inherited from the First World War. The Navy slang, not quite so extensive as that of the Army, is even more traditional. The Air Force had a small body of slang even when it was the Royal Flying Corps. The RAF has many more slang terms than were possessed by the RFC.<sup>54</sup>

Partridge's assertion that the Navy slang is less extensive than that of the Army needs to be challenged. Such is the richness and historical importance of Royal Naval slang that a great deal of it entered mainstream English language over time making some of it invisible, perhaps giving the impression that the Army, in 1945, had a more extensive lexicon.<sup>55</sup> However, his points about the novelty and rate of change of RAF slang are important. The entirely new forms of aerial machinery that the RFC, RNAS and RAF began to operate required new words to be invented, appropriated and in certain circumstances misappropriated.<sup>56</sup>

Added to the practicalities of inventing new terms for aeroplanes and procedures, the experience of the new military aviators also coloured linguistic development. Baring commented about the conversations between pilots being

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> E Partridge, *A Dictionary of RAF Slang* (London: Pavillion Books Ltd, 1990), p.8.

<sup>55</sup> Jolly wrote a guide to Royal Naval slang that includes the Naval etymology of many words or phrases in common modern parlance that do not appear to be of obvious naval origin eg: cuts very little ice, p.124, devil to pay, p.132, codswallop, p.106, clean slate, p.101, chock-a-block, p.96, chew the fat, p.92, let the cat out of the bag/not enough room to swing a cat, p.85, the bitter end, p.41, to binge, p.39, show/shake a leg, p.398, toe the line, p.459.

<sup>56</sup> Many terms for aeroplane parts and navigation were appropriated either from the navy or from France eg port and starboard and nacelle (for nose of an aircraft). The RAF still uses the term punkah louvres to mean air conditioning ventilation ducts derived from Hindi and the RAF in India.



'Greek to me' as he departed by train with Salmond for France.<sup>57</sup> This underlines both that the early slang was already well established by 1914 but also, his fear of asking questions highlights how exclusive the band of aircrew had already become. The language conveyed nonchalance laced with an easy humour that helped aircrew shrug off danger. The pace of change of that language reflected the rate of change of the new technologies and roles that emerged in aviation between 1912 and 1945. The early aircrew were also very much aware of their new language, celebrated it and reinforced it. A writer under the moniker HC, in the first editions of *The Piloteer* shed light upon some of the slang terms in use by the RNAS:

Ailerons – pieces of fabric hinged on afterwards. The best pilots always waggle these violently when on the ground, the object being to impress the mechanics. Used largely in banking but somewhat rare in Lombard Street

Aerodromes – Places to meet lady friends and have tea. Generally contains large number of motors. Aeroplanes may be seen here at long intervals, which depend upon (a) the crowd in the mess, (b) The congestion in the tennis courts, (c) The number of machines available, (d) The inclination of the pilots. The weather doesn't matter, it is never flying weather.<sup>58</sup>

*The Piloteer* also published the Cranwell Alphabet A-Z that gives a useful insight into the both the use of language and humour:

A is for aircraft, all sizes and patterns:  
Some nimble and slender, some sluggish and fat 'uns.

B is the bump: puts wind up the quirk,  
Sometimes brings you to earth with a horrible jerk.<sup>59</sup>

An article in the Daily Mail, meanwhile, entitled *Airmen in the Making, The New Vocabulary*, gave an insight into how rich the language of the air services already was in 1917:

---

<sup>57</sup> Baring, *Flying Corps Headquarters*, p.12.

<sup>58</sup> *The Piloteer*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (n.d.), RAF College Cranwell Archive, CRN/0/2013/90, p.2.

<sup>59</sup> A Quirk was a BE2c aircraft. See Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.157. 'The Cranwell Alphabet', *The Piloteer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (n.d.), RAF College Cranwell Archive, CRN/0/2013/91, p.2.

While all branches of the Army since the commencement of the war have contributed their share of new words to our language, no one can claim the invention of so many strikingly original terms as the air services. The explanation lies in the fact that it is a new game, played for the most part by youngsters.<sup>60</sup>

The article highlighted of the exchange between pilots that ‘to the outsider it must be entirely meaningless.<sup>61</sup> To the initiated it is full of expressiveness and beauty’.<sup>62</sup> The article reported the use of the following words and phrases:

Zoom – ‘a soul-satisfying word – describes the action of an aeroplane which while flying level, is hauled up abruptly’.

Quirk – ‘disrespectful slang for a certain type of machine much in use overseas’.

Joystick – ‘the central lever by which the pilot works the wing and tail plane controls’.

Aerobatics – ‘are “stunts” and “stunts” are, well, “aerobatics”’<sup>63</sup>

Francis wrote that aircrew ‘connected through their shared knowledge of the RAF’s highly particular verbal idiom. Outsiders were both fascinated and baffled by the flyer’s esoteric slang’.<sup>64</sup>

Francis only concentrated upon aircrew, however linguistic quirks were common across the entire rank structure and different silos were delineated through the use of subtly different slang.<sup>65</sup> In the inter-war period, for instance, Lawrence highlighted that aircrew were not alone in adopting slang. He also underlined how language represented a divergence from the parent services:

In its virtue we resist the gas of militarism, which is breathed at us by our sergeants: - eight in ten of whom are old soldiers or old sailors, transferred in authority to the R.A.F. till the baby service had bred its own veterans. They

---

<sup>60</sup> ‘Airmen in the Making. The New Vocabulary’. *Daily Mail*, 19 July 1917, Issue 6643, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., This exchange and article was also used in Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.156.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.36.

<sup>65</sup> Other Ranks’ extensive use of idiom was highlighted in *Missed Date*, Analysis Films Limited, compiled on *The Royal Air Force at War, the unseen films*. Imperial War Museum, the official Collection. 1943-1944.

do their best with us men-in-the moon, do these minds, which were set before ever they transferred: but we and they speak different languages: their traditional eyes cannot see even how far from their pasts we have diverged.<sup>66</sup>

RAF slang transcended the divisions of rank and helped to bind the RAF in a common shared and very specific language.<sup>67</sup> By the Second World War, this was clearly evident in the majority of personal accounts of RAF service from across the rank structure.<sup>68</sup> The different trades had earned a wide variety of monikers: 'Snoops/Snoopers' for RAF Police, 'Chain Gang' for Aircraft hands General Duties, 'erk' for a recruit, apprentice or sometimes any junior 'rigger' or 'sooty', 'Paraffin Pete' for those involved in airfield control duties, 'Plumber' for armourer, 'Senior Scribe' for NCOs in the orderly room, 'Sid Walker's Gang' for members of aircraft salvage parties, 'Sparks' or 'Wop' for wireless operator, 'Trenchard Brat' for an apprentice or ex-apprentice.<sup>69</sup> The slang was, in itself, a source of pride that highlighted and celebrated the RAF's independence. Ward-Jackson underlined this in the following apprentice song:

It has been true, I'm told, ever since the days of old,  
That the language which we use is apt to vary,  
And the slang which we invent  
Will form a supplement  
To the next issue of the Oxford Dictionary.<sup>70</sup>

The slang was an indication of a very deeply entrenched culture. Its intricacy

---

<sup>66</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, p.192.

<sup>67</sup> Other sources of RAF Slang can be found in HW, *What's the Gen?* (London: John Crowther Ltd, 1942). James MacIsaac, 'Glossary of WWII R.A.F Slang and Terminology', <http://natureonline.com/37/56-ap4-glossary.html>, accessed 23 Mar 2016. J Hunt, A Pringle and Flying Officer C Morgan, *Service Slang* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008 Edition [1943]). Partridge E, *A Dictionary of RAF Slang*.

<sup>68</sup> See, for instance, Gibson, *Enemy Coast Ahead*. Paul Richey, *Fighter Pilot* (London: Cassell 2003 [Originally published anon, B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1941]). Geoffrey Wellum, *First Light* (New Jersey: Hoboken, 2003 [Viking, 2002]). Currie, *Lancaster Target* (Bodmin: Goodall Publications Ltd, 1988).

<sup>69</sup> Partridge E, *A Dictionary of RAF Slang*, p.8, p.52, p.61 and p.62.

<sup>70</sup> Ward-Jackson, *Airman's Songbook*.

and technical nature highlight a way of life with deep complex structures, traditions, rituals and ceremonies which bonded personnel yet also in which deep silos existed.

### **Rejection of Uniform**

The power of a uniform was discussed in the last chapter. However, although a uniform is designed to make an organisation appear as one, members of uniformed organisations often begin to wear the uniform in subtly different ways.

The apprentices did this as highlighted in Chapter VI. Hertz wrote that:

Deviations from a uniform code may exist for a variety of reasons. They may be intentional (out of defiance or necessity), unintentional (out of sloppiness, inexperience, or misinterpretation), or unavoidable (due to insufficient supplies, finances, or communication).<sup>71</sup>

She continued by emphasising that making such changes alter the symbolic message of the uniform itself:

While uniforms may regularly be altered physically for a variety of reasons, their symbolic communications may also be manipulated, thus calling into question exactly who has control of a uniform, its meanings, purposes, and messages.<sup>72</sup>

This is particularly important; certain unofficial alterations to RAF uniform resulted in some deeply held beliefs ranging from the negative such as dissatisfaction or acquiescence through to positive deep feelings of affiliation to certain sub-cultures.

Instances of all of these motives for deviations from the wearing of the prescribed uniform can be identified in the RFC, RNAS and RAF. Early in the RAF, for instance, personnel were slow to adopt new RAF uniforms either out of

---

<sup>71</sup> Hertz, *The Uniform: as Material, as Symbol*, p.46.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p.47.

attachment to the former uniform or due to the financial penalty of buying new ones.<sup>73</sup>

The inadequacy of the uniform was touched upon in the last chapter and there were a number of modifications and additions to uniforms that emerged from necessity such as pilots wearing silk scarves to counter chafing of the neck. However, Hertz' explanation of intentional motive being rooted only in defiance or necessity is a little simplistic. Some of the very significant departures from RAF standard uniform, that will be examined later, were made intentionally, but with motives that were better explained by Nathan and Nicholas. They provided the following explanations about why members of uniformed organisations reject uniforms:

One of the objections may be that uniforms create obstacles to performance...Another objection to uniforms may be their denial of individuality... Smaller elites within larger uniformed groups attempted to distinguish themselves from the run-of-the-mill member by introducing unofficial modifications of the uniform...Another form of rejection may be an expression of discontent, not with the uniformed status itself, but with it as the key status... Finally, the rejection of the uniform may represent opposition to the group itself. The altered uniform is worn, in this instance, to express dislike of the group and constitutes an interesting effort to oppose the group short of leaving or destroying it.<sup>74</sup>

Both the aviator identity and technical mind-set of personnel encouraged individualism. The tendency to ignore trifling rules and to dress slightly differently reinforced the special place they saw for themselves. Hamilton-Patterson described uniform trousers worn with tennis shoes as well as pyjamas worn under uniform in

---

<sup>73</sup> TNA Air 1/29 (Buff File Original AHB Ref 15/1/141/4) D18369, Weekly Order Application Form entitled 'Dress', dated 23 Nov 1918.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Nathan and Alex Nicholas, 'The Uniform: A Sociological Perspective', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Jan 1972), pp.727-728.

the First World War.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, illegal adoption of Eagle insignia on sleeves and shoulder straps by RNVR Officers attached to the RNAS attracted outraged correspondence from Vaughan-Lee and an Admiralty Weekly order proscribing such activity.<sup>76</sup>

The unofficial RFC and RNAS regard for military discipline and interesting clothing choices was inherited and accentuated by the RAF. Bamford wrote that 'there were subtle changes to dress and uniform that affected everyone, but in most cases dress regulations would not be strictly enforced for some time'.<sup>77</sup> He went on to note that:

The formation of the RAF was not to have an immediate effect upon the flamboyant taste and sense of dress that many pilots and observers had openly flaunted for a number of years...it was thought to be important for morale that officers should be allowed to express themselves in their own fashion.<sup>78</sup>

By the time the RAF arrived in the Second World War, the somewhat 'slack' approach to uniforms appears to have spread from the aircrew cadre across the rank structure such that Sherbrooke-Walker, previously a pilot in the RFC, described RAF-wide approach to uniform as follows:

Another aspect of the R.A.F. dress which struck "the brown job", as they called their brothers in the Army, was the way in which so many officers and airmen wore their uniforms, and here I noticed that aircrew were usually the worst offenders. One could perhaps forgive the undone top jacket button of the "Fighter Boy", but not the slovenliness so widespread on some R.A.F. Stations – the flapping jackets, the crushed and dirty caps, the undone buttons.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Hamilton-Paterson, *Marked for Death*, p.157.

<sup>76</sup> *R.N.A.S. and R.N.V.R Officers – 'Titles and Uniforms'*, Admiralty Weekly Order No 756, 21 April 1916, Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, p.296. And 'Memorandum by Rear-Admiral C.L. Vaughan-Lee', Director of Air Services, dated 12 February 1916 in Roskill, *The Naval Air Service*, pp.295-296.

<sup>77</sup> Joe Bamford, *Surviving the Skies. A Night Bomber Pilot in the Great War* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2012), p.108.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.108.

<sup>79</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.4.

The film *Missed Date*, an internal RAF training/propaganda film intended to highlight the dangers of loose talk, provided an interesting backdrop of what had become acceptable in terms of dress. It depicted incorrectly worn uniform with the forage caps set at remarkably rakish angles and worn indoors.<sup>80</sup> The haircuts were long and unruly, living up to the RAF 'Brylcreme Boy' moniker. Even the RAF Standard fluttering as the credits rolled was frayed. Paradoxically, the film suggests that the personnel in the film are extremely proud of their Service and revel in their technical expertise and argot.<sup>81</sup> Given this was an officially endorsed film, it highlights the circular reinforcement of Giddens' structuration theory; the counter-institutional dress standards appear to have been tacitly condoned by the chain of command.

In addition to uniform 'objection' on grounds of expressions of difference or elitism, it appears some instances of 'objection' based upon discontent with the uniform occurred. Currie, a sergeant pilot, described a particularly extreme approach to uniform by his bomber colleagues thus:

It was true that we had grown rather lax; we wore the most comfortable clothes that came to hand, and we didn't always shave in the morning. Saluting was generally avoided...Most of us wore one of two items of flying gear. I was dressed in a US Army shirt, silk scarf, sweater, basketball boots and battledress with no cap.<sup>82</sup>

Currie's account is extreme and the rich photographic evidence from the Second World War demonstrates that, while some aircrew had a distain for uniform, the vast majority wore a uniform that was entirely recognisable as an RAF one. There were, however, some isolated incidents in which uniform was rejected more

---

<sup>80</sup> *Missed Date*, Analysis Films Limited.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Jack Currie, *Lancaster Target*, p.74.

fundamentally during a series of discipline breakdowns in the India and the Far East as RAF personnel expressed opposition to the organisation in what were termed mutinies.<sup>83</sup> However, the majority of uniform rejection was in the form of modifications that affirmed the owner's membership of an elite. The RAF blue with silk scarf, red silk lined jacket and top button undone was, for instance, symbolic of the romanticism, dash and élan of the fighter pilot.<sup>84</sup> A scruffy crushed hat, meanwhile, was typical of bomber aircrews. Different ways of wearing the uniform were representations of the strong silos that existed between subcultural elements of the RAF. RAF personnel across the ranks, meanwhile, appeared to revel in perching the forage cap at what became known as a 'rakish' angle.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, the scruffiness of mechanics and aircrew and their blasé poses came to epitomise British defiance in the Battle of Britain and was endorsed by the chain of command and used as publicity material.<sup>86</sup>

## **Moustaches**

Any discussion regarding iconic RAF appearance needs to include the subject of facial hair and the origin of the RAF handlebar moustache. An aspect of

---

<sup>83</sup> Duncan referred to personal accounts of an incident in Karachi that involved the rejection of the wearing of blue uniform. David Duncan, 'Mutiny In The RAF – the Air Force Strikes of 1946', Socialist History Society, Occasional Papers Series, No 8, [http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page\\_id=179](http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page_id=179), accessed 2 Jun 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Moulson, *Millionaires' Squadron*, p.15. See also 'Squadrons of the Battle of Britain: No. 601 Squadron', 17 Jul 2015, <https://www.rafbf.org/news-and-blogs/squadrons-battle-britain-no-601-squadron#sthash.cKVEOAW3.dpuf>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>85</sup> Early RFC Photo shows forage caps at rakish angle in 'The Chaplain leads the singing at No 2 Aeroplane Supply Depot', RAF Museum Collection. See also 'A Halifax Rear Gunner', Ann Bradbury, 20 Sep 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/50/a5969550.shtml>, accessed 12 Dec 2017. 'Flt Sgt Steventon', The Wartime Project – The Second War, <http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/ww2/view.php?uid=1205832>, accessed 12 Dec 2017. 'Battle of Britain', <https://www.rafa.org.uk/blog/2015/08/14/battle-of-britain-15-august-1940/>, accessed 12 Dec 2017. See also Eric Kennington's portrait of Wing Commander Geoffrey Tuttle at the RAF Museum.

<sup>86</sup> Battle of Britain Photo Gallery, <https://www.rafbf.org/battle-of-britain/gallery>, accessed 24 Dec 2017.



a British military organisation that needs to be understood is its wry humour and the moustache epitomises that. The development of the handlebar moustache allowed its owner to stretch the interpretation of regulations to achieve individuality within a constraining military structure. It is an example of a counter-institutional ritual that ultimately worked in favour of the organisation helping give the RAF its own special image that underlined its independence.

During the Eighteenth Century facial hair became common in the RN and the Army for the practical reason that shaving at sea was problematic in the RN and for reason of cultural acceptance in Empire combined with a need to keep warm during the Crimea War. In 1869 the RN chose to repeal previous rules that sailors be clean shaven following

representations having been made to their Lordships that it would conduce to the health and comfort of men, under many circumstances of service, were they to be permitted to discontinue the use of the Razor on board Her Majesty's Ships'.<sup>87</sup> 'In all cases, when the permission granted in Clause I is taken advantage of, the use of the Razor must be entirely discontinued. Moustaches are not to be worn without the Beard, nor is the Beard to be worn without the Moustaches'<sup>88</sup>

Thus, the RN personnel were allowed to grow a full beard or a 'full set'.<sup>89</sup>

Photographic evidence demonstrates the Victorian British Army sporting full and impressive beards and whiskers and the Army regulation that all officers were to leave the upper lip unshaved was only repealed in 1916 following a Memorandum from General McCready to the Army Council following much consternation following

---

<sup>87</sup> Beards and Moustaches in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines, Admiralty Circular No. 36.-LMM, Admiralty, 24 June 1869, [http://www.pbenyon.plus.com/Navy\\_List\\_1870/Beards\\_Moustaches.html](http://www.pbenyon.plus.com/Navy_List_1870/Beards_Moustaches.html), accessed 7 Jan 2016.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Jolly, *Jackspeak*, p.185.

changes in fashion.<sup>90</sup> Thus, in the early days of the RFC all personnel, technically, were under orders to wear a moustache while members of the RNAS were able to wear a full set. The Air Council, in 1918, initially decided that 'there was no objection to hair on the face if kept within moderate limits'.<sup>91</sup> Kings Regulations from 1918 indicated, meanwhile, that 'the Hair of the Head will be kept short. The chin and underlip will be shaved'.<sup>92</sup> Technically that would have allowed for long sideburns to be worn, but by 1927 regulations were tightened up such that 'the face will be shaved with the exception of the upper lip which will be shaved or left entirely unshaven'.<sup>93</sup> Referring to the RAF and the Army, James wrote:

Both services drew the line at beards. Like the naval beard worn at the time mostly by aviators and submariners, the RAF moustache became the mark of a *corps d'élite*. It was the only way in which these men could express their individuality.<sup>94</sup>

James was incorrect about moustaches being the only way RAF men could express their individuality; as has been demonstrated, they were doing a good job of that in many other areas. It was, more correctly, one of many of the unofficial ways in which they were expressing their individuality and ironically, in doing so they created a tradition of pushing the boundary of the rules on facial hair that gave the RAF another symbol of its slightly rebellious nature but also a symbol of its independence.

---

<sup>90</sup> Christopher Oldstone-Moore, 'The Rise and Fall of the Military Moustache', Wellcome Library Collection, 20 November 2015, <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2015/11/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-military-moustache/>, accessed 2 June 2016. Olstone-Moore is a senior lecturer in history at Wright State University.

<sup>91</sup> AHB, Air Council Minutes, 'Growth of Hair, officers and men R.A.F.', 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting – Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1918, Item 11.

<sup>92</sup> RAFM Kings Regulations for the Royal Air Force 1918, p.140.

<sup>93</sup> Trenchard Museum, 'Standing Orders for the Apprentice Wings Stationed at RAF Halton' published under Paragraph 61 King's Regulations, Jun 1927, p.21.

<sup>94</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.183.

Sherbrooke-Walker noticed an RAF officer travelling on board a troopship 'distinguished by an immense pirate's moustache, a shock of bobbed hair and a pair of side-whiskers. He was an offence to the eye'.<sup>95</sup> Once again, a cursory inspection of photographs of groups of RAF personnel from the Second World War reveals the handlebar moustache was far from a universal facial adornment. Indeed, it was worn by a minority of personnel and, probably, limited to the more eccentric members of the RAF. However, the fact that it became so strongly linked to the RAF highlights the power of symbols, traditions and rituals and is also another example of culture-in-action morphing the original intentions of the officially espoused culture.<sup>96</sup>

### **Unofficial Badges**

Aircrew dominated the production of unofficial badges with some gaining iconic symbolic status such as the 'Late Arrivals' badge, a winged boot, for those who walked back across the lines from enemy territory and 'The Goldfish Club' badge, with a white winged goldfish motif, for those rescued from the sea.<sup>97</sup> Some unofficial trade badges also emerged such as the RAF Dispatch Rider badge but these were less prevalent in the ranks, presumably because the Station Warrant

---

<sup>95</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki & Blue*, p.4.

<sup>96</sup> The RAF tradition for handlebar moustache wearing has recently gathered increased momentum with the Movember cancer charity phenomenon. 'Movember Foundation', <https://uk.movember.com>, accessed 3 June 2017. See also 'RAF Pilot Wins Moustache Battle', [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north\\_east/7451939.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/7451939.stm), accessed 2 June 2016.

<sup>97</sup> British Pathe footage shows Late Arrivals Club members being awarded their badges. Note also the long hair and varied non-uniform dress of the aircrew. 'Late Arrivals Club', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGIkqDU4hBI>, accessed 3 June 2017. See Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.128.

For more details of the history behind the badge with Goldfish Club as well as accounts see 'The Goldfish Club', <http://www.thegoldfishclub.co.uk>, accessed 12 April 2016. See also Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.127.

Officer had greater sway over the ORs than over the aircrew.<sup>98</sup> The unofficial badges that emerged underline two aspects of the RAF. Firstly, that certain trades, branches and sub-cultures of the RAF did not feel that they were sufficiently recognised. Secondly, according to Hering, given the humorous designs of many of such badges, this was a further manifestation of Service humour.<sup>99</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that tradition, ritual and custom are particularly important to military organisations in creating the bonding or social cohesion necessary to overcome the intense visceral fear of going into armed combat. The formal traditions, rituals and ceremonies that surrounded the RAF structure were an amalgam of those from the RN and the Army or a continuum of many of those that had been introduced to the RNAS and the RFC when they were part of those parent services. Thus, it would not be unreasonable to expect the RAF culture to be very close to that of the Army and the RN. However, this chapter has demonstrated that it was largely through the emergence of informal traditions, rituals and ceremonies that RAF Culture diverged away from that of its parent services and it did so quite markedly. This is in line with Giddens' theory of structuration. Kirke noted of the Army that:

The informal aspects of soldiers' lives were not governed by any written regulations – indeed in some areas they contravened them. These informal

---

<sup>98</sup> IWM INS 40252, Uniforms and Insignia, badge trade, British. 'Unofficial Royal Air Force Dispatch Rider trade badge bearing the letters 'D.R' above a motor-cycle wheel, side on, between two upward-curving wings emanating from the wheel hub'. See 'Badge, trade, Royal Air Force, other ranks', <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30061852>, accessed 16 April 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Hering, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*, p.127.

aspects comprise the most complex and diverse area of British military life'.<sup>100</sup>

The very specific environment in which aviators operated combined with the new stresses that they were under, the type of person that was attracted to aviation and that the model for going into combat had been completely changed to one in which a few warriors, predominantly officers, went forward leaving the bulk of the force in support, totally transformed the way combat was executed. The aviator identity that emerged had resulted in a significant change in the new warriors' views and behaviour. Meanwhile, in the hangars and support buildings, the technical mind-set also drove the emergence of new cultural norms.

The unofficial traditions, rituals and ceremonies were not homogenous across the RAF. Silos emerged, either as a result of the official structures, or as a result of more informal sub-groupings. In those silos, traditions, rituals and ceremonies developed in different ways, shaped and reinforced by the participants in the groups. The most culturally powerful silo, as highlighted by Mahoney, was that of the pilot. That sub-group developed very strong traditions, rituals and ceremonies as has been outlined and were a direct result of the aviator identity. However, elements of their culture-in-action spread across the wider force, not least because it was from there that the leadership emerged, giving the RAF a marked youthful, humorous and modern approach to service which was starkly juxtaposed against the more traditional and stuffy aspects of the Service. Those aspects emerged due to it having structures, rules, regulations and recruitment that were largely conventional as already examined earlier in this thesis. However, the emergence of silos was not restricted to the aircrew fraternity. A wide range of other silos

---

<sup>100</sup> Kirke, *Red Coat, Green Machine*, p.60.

emerged that engendered belonging and pride. However, they also caused parochialism across the RAF which, in some cases, could be corrosive such as across the aircrew/ground crew, the bomber/fighter or the pilot/other aircrew divides.

The culture-in-action or the culture 'between the ears of the people' resulted in the unofficial development of strong silos and reinforcement of the aviator identity and technical mind-set that encouraged the divergence of RAF culture away from the cultures of the Army and the RN.<sup>101</sup> The Inter-war RAF officer cadre assumed a devil-may-care approach to life juxtaposed against overt public school traditionalism. The self-effacing nonchalance and modernity that arose from operating cutting edge technology and blasé humour saw the Force develop its own distinct lexicon that varied across silos. The counter-institutional activity such as high jinks, unofficial wearing of badges, scruffy appearance, rejection of uniform, rakishly angled forage caps and handlebar moustaches and typified a Service that had developed its own unofficial customs traditions and rituals. In particular, this counter-cultural activity emphasised the importance of practicality over pomp and circumstance. The Service particularly valued its technical mind-set in the cockpit, hangar, cookhouses and HQ's of this cutting-edge organisation.

---

<sup>101</sup> Kirke, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition', pp.97-99.

## CHAPTER X

### RAF ARCHITECTURE



**Fig 6 - RAF College Cranwell**

Sharr contended that 'it remains important for architects and architectural historians to appreciate buildings as the material embodiments of culture (or multiple cultures), and to read the stories that they contain'.<sup>1</sup> His research pointed to a body of evidence that indicated the strong inter-relationship between culture and architecture that would make bypassing buildings and architecture quite an impossibility when a considering the development of RAF culture. Brown wrote that

---

<sup>1</sup> Adam Sharr, *Architecture & Culture, Researching buildings spaces and documents* (New York: Routledge, Kindle edition, 2012), Loc 385 of 6638.

'buildings are often intimately bound up with the history and development of an organisation, and changes in location often mark radical alterations in the strategic direction or general character of a company'.<sup>2</sup>

Unwin proposed that 'architecture has the potential to establish and influence relationships, elicit emotional responses, even to affect how we behave and who we think we are'.<sup>3</sup> More functionally, Berg and Kreiner, highlighted how deeply affected people continue to be by the buildings that surround them:

A basic proposition of corporate architecture is that the architectural, interior, and environmental design of corporate buildings and settings has a profound impact on human behaviour in general ... and on human performance in particular'.<sup>4</sup>

As the military services were convinced of a need to explore air power, they needed places to fly from and gradually required 'places' to store fuel, to sit, to sleep and to shelter. The fields and balloon launching sites established at Farnborough, Larkhill and Upavon required mess halls, women's hostels, barracks, offices, supply stores, dope sheds, gas plants, kitchens and headquarters. By 1918 the air services had already established an impressive array of air stations, training and operational bases, repair depots, logistical units and HQs across the UK and overseas. According to Higham, airfield construction was 'the largest civil engineering project in the United Kingdom since the construction of the railways in the nineteenth century' and took place between 1934 and 1945'.<sup>5</sup> This chapter will examine the important aspects of RAF buildings and facilities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Brown, *Organisational Culture*, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Unwin, *Analysing Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, Fourth Edition 2009), p.5.

<sup>4</sup> Per Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner 'Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources' in *Symbols and Artifacts: views of the Corporate Landscape*, ed Pasquale Gagliardi (Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1990), p.46.

<sup>5</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*.



## Trenchard's Vision

Following the end of the First World War, the lack of permanent buildings was of significant concern to Trenchard:

I ... decided – and gradually convinced my Secretary of State – that we ought to defy the other services and risk unpopularity by building foundations with nothing much else to show – but foundations that it would be hard to destroy. I wanted very few squadrons – just enough to gain experience and carry out domestic roles in our overseas territories when local emergencies arose.<sup>6</sup>

A key part of Trenchard's plan was to build separate RAF infrastructure and institutions. He aimed 'to really make an air service which will encourage and develop airmanship, or better still, the air spirit, like the naval spirit, and to make it a force that will profoundly alter the strategy of the future'.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1919 Memorandum, Trenchard underlined the lack of permanent infrastructure:

Though some of the wartime buildings can be made to serve for a year or two in their present state, the Air Force does not possess one single permanent barracks. ...a large capital outlay on the provision of new buildings and the adaptation of the most suitable of the temporary buildings is inevitable during the first few years.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, the RAF did possess some buildings that were permanent structures.<sup>9</sup> However, Trenchard envisaged well-provisioned stations that would be more than functional and a source of pride for the new Service. He said at an Independent Force dinner that:

I ask you to picture to yourselves – as I hope to see it even in my time – Permanent Stations with their cricket grounds, tennis courts, polo grounds,

---

<sup>6</sup> Boyle A, *Trenchard*, p.341.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p.343.

<sup>8</sup> Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

<sup>9</sup> RAF Wittering, RAF Cranwell and RAF Henlow all have examples of First World War era buildings that were permanent enough to remain in use today. RAF Henlow, in particular, retains impressive and listed First World War hangars.

etc. with comfortable living conditions for officers and men, in which all can take a pride, and an interest, and feel that they have got a home.<sup>10</sup>

Given concerns that demobilisation might sweep away the RAF, the proposed building could be viewed as an exercise of Trenchardian aggrandisement in order to secure the future of his Service. If that were the only motivation for building, then it worked. The RAF College stands as physical embodiment of Trenchard's determination to build permanence. The columns, rotunda, parade ground, impressive railings and front gate proclaimed that the RAF College had its own Dartmouth or Sandhurst. But the programme was not simply about producing grand edifices. It also provided HQ's, aerodromes, training centres and depots that would prepare the RAF both for expansion and future operations. The building programme would also have a deep cultural effect on the personnel. What is perhaps most surprising is that this building project came at a time of tight financial constraint and at a time when the Royal Air Force might have been tempted to spend its meagre budget on aerial vehicles. Faced with some difficult choices, Trenchard preferred to dig solid foundations that would last a great deal longer than the bi-planes he could have bought.

The expansion period of the RAF is the most obvious manifestation of how the culture of the RAF was expressed in its buildings and infrastructure and that period is particularly well covered in *Works* and the Official Narrative on the Expansion of the RAF.<sup>11</sup> While these acknowledged that the conceptual and political roots of expansion were to be found in the earlier phase, they failed to

---

<sup>10</sup> RAFM MFC 76/1/98 Speeches: Drafts and Notes 1919-1927, 'Independent Force Dinner Speech B', p.11.

<sup>11</sup> Documents such as the 'RAF Narrative on the Expansion of the RAF' and *Works* emphasise this period in particular. 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1939'. *Works*, p.24

underline just how important the early years of aviation were with respect to RAF culture. Higham's Wave Theory of airfield development provided a useful thread in which 1914 is referred to as infancy, 1914-1919 as puberty, 1919-1939 as manhood, 1939-1945 as middle age and 1956 as peacetime equilibrium.<sup>12</sup> The infancy stage, 1914-1919 was, clearly an important period of expansion in which the RFC and RNAS took over aerodromes in the UK that would become important bases for the RAF. Aerodrome procurement and building was initially ad hoc but impressive nevertheless and conducted on a relatively large scale during the First World War. In that initial period, the buildings did not reflect anything truly revolutionary with the exception, perhaps, of enormous airship hangars such as those at Cardington.<sup>13</sup>

In France, most fixed wing aircraft operations during the early part of the First World War needed little in the way of specialised buildings given that the aircraft operated from grass strips. Dye highlighted the importance and complexity of the logistical system's Aircraft Depots, Air Parks, Lorry Park, Port Detachments, Aircraft Repair Depots, Stores Depots, Airship Depots. They formed part of a network that also included detailed reporting and accounting of the movement of aircraft and materiel. That, Dye claimed, was key to 'delivering strategic success, facilitating 'modern warfare' and anticipating the management practices that now form the global supply chain – an immense legacy for a small military organisation that flourished for just five years at the beginning of the last century'.<sup>14</sup> From a cultural perspective, the First World War architecture offers little for consideration in this

---

<sup>12</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, p.27

<sup>13</sup> The scale of these can be seen at Cardington where two First World War era airship hangars remain standing. See 'Cardington Number 1 Shed at RAF Cardington', <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114165>, accessed 19 Feb 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Dye, *Air Power's Midwife*, p.329.

thesis except that the broadly accepted layouts of aerodrome, separate messing, the need for a parade square, the choice of nomenclature for buildings emerged and can be observed at locations such as Stow Maries.<sup>15</sup>

The period from 1918 until 1922 was defined by demobilisation and insecurity for the RAF. The RAF reduced from 291,175 personnel in 1918 to 31,500 by 1920 and from 204 squadrons in 1918 to 29 by Mar 1920.<sup>16</sup> For RAF personnel, futures were uncertain. The insecurity, lack of existential national threat, poor living conditions and demobilisation delays resulted in dissatisfaction that, in the case of Biggin Hill, was sufficiently serious that it resulted in a strike.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, personnel who wished to stay in the RAF faced uncertain careers with the future of the RAF under scrutiny. Although *Works* referred to 1920 to 1935 as ‘the comparatively comatose years’ of estate expansion, some of the acquisitions and plans made between 1918 and 1922 would be of marked cultural significance to the future RAF.<sup>18</sup> The Air Ministry, initially in Hotel Cecil on the Strand and then in Adastral House on Kingsway, Bentley Priory (Fighter Command HQ) and the Halton Estate were all procured during those years. Meanwhile, in this period, the RAF College and Halton were respectively built and bought. Their significance as training centres has already been explained. However, as buildings, they became very important as physical manifestations of both permanence and independence.

---

<sup>15</sup> ‘Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Essex’. <http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/history/>, accessed 11 May 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Jones H, *The War in the Air, Appendices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), Appendix xxxv. See also ‘From World Power to Colonial Policeman’, <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/history-of-the-battle-of-britain/from-world-power-to-colonial-policeman.aspx>, accessed 14 May 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Wallace, *R.A.F. Biggin Hill*, pp.56-60. See also ‘1919: The RAF Biggin Hill mutiny’ <https://libcom.org/files/1919%20The%20RAF%20Biggin%20Hill%20mutiny.pdf>, accessed 17 Mar 2017. See also ‘Biggin Hill History’, <http://bigginhill.co.uk/history.htm>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

<sup>18</sup> *Works*, p.24.

In 1921, the final of the three Geddes reports was completed that placed enormous strain on military defence spending. The Air Staff's deft footwork, Churchill's belief in air power and the employment of the RAF in a colonial policing role appeared to have demonstrated that air power was a cheap method of maintaining order in the Empire. Despite fears about how the Geddes axe might fall, the decision to maintain the RAF as a separate service was announced by Chamberlain in the House of Commons in March 1922.<sup>19</sup> The RAF's defence of both Halton and Cranwell was particularly robust and they remain extremely important RAF cultural icons.<sup>20</sup>

The decision to expand in 1922 arose from an enquiry conducted by the special Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence set up on 9 November 1921 to "go fully into the question of the vulnerability of the British Isles to air attack and the measures necessary to provide for meeting such an attack" with the primary focus of threat considered, by the Committee, to be France.<sup>21</sup> Balfour suggested

---

<sup>19</sup> 'Mr. Chamberlain's Announcement', HC Deb 16 March 1922, vol 151 cc2474-2476, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/mar/16/mr-chamberlains-announcement#S5CV0151P0\\_19220316\\_HOC\\_379](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/mar/16/mr-chamberlains-announcement#S5CV0151P0_19220316_HOC_379), accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>20</sup> TNA 8/42 CAS Archives, Geddes Committee Memoranda Appendix to the 'Memorandum on the Recommendations of the Committee on National Expenditure', Prepared by the Air Ministry For Mr Churchill's Cabinet Committee Jan 16 1922, pp.2-4 and pp.9-13. See also TNA 8/42 CAS Archives, Appendices to 'Report of Cabinet Committee appointed to examine Part I (Defence Departments) of the Report of the Geddes Committee on National Expenditure', Appendix III, p.3, pp.6-7 and pp.11-13. See also TNA 8/42 CAS Archives, 'Cabinet Committee to Examine Part I of the Report of the Geddes Committee on National Expenditure so far as it Affects "Defence Departments"', Minutes of the Second Meeting, 10 Jan 1922. Trenchard's statement summary, p.2, Guest's statement summary, p.4. Also, TNA 8/42, CAS Archives Vol 3, Letter from the Air Ministry to the Secretary of State dated 3 Dec 1921.

<sup>21</sup> CID 106-A, 26 April 1922 'Report of the Sub-Committee of Imperial Defence on Continental Air Menace' in 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.2. See also T C G James, *Growth of Fighter Command, 1936-1940: Air Defence of Great Britain*, (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2013 [Frank Cass 2002]), p.1.

that not expanding the RAF would 'put temptation in the way of French statesmen which would find it hard to resist'.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee advised that the establishment of the Air Force 'should be increased in order to enable an offensive organization to be built up' and 'the organization of a zone of defence should be proceeded with'.<sup>23</sup> Trenchard was not entirely convinced of the likelihood of attack by the French, nor was Lord Gorell.<sup>24</sup> However, while the French threat was somewhat doubtful, it served as a yardstick by which to judge the strength of the RAF. Thus, aerodrome building in the UK would be based upon a perceived and flawed axis of attack from France until 1934.<sup>25</sup>

On 3 August, 1922, Lloyd George duly accepted 'to adopt a scheme submitted by the Air Ministry providing a force of 500 machines for home defence at an increased cost of £2,000,000 per annum. £900,000 out of the total of £2,000,000 will be found by economies in the Estimates of the Air Ministry'.<sup>26</sup> This allowed for the expansion of the Force by 20 Squadrons with the axis of build towards France.<sup>27</sup> In due course, under Baldwin's Conservative Government in 1923, the Imperial Defence Committee's recommendation for allocating 52 Squadrons to Home

---

<sup>22</sup> Note by Lord Balfour on the 'Report of the Sub-Committee on Continental Air Menace', CID 180-A, 29 May, 1922 quoted in 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.5.

<sup>23</sup> 'Report of the Sub-Committee of Imperial Defence on Continental Air Menace'. CID 106-A, 26 April 1922 in 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.2.

<sup>24</sup> For Lord Gorell's view, see 'The Air Force', *Hansard*, HL Debate, 27 July 1922, vol 51, cc 902-44, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0\\_19220727\\_HOL\\_101](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0_19220727_HOL_101), accessed 21 Oct 2017. For Trenchard's view see: 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.5.

<sup>25</sup> RAFM AIR 69 Freeman W, 'Air Strategy', Précis of Lecture, p.2. The change in this perceived axis of threat is reflected in Freeman's lecture to the Staff College in 1935.

<sup>26</sup> 'Committee for Imperial Defence, Air Defence, Prime Minister's Statement', *Hansard*, HC debate, 03 August 1922, vol 157 cc 1661-3, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/aug/03/prime-ministers-statement>, accessed 01 June 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Francis P, *British Military Airfield Architecture*, p.16.

Defence was accepted.<sup>28</sup> The building process initially consisted of modernising First World War airfields and providing them with permanent buildings. Part of the problem at this stage, however, was that despite comparing the RAF with the French Air Force, the real prospect of fighting them did not seem entirely credible and was, perhaps, a reason for the lack of any real urgency in forces build-up. However, after Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany, a far more credible threat to the United Kingdom began to emerge and RAF infrastructure building.

Before 1934 the RAF possessed 52 aerodromes, however, the increasing German threat saw exponential growth. In 1934 there were 5 sites for which 'action was inaugurated to acquire'. This increase to 17 in 1935, 18 in 1936, 12 in 1937, 27 in 1938, 63 in 1939, 126 in 1940, 106 in 1941, 91 in 1942 and 3 in 1943.<sup>29</sup> Thus, by 1944 there were 432 aerodromes in the United Kingdom and 111 satellite aerodromes.<sup>30</sup> This period of expansion took place by means of schemes denoted with the letters A to M, however, a number of them failed to get off the ground or were surpassed by subsequent schemes. Ultimately the schemes that were approved were: A, C, F, H, J, K, L and M.<sup>31</sup>

Higham contended that the schemes did not go far enough, however, whilst the expansion programme was slow to start, this period of construction nevertheless provided the RAF with enough stations, command and control systems and

---

<sup>28</sup> 'Strength', *Hansard*, HC written answer, HC Deb, 19 July 1923, vol 166 c2509W, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written\\_answers/1923/jul/19/strength#S5CV0166P0\\_1\\_9230719\\_CWA\\_1](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1923/jul/19/strength#S5CV0166P0_1_9230719_CWA_1), accessed 16 May 2015.

<sup>29</sup> 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.145. The figures do not include the acquisition of some of the advance landing grounds or relief landing grounds.

<sup>30</sup> 98 of the aerodromes were in use by the United States Army Air Force. Figures from Geographical Index of RAF Units quoted in 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.146.

<sup>31</sup> See TNA AIR 8/238 'British Air Re-armament'.

logistical arrangements to fight the Second World War.<sup>32</sup> The hangars, technical and administrative buildings of the 1930s expansion period continue to dominate RAF stations today underlining how well designed and built they were. Buildings such as hangars, guardrooms, morgues, decontamination units, parachute packing facilities and station headquarters were not only practical, they were built to standard patterns that gave RAF stations a very distinct identity or cultural stamp.<sup>33</sup>

*Works* highlighted that:

The expansion of the Royal Air Force, provided the Works Directorate in 1935, with its first real opportunity to design and construct, on a comprehensive basis, permanent buildings of character and uniformity and planned to a standard of efficiency in keeping with the modern service they served.<sup>34</sup>

The expansion plans resulted not only in modern robust war fighting establishments but also recognised the importance of establishing a sense of community spirit and pride in its personnel. The RAF recognised the need to provide married quarters, leisure facilities, places of worship, shops, bars, post offices and the other paraphernalia associated with running a community.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond the utilitarian working buildings, the most obvious trait of 'character' was the

---

<sup>32</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, pp.15-28. For further comment on the weaknesses of the expansion schemes see: 'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1934', p.162-3.

<sup>33</sup> For a detail on the various patterns of technical and domestic buildings including guardhouses, operations buildings, workshops, hangars, control towers, squash court, water supplies, synthetic training facilities, barrack blocks, huts and married quarters see Francis P, *British Military Architecture*.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, p.26

<sup>35</sup> The rigours of isolation and the need for married quarters for this was articulated in TNA AIR 8/42 CAS Archives, Geddes Committee Memoranda Air Ministry Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure, October 1921, Section V, 'Married Quarters for Officers and Men', p.32. Meanwhile, the importance of leisure facilities was identified in Air Council Minutes, 9th meeting, Item VIII 'Supply of Tennis Courts etc to aerodromes', 19 March 1918, AHB. See also the importance placed on community facilities in 'Effective Striking Strength', Hansard, HC Deb, 25 Feb 1926, vol 192 cc813-75, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0\\_19260225\\_HOC\\_402839-842](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402839-842), accessed 17 Mar 2017.



adoption of faux Georgian styles for many buildings such as messes, guardrooms, married quarters and headquarters. That all plans were 'subject to review and approval by the Royal Fine Arts Commission' is testament to how seriously the development of Stations was taken by the RAF as well as wider institutions.<sup>36</sup> Congdon wrote that 'in the planning of barrack blocks, Mess and married quarter buildings a 'Georgian' influence can be seen in the architects' attempts to provide dignified restful lines that would blend in with their surroundings but remain in keeping with the character and purpose of the building'.<sup>37</sup> The story of RAF building was not, however, simply one of buildings and technology being harmoniously developed amid a bucolic idyll. The procurement and building of airfields was a serious and contentious issue.<sup>38</sup> Such issues persisted throughout the inter-war period into the Second World War and were a significant cause of friction between the Air Ministry and the public.<sup>39</sup> The Society for the preservation of Rural England was involved in approval of airfield designs and even dictated the use of certain materials at some stations to ensure that they fitted in better with local

---

<sup>36</sup> Francis P, *British Military Architecture*, p.18 and *Works*, p.26.

<sup>37</sup> Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.13.

<sup>38</sup> For problems identified by Henderson that arose between the needs of the aerial services and those of the Food Controller and local agricultural communities in 1918 see AHB, Air Council Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Item VII 'Works at Loch Doon', January 1918. See similar comments by Admiral Kerr in AHB Air Council Minutes, 9th meeting, Item VII 'Aerodromes Committee. Interim Report', 1 February 1918. Turner highlighted the issues of airfield construction emerging as airfields grew in size, AIR 69/101, Turner J F, Lecture Notes to lectures to 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Staff Courses entitled 'Works and Buildings', 1934.

<sup>39</sup> See TNA AIR 2/2067 'Design of Aerodromes – Future Requirements'. Also, 'Air Ministry Accused of Extravagance. An Aerodrome Demolished and Then Rebuilt', *The Times*, (Nov 18 1925), p.16 Issue 44122, Col C. 'Government and Hendon' *The Times* (Dec 29 1925 p 10 Issue 44155 col E). 'Dorset as "An Armed Camp". Opposition to Proposed R.A.F Aerodrome', *The Times*, (Nov 22, 1935), p.20; Issue 47228; Col E. 'Hampshire Aerodrome', *The Times*, (Saturday May 30 1925), p.9 Issue 43975 col E. AHB, Air Council Minutes, 8th meeting, Item IV 'Employment of Agricultural Labour on Aerodromes', 29 Jan 1918, 'Preservation in Wiltshire', *The Times*, Aug 31 1936, p.9; Issue 47467; col E. 'Proposed Aerodrome Near Swindon', *The Times*, (Feb 25; 1939), p.8; Issue 48239; col C.

architecture.<sup>40</sup> For the personnel, this contributed to RAF airfields having a more pleasing visual aspect than they might otherwise have had which helped make RAF airfields more homely.

Meanwhile, the context of the modernity of RAF stations is important to the culture. Schofield noted that: 'in the lead up to the Second World War new airfields were spread across a countryside where horses remained the chief source of motive power'<sup>41</sup>. ORs came from urban households in which internal privies were not the norm. Thus, the RAF Station airmens' blocks with indoor ablutions were a relative luxury.<sup>42</sup> A 1938 investigation into barrack blocks, in particular, resulted in barrack accommodation becoming increasingly comfortable with an increase in floor area per man in barrack rooms, a reduction in height of rooms, a reduction to a maximum of 12 men per room and provision of a sitting room for entertainment, reading and radio.<sup>43</sup> When combined with the fact that these stations were at the cutting edge of technology, these RAF stations were extremely impressive installations for the era.

---

<sup>40</sup> Francis M, *The Flyer*, p.18 and *Works* pp.26-28. .

<sup>41</sup> John Schofield et al, 'Artists and Airmen: Documenting Drawdown and Closure of RAF Colitshall (Norfolk)', <http://medieval-europe-paris-2007.univ-paris1.fr/J.Schofield%20et%20al..pdf>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

<sup>42</sup> For a view on the relative luxury of an RAF station from the perspective of a working class airman see: 'How the hell can you privatize water?' *The Guardian* 24 November 2014, [www.the-guardian.com/society/2014/nov/24/harry-leslie-smith-nhs-great-depression-ed-miliband-advice](http://www.the-guardian.com/society/2014/nov/24/harry-leslie-smith-nhs-great-depression-ed-miliband-advice). Accessed 17 Mar 2017.

<sup>43</sup> *Works*, p.30-31.



**Fig 7 - RAF Henlow Officers' Mess**



**Fig 8 - RAF Henlow Officers' Mess Wing with Reproduction Faux Georgian windows**

Meanwhile, RAF officers' messes represented a high degree of comfort. During the Second World War, Sherbrooke-Walker noted: 'the quarters in these

large messes, built in peace-time, were extremely comfortable by army standards'.<sup>44</sup>

According to James, Officers' Mess design was unashamed in underlining the status of the officers:

There were 2 types of Lutyens designed messes, two-storey and three-storey... Ceilings are high and the cost of heating therefore enormous, but that did not matter in 1933...The impression which these buildings attempt to give and the way of life they encourage, is something between the country house and the large hotel.<sup>45</sup>

James made a common error regarding Lutyens' involvement in RAF architecture. The Expansion period architect for such buildings was actually Archibald Bulloch. Lutyens, the architect of many country houses, did, however, play a role as advisor to the Fine Arts Commission providing advice on airfields.<sup>46</sup>

'While Lutyens had a considerable influence on the looks and layout of the airfields during this critical expansion period, Bulloch and others designed the actual buildings'.<sup>47</sup> *Works* highlighted that Messes were designed to have a 'Club atmosphere' and that:

The buildings as erected were dignified and in all respects in keeping with their purpose. Internally, much was done by way of good class fittings of modern design and character, selected decorations and, in conjunction with the Directorate of Equipment, for curtains and furnishings of appropriate character, to improve the atmosphere and comfort of this accommodation.<sup>48</sup>

This functional but distinctive RAF building programme was indicative of an organisation that was reconfiguring and was sending out a message to its people, as well as the public, that the RAF was modern, youthful and highly technical. This served several purposes: it enhanced military capability through modern streamlined

---

<sup>44</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki and Blue*, p.8.

<sup>45</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.171.

<sup>46</sup> Lutyns Martin, 'Lutyens and the Expansion of RAF Airfields in the 1930s', *The Lutyns Trust*, <http://www.lutynstrust.org.uk/portfolio-item/lutyens-expansion-raf-airfields-1930s/>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Works*, p.33.

infrastructure efficiencies, it served to attract suitable recruits to a military life that was both exciting and offered technical qualifications and, finally, it helped signal, externally, the modernity and capability of the RAF to the British public as well as potential enemies.

However, the RAF buildings still also conformed to military expectations of the time with parade squares and functionality being very much in evidence. Thus, whilst representing the modernity of the RAF, the buildings also maintained many of the traditions, cultural predispositions and institutionalisation inherited from the senior services. This allowed the RAF, whilst developing its own high-tech culture to retain a military character which was not too far removed from that of the other services and, of course, vital in ensuring that the RAF produced robust fighting men and women able to survive the rigours of life in the outposts of Empire as well as on expeditionary campaigns.

Expansion gathered pace when the emerging German threat emerged. Lake wrote that: 'the marked improvement in the quality of design of stations built under the post 1934 schemes reflected government and Air Ministry reaction to public concerns over the issues of rearmament and the pace of environmental change.'<sup>49</sup> However, Higham underlined that the approach in the inter-war years was, 'ad-hoc' and 'typically British. It was not so much a well-planned effort as a muddling through to victory'.<sup>50</sup> Higham's point is valid to an extent. The complexity of airfields themselves and the complicated logistical requirements that they require to allow them to be effective had been underestimated. However, the thought and attention

---

<sup>49</sup> Jeremy Lake, 'Conserving Military Airfields', Institute of Historic Building Conservation, *Context* 66, June 2000. [http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context\\_archive/66/airfields/airfields.html](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/66/airfields/airfields.html), accessed 9 Jul 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, p.16.

to detail that went into the design of aerodromes in the interwar period should not be entirely dismissed. The Air Ministry Works Department was a well-organised department and the 1934-9 expansion stations it had planned would help prepare the RAF for the Second World War in two ways. The experience of building the stations allowed the Air Ministry to hone its procurement, design, contracting and building processes. The buildings were also a statement of RAF independence. James summed up the relationship between the isolation of the aerodromes and the emerging culture of the RAF. The Station was:

A closed community, or two communities, one of officers and one of airmen, with the sergeant pilots occupying a slightly ambiguous position. In this and in many other closed groups, virtually isolated from civilian life, during the time from autumn 1937 to summer 1939, the ethos of a new Air Force was hammered out, with a small legacy from the old short-service days; and with the ethos came a vocabulary, a new language of understatement and technical reference which in the 1940's everybody was to learn. These men in their isolated stations were the men who fought the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain.<sup>51</sup>

The RAF had come of age and emerged from the legacy of the RFC and RNAS. It now owned modern, distinctive airfields from which to fight a modern war. However, it did not yet own enough of them.

The declaration of war in 1939 resulted in a distinct change in emphasis regarding the architectural design of aerodromes. Buildings that was already in progress had 'austerity measures applied', fixtures and fittings became utilitarian and the building of married quarters ceased.<sup>52</sup> The scale of the expansion during this period was dramatic. At the peak in 1942, a new RAF airfield was being constructed every 3 days in the UK by a workforce of 60 000 men.<sup>53</sup> The logistical

---

<sup>51</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.175.

<sup>52</sup> *Works* p.72.

<sup>53</sup> *Works* p.76.

pressure on delivery of air power was immense and resulted in rapid advancement of distribution systems and logistics mechanisms. Higham's model of the invisible infrastructure required to support air power proved most apt in this respect.<sup>54</sup> The construction methods also became increasingly complex as technological advances saw the introduction of the four-engined bomber. In 1939 only 9 airfields had concrete runways, however, during the period 1939-1945, over 175,000,000 square yards of hard surface were laid in the UK to provide hard runways allowing the RAF to overcome problems of waterlogged fields, particularly for its bomber forces.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, for RAF personnel, accommodation became very much more austere and huts predominated. Brickwork was increasingly left un-rendered internally, the floors were concrete and usually covered in linoleum and as the war effort gathered pace, so emphasis on comfort rapidly reduced.<sup>56</sup> Bathhouses were no longer necessarily collocated with sleeping accommodation, causing significant inconvenience.<sup>57</sup> Communal buildings such as messes, dining rooms and airmen's institutes were reduced by 25% in their main rooms but ancillary rooms, halls and corridors were significantly reduced. In 1943 seating in dining halls was reduced to 50% of manning establishment resulting in the need for 2 sittings at most meals.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, p.22.

<sup>55</sup> *Works* p.76.

<sup>56</sup> In 1939 scales were 120sq ft per officer, 70 sq ft per sergeant and 45 sq ft per corporal or airman. By 1942 this was reduced to 96 sq ft per officer, 58 sq ft per sergeant and 38 sq ft per airman. In July 1943, this was further reduced to 32 sq ft per airman. *Works*, p.118.

<sup>57</sup> For an insight into the inconveniences of life on a dispersed RAF airfield see Jack Gillard, 'Life in an RAF Spitfire Station', WW2 People's War, BBC, 25 May 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/15/a4115215.shtml>, accessed 17 Mar 2017. For a view of life of a Wireless Operator see: Mass Observation Report, Royal Air Force. Assorted material sent in by other Observers in the RAF. Letter Dated 1942. Redacted and address removed, <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/Documents/Images/TopicCollection-29/1708#Sections>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

<sup>58</sup> *Works*, p.117

Thus, with this enormous expansion, the RAF UK war-time experience for the vast majority of personnel involved sleeping in draughty huts with pot-bellied stoves, allocated meal sittings, outside ablutions, and working on fairly basic satellite aerodromes or in hatted RAF support installations, life on an RAF Station involved a fairly tedious routine in order to keep aircraft maintained and airborne. Dislocation between personnel working on different sections was particularly notable. However, the main 1930s expansion era RAF stations appeared to act as flagships of RAF standards and vindicate James' claim that it was on such stations that the ethos of the RAF was 'hammered out'.<sup>59</sup> The following account highlights the effect of the 1930s Station at Abingdon at that time:

This was a real pukka RAF Station, peace time built, with all the buildings for HQ, and Officers and Other Ranks housing...here we had to be on parade, in correct uniform, all buttons and boots ablaze, correctly shaven, and with proper haircuts. The good old peacetime discipline was kept up with all the necessary and appropriate punishments.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, the very distinctive 1934-39 expansion airfields helped maintain espoused RAF culture with less formal satellite stations proving more likely locations for culture-in-action to emerge.

The picture of overseas architectural development of the RAF is much more varied than that which took place in the UK. It is all too easy in the post-colonial era to ignore the importance of Empire to the British psyche and the role that the RAF played in its defence. The performance of the RAF in colonial policing helped secure the future of the RAF. Across Empire the decision about where to emphasise RAF presence fell out of policy decisions made in Whitehall. However,

---

<sup>59</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.175.

<sup>60</sup> Caygill, 'Nearly a Somebody'. For comment about formal vs informal RAF Stations see Essex-Lopresti 'Memories of a Wartime Erk in the RAF'.



the building materials and designs were much less standardised than those of the UK and subject to local design, material procurement and contracts. That said, many former RAF buildings across the Commonwealth exhibit readily identifiable features common with the RAF expansion buildings with a local twist and conceptual layouts and functional buildings included at airfields were not far removed from those in the UK.<sup>61</sup> The RAF's physical presence at its stations in Empire would also ensure that elements of the culture of Empire would shape the wider RAF. The word station is thought to have originated arisen from the self-sufficient hill stations of India. Meanwhile, the RAF slang still retains words and phrases from its time Empire such as 'dhobi', 'dhobi dust' 'punkah louvres' and Wadis<sup>62</sup>. Thus, the inter-war RAF physical presence in Empire made a significant and lasting linguistic contribution to the RAF.

When the Second World War came, the Works Directorate overseas operations would become increasingly important. The experience in France and the advances of North Africa and the lessons learned in both theatres would pave the way for the rapid advance across Europe. That demonstrated a very different skill set to the one originally envisaged while the Directorate built its expansion era aerodromes during the 1930s, demonstrating that flexibility really is the key to air power. Without the developments in expeditionary airfield construction techniques and the adaptation of logistical support to effect high-speed airfield development

---

<sup>61</sup> RNZAF Ohakea, RNZAF Whenuapai, RAAF Pearce are examples of airfields that bear many close similarities to UK RAF Stations.

<sup>62</sup> Dhobi is an Indian word for washing. This had been used for many years by anyone associated with India. This continues to be used in the RAF, probably as a consequence of the RAF's time in India. See also Hunt, Pringle and Morgan, *Service Slang*, p. 27. Dhobi dust means washing powder; a term that is now in decline. Punkah Wallahs operated fans in India; air vents in RAF aircraft continue to be called Punkah louvres. The term Wadi is often used by RAF aircrew to refer to a river.

and resupply, the tempo of the advances in those three theatres would have been significantly undermined. The Airfield Construction Service and workforce, ultimately numbered over 60 000 UK based personnel.<sup>63</sup> These were hand-picked personnel some of whom were trained for expeditionary airfield building in hostile areas. Their skill sets included plant operation, well boring, mechanical, electrical and construction skills. In addition to building the landing grounds in Normandy, their skills were also adapted for road building and other support functions such as keeping the dust levels down by spraying roads and airfields with an oil mix to allow fighters to take off to provide essential air cover.<sup>64</sup> Their first continental airstrip to be laid, B.19 was an agricultural site bearing crops that were harvested by the ACS and airfield laid within 5 days of the first site recce on 22 July 1944.<sup>65</sup>

The human dimension of airfields needs examination. Higham was very clear of the need for airfields to be more than utilitarian undertakings:

Airfields... are also human communities with all the special and normal needs of such establishments... The story of airfields as the bases for air strategy cannot simply be told in terms of the construction of runways. It had to include food and housing, hangars, amusement facilities, and above all fuel storage and distribution.<sup>66</sup>

Disappointingly, however, Higham provided little further analysis on that human dimension. Early in the development of aerodromes, the RFC and the RNAS had identified that airfields needed to be self-contained and relatively self-sufficient. They also noted the need for them to develop basic domestic and leisure facilities but the First World War developments prioritised accommodation for the immediate war needs resulting in them being largely for unaccompanied personnel.

---

<sup>63</sup> This was the 1945 total. *Works* p.76.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* p.464.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p.466.

<sup>66</sup> Higham, *Bases of Air Strategy*, p.21.

In Oct 1921 the Air Ministry Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure referred to married quarters as follows:

The R.A.F. at the end of the First World War found itself with no married establishments, and to all intents and purposes no married quarters...Their provision is vital. R.A.F. Stations in the United Kingdom are necessarily situated in the most cases in sparsely inhabited agricultural localities where it is almost impossible to obtain existing accommodation.<sup>67</sup>

Lord Gorell identified in July 1922 that the Royal Air Force needed more than utilitarian provision:

There are examples of officers who are living with nothing more than packing cases in tents. There are married families with not a single washing place except tents. And the Air Ministry has planned as far as possible to steer between extravagant expenditure on building and making the conditions of life tolerable for those in its charge. It has, therefore, adopted the policy of building here and there married quarters.<sup>68</sup>

The provision of married quarters began to increase throughout the expansion period; the faux Georgian appearance, 'restful lines' and the fact that they would usually be arranged in groupings away from the technical site gave them a sense of domestic normality.<sup>69</sup> However the location of aerodromes, in particular, meant that families lucky enough to be allocated a quarter would still feel a sense of isolation from the 'real world'. This could make for a goldfish bowl existence in which families were subject to series of regulations as well as social pressures to conform to the RAF life. However, during times of operational stress, the mutual support that the RAF community offered for those who were able to live on or near

---

<sup>67</sup> TNA AIR 8/42, CAS Archives No 3, 'Air Ministry Memorandum for Committee on National Expenditure', Oct 1921, Section V, para 18, 'Married Quarters for Officers and Men', p.32.

<sup>68</sup> 'The Air Force', *Hansard*, HL Debate, 27 July 1922, vol 51 cc 902-44.

[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0_19220727_HOL_101)

[force#S5LV0051P0\\_19220727\\_HOL\\_101](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0_19220727_HOL_101), accessed 21 Oct 2017. See also Brig Gen Warner's similar view on the need for married quarters: 'Effective Striking Strength'.

*Hansard*, HC Deb, 25 Feb 1926, vol 192 cc813-875,

[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402839-842)

[strength#S5CV0192P0\\_19260225\\_HOC\\_402839-842](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402839-842), accessed 17 May 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Congdon, *Behind the Hangar Doors*, p.13.

stations, was very valuable. It allowed spouses to be immersed in a community that understood the pressures that operational flying behind enemy lines can bring. Humour and comradeship helped alleviate this as reflected by Enid Mackay whose husband, John, was a pre-Second World War regular who went on to fly in Coastal and Bomber Command: 'Life in His Majesty's services during wartime was helped on many occasions when a good sense of humour saved the day'.<sup>70</sup> For his first 1000 bomber raid on 31 May 1942 over Cologne she highlighted the value of living on a station where the wives all waited together for the safe return of the aircrew.<sup>71</sup>

It was not only married quarters in which it was deemed necessary to invest. Leisure and sporting facilities were believed to be an essential part of life on a modern military installation. This was identified as early as March 1918 in an Air Council meeting:

The question of the supply of tennis courts, squash racquet courts, etc., to aerodromes was considered by the Council. Stress was laid on the importance from the point of view of health of providing the flying centres with the proper amenities of life such as baths, and to provide recreation in the shape of tennis courts etc.<sup>72</sup>

The provision of recreational facilities was not simply to keep the men fit, it was also to ensure that they were kept busy as the following account highlights life in India during the Second World War for Donaldson during an instructional tour in Madras between other much busier front line duties:

The hours were light with Wednesday afternoon and all Sunday off, and of course with such a lot of spare time, sport became very important. Football, tennis and badminton clubs were organised as well as swimming. The powers that be are very keen on the men having as much exercise as

---

<sup>70</sup> Enid Mackay, 'Life as the wife of an RAF Pilot', WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Sep 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/33/a5877633.shtml>, accessed 24 May 2015.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Air Council Minutes, 9th meeting, Item VIII 'Supply of Tennis Courts etc to aerodromes', 19 Mar 1918, AHB.

possible it is so necessary to physical fitness in a country such as this, and so every facility was granted.<sup>73</sup>

As aerodromes increased in size, complexity and permanence in the 1934-1939 period, so the need for airfields to develop into communities was increasingly needed, and recognised. These stations were not idyllic capsules of perfect RAF espoused culture. Just like any community, military units were composed of people and, with that, comes human emotional response. While the building programme of the RAF provided a place to work, a place to live, and a place for the RAF to develop the official processes and practices from which the espoused culture emerged it also allowed the emergence of the side of the RAF culture that was not officially sanctioned. The reality of a military existence is that it can be hard, lonely, stressful, dangerous and boring. In parallel to the emergence of cultural coping mechanisms such as the banter, aloof disinterest and the black RAF humour, other darker responses such as depression emerged due to separation from family, communal life, being bombed and the rigours of living in harsh conditions in the field or in places such as Burma or India. The pressures of life were accentuated when living in an isolated community, particularly in wartime. While the commonly accepted view of RAF life is one of carefree aircrew enjoying banter and camaraderie, the reality was that RAF personnel would serve out their time in isolated bases unhappy, lonely and in some cases, suicidal.

In some instances, the culture-in-action morphed to an extent that even military discipline measures were overcome. At the end of the Second World War in India and South Asia in 1946, as conditions on their remote stations and the slow

---

<sup>73</sup> JJW Donaldson, 1943: Life and Work in Madras; Heat; Tea Party; 'One Starry Night', WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Sep 2003, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/74/a1289874.shtml>, accessed 9 July 2017.

demobilisation became too much for personnel to bear, mutinies took place at Maripur near Karachi, followed by Ceylon and then at five RAF other stations in India before spreading to Seletar and then Kallang in Singapore.<sup>74</sup> There was also an incident in Burma when the airmen of 194 Squadron stopped work.<sup>75</sup> Thus while the RAF did develop a very strong espoused culture that would prepare its personnel for war fighting, the architectural planning that recognised that a base is more than a place of work still could not overcome all of the harsh realities of military life, particularly pertaining to isolation and all that comes with it. Exacerbated by additional operational and/or societal stresses, such tensions can have profound effects on personnel that can easily boil over and they continue to require careful leadership both to recognise and overcome.

## **Conclusion**

In the beginnings of aviation, aircraft and airships needed locations to operate from. Unwin referred to this as 'place'. Those locations were developed by the military mind-sets of the men and women of the RFC and RNAS and were very much adaptations of extant military thinking on what constituted a military unit. To military minds of the time, a unit needed a parade square, HQ, technical buildings, separate messes, accommodation and even in the early days, leisure facilities. However, the new technology also dictated what form the aerodromes and air stations would assume. As the technology progressed, so airfields became part of an increasingly complex network that required advanced logistical processes, well networked command and control systems, highly technical training schools, and a

---

<sup>74</sup> Group Captain T C Flannagan, 'Demobilisation from the RAF 1945-47. Plans and Pains'. *Air Clues* article held at AHB (date unreadable). See also Joyce E, 'Remembering the Mutiny', *Aeroplane Monthly* (Jan 1987), p.12. See also AHB, *Service record of Cymbalist Norris* held at 'discharged with ignominy 25/2.46'

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

host of new support and administrative processes. In the isolation of bases and immersed in the operations of a rapidly changing cutting edge technology, the members of the RFC and RNAS began to develop their own processes, practices, norms, language and humour that, through physical and technological isolation was very much their own. The RAF was led and made up of people from those two organisations and their preconceptions and ways of doing things would influence the culture for a generation. It is, therefore, of little surprise that the RAF buildings and facilities would conform to look recognisably martial and were simply follow on projects from the RFC and RNAS. In many ways, the basic provision on an RAF station was not formed out of particularly innovative new thinking but simply adapted wisdom with some new twists. Nevertheless, the building programme helped both secure the RAF as an organisation and provided an environment in which the culture would flourish and continue to diverge, a culture that would, as seen in previous chapters, borrow from other traditions but also develop its own.

Trenchard's vision to embark on the building programme embodied in the 1919 memorandum appears irrational given the straitened economic environment. However, the Air Staff pursued projects such as an ornate College, the apprentice scheme and buildings at Halton and the Staff College. The structures left no doubt in the minds of the other services, politicians and the general public of both the independence and permanence of the RAF.

The building programmes of the expansion era followed. The style of the buildings, the modern airfields, impressive messing facilities, distinctive hangars and comfortable married quarters sent the message that the RAF was modern, serious and permanent. Aircraft have proved to be relatively transient RAF assets due to

rapid technological advances. However, the infrastructure has proved to be more enduring. Thus, today, the RAF maintains a direct historical link to the successes of the Second World War through the bases it fought from.

The 1924-34 expansion period prepared the way for the RAF to develop its own architectural identity but it was the 1934-39 period that RAF architecture had its heyday. It was, indeed, on those aerodromes that 'the ethos of the new Air Force was hammered out'.<sup>76</sup> The scale of the building programme gave the RAF a sense that it had arrived, was modern, that it looked after its personnel but had, nevertheless, all the trappings of a credible efficient British military fighting force. The aerodromes, training establishments and other installations set the stage for all of the RAF's professional activity as well as its pomp and ceremony. The uniformity of the buildings and facilities gave the Force a very strong identity and the faux Georgian style gave it a manufactured sense of history that appears to have worked quite well. This, combined with the isolated nature of most locations and the other aspects of culture-in-action, discussed in the other chapters, helped contribute to the evolution of an RAF culture with its own processes, practices, language, stories, deeper loyalties, assumptions and preconceptions. The legacy of such a large building programme is that the RAF, by 1939, was housed in an infrastructure that was largely well designed and, crucially, part of a modern logistical and C2 structure that was fit for fighting a modern war. The only problem was that, impressive and well-appointed as it was, there was simply not enough of it.

The expansion during the Second World War returned the RAF to a much more utilitarian footing and, with it, a tendency for satellite airfields to be increasingly

---

<sup>76</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.175.



task oriented, but it would appear that the expansion era airfields exerted a stabilising influence over the wider RAF to ensure that the newly acquired and manufactured RAF traditions would be more likely to be observed. The systematic building processes and practices that the Airfield Construction Service established as well as the use of common building patterns would serve the Force well as the wartime expansion took place. Making use of the far more utilitarian style of buildings, airfields and infrastructure ultimately allowed the RAF to return to expeditionary warfare on a remarkable scale in North Africa, Italy, Normandy and the Far East.

But the RAF aerodromes and stations were far more than places of work and operational platforms. They were also places where personnel and their families lived side by side. Due to their isolation and without good leadership, they could easily become microcosms of discontent, boredom or even mutiny. Overall, though, the RAF architecture and building programmes have produced a very identifiable and efficient model that balanced work, play and family life and given the RAF a very distinct cultural stamp. James identified the lasting value of airfields: 'the Lutyens-Stations, as we must call them, proved more durable and useful pieces of military equipment than cruisers'.<sup>77</sup> In addition to their operational value, they had a significant impact upon those who have worked, lived on them and also fought from them. The stations are physical evidence of the culture that made them but they also played a significant role in shaping that culture.

---

<sup>77</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.172.

## PART IV

### CHAPTER XI - CONCLUSION

The culture of a military organisation, such as the RAF, is extremely important given that its people live an immersive existence and risk their lives in the course of duty. The RAF deeply values its culture; it engages in a wide array of processes and practices that bear witness to this: wearing of uniform, parades, dinner nights, disciplinary processes, wearing of badges and the recording of its history. That very little academic study had been conducted into the social aspects of air power, and RAF culture is surprising given such investment. Gray identified 'social and cultural aspects of military history' as 'a rich field for study'.<sup>1</sup> The literature review further underlined not only the paucity of cultural academic material relating to the RAF, but that broader military culture is an area that has not been invested in to any great degree. Thus, in addition to making a ground-breaking foray into a study of the cultural origins of the RAF, this research has also provided a valuable contribution to the field of study of military culture more broadly. Furthermore, organisations rarely begin life with detailed archival records. Whilst this thesis is primarily of interest to air power historians, it also provides a rare case study of an organisation with a highly-documented archive that was established even prior to the inception of the organisation itself. The archival evidence and the analysis in this thesis will be of value to academics researching organisational theory and organisational culture, particularly of a military organisation. Additionally, this research also underlined the lack of presence in the historiography of both Henderson and Sykes. Their contributions to both the RFC and the RAF have been

---

<sup>1</sup> Gray, *Air Warfare*, Bloomsbury, London, 2016, p 13.

overshadowed by the Trenchard story; this was particularly notable in the case of Sykes. This research has, then, added to a growing body of evidence that restores to the historiography, the contributions they made to the development of the RFC and the RAF. It has also examined Trenchard from a new angle that centres upon the social aspects of the RAF.

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this research is that a distinct culture emerged in the RAF with quite remarkable speed. Paradoxically, that distinctive culture appeared to emerge in an organisation that was overwhelmingly conventional. However, by the time the new Service arrived in the Second World War, it had a distinguishing infrastructure, it had developed a very special patois, its personnel had established behavioural patterns, traits and value sets that were distinct from those of the other services.<sup>2</sup> Given how traditional the official processes and practices of the RAF were, it was important to reach back and examine how the RAF came into being in order to understand the emergence of this distinct culture.

Organisationally, the RNAS and the RFC were established along very traditional lines within their respective parent services, the RN and the British Army. Referring to the RFC, Pugh noted that the 'Corps reflected the doctrine, practices and wider cultural identity of the British Army'.<sup>3</sup> Pugh was correct to highlight this; in many ways the RFC did look very similar to other units and formations within the Army. The research in this thesis has demonstrated the important role Henderson, Sykes and Trenchard played in setting the conditions in which RAF espoused

---

<sup>2</sup> Sherbrooke-Walker provided some excellent contextual observations about the differences between the RAF and the Army that underline some of these. Sherbrooke-Walker, *Khaki & Blue*.

<sup>3</sup> Pugh, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps', p.266.

culture would emerge. Henderson and Sykes played a very important role in ensuring that the RFC fitted in with the existing norms of the British Army. The fact that they were both officers with promising post-staff college careers helped secure a strong place for air power within the Army. Together, they mounted a highly successful 'corporate communications' campaign that allowed the RFC to become accepted within the British Army so that it was not seen either as a threat or a subservient and renegade capability. Their astute networking and promotion of the RFC saw it integrated into wider Army training and, by the time the BEF went to war, the RFC and its capabilities were understood and had patronage within the teeth arms of the BEF.

The RNAS did not have officers with such a high profile or an understanding of the need to work within the confines and strictures of the RN in order to ensure acceptance. Seuter, in particular, had a gift for understanding the tactical and operational potential of air power but had a troubled relationship with the Admiralty. When the RNAS stripped away from the RFC, it too assumed traditional structures, processes and practices.

On the surface, then, both aerial services were extremely traditional. Somewhat ironically however, it was the very conservative Henderson, initially only able to view air power in terms of its intelligence gathering value, who became the visionary able to see the strategic value of creating an independent service. Henderson, with the assistance of Sykes, successfully integrated one of the most significant technological military advances in history into the British Army. In turn, he played a major role in bringing an independent Service to bear. He effected

these changes by adapting this cutting-edge technology and exploiting the existing culture in the British Army with enormous effect.

Danger, glamour and perception that military flyers formed part of a new chivalric order played a very important role in the emergence of the culture-in-action of the aerial services. The aviator identity played a fundamental role in how this new breed of warrior viewed the world and also how they were viewed externally. Henderson, Sykes, Trenchard and Seuter were all pilots and were all influenced by their experiences in the third dimension. While they largely conformed to the norms of British military processes and practices from an organisational perspective, they all appeared to understand the need to modify and adapt in order to underpin the professional needs of the new aerial services. Thus, while the organisational structures were traditional, a new mental approach to the new technology was required. The leaders understood the need to develop air-mindedness and for the aerial services to develop a technical mind-set. The RNAS was formed in the RN, which had a tradition for being a technical service. All three of the key leaders examined in this thesis understood the need for the RFC and the RAF to become a technical service somewhat like the RN. Morris' quotation about Trenchard admonishing an officer and underlining that 'this is a technical corps' and 'you're not in the Army now, you know' is important.<sup>4</sup> It underlined that a new thinking process was in place that set the aerial services on the road to cultural divergence from their parent services. The leaders had, quite rapidly, adopted the aviator identity despite their traditional pre-dispositions. Brooke-Popham was another example of this; he had extremely traditional in his views of officer-like qualities evidenced in the speech

---

<sup>4</sup> Morris, *Bloody April*. p.144.

that found him 'harping on' about the importance of officers riding horses and avoiding spending money on port and cigarettes.<sup>5</sup> This arose from his original training as well as the expectations of the wider class based society. However, his view on the spirit of the RAF being a Peter Pan-like carefree and youthful organisation, demonstrates that even those early leaders had bought into the aviator identity that was outlined in Chapter II. The apparently chimeric approach of the early senior leaders is unsurprising. While they embraced the new technology, they had previously been acculturated by their various parent services and were deeply traditional. As they built the new aerial services they fell back on what they knew. For Sykes, this equated to establishing a structure, artefacts, rituals, traditions and customs that equated to those in the Army; they had served the Army well in Empire so why should they not work for this new Service? However, he and Henderson also recognised the need to integrate representative training from the lessons learned out of the Boer War and to introduce new symbol such as the Wings, the Roundel and to create new rituals such as flypasts that chimed with the new aviator identity that had emerged. For Trenchard, it was clear from his previous experience that a new Service would need to establish a new spirit. Quite what he thought that was will never be known; spirit was intuitively understood in Edwardian military and naval circles. Wrapped up in his interpretation of spirit, articulated in his 1919 Memorandum, were many traditional plans, most of which actually borrowed from others.

The establishment of the RAF College, a Staff College and a training system were, for instance, nothing new and were largely conformist when they were brought

---

<sup>5</sup> KCLMA Liddell Hart, Brooke-Popham Papers 1/5/4 'Commandant's Address, 4 April 1922', p.4. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p.92.

in. However, Trenchard understood that this technical service needed to have a different approach.

The apprentice system was a traditional idea but Trenchard's interpretation of it was novel. The apprentice system saw the best apprentices automatically sent to the RAF College each year; the Character Book highlights how well they performed and, combined with their colleagues that went to flying training schools, the apprentices gradually gained recognition and promotion including to Air rank.<sup>6</sup> Thus, 'Trenchard's Brats' helped create a distinct and strong sub-culture within the RAF that emphasised its independence, infused a sense of technical superiority over the other services that gave great pride to the chosen ones and established the beginnings of social mobility in the RAF that would, with time, become increasingly pronounced.

The apprentice system was probably the most innovative part of the training system laid out in the 1919 Memorandum. However, the other institutions, traditional as they were, in concept, were inhabited and used by personnel who were also heavily influenced by the aviator identity and the Service-wide value that prized role based technical professionalism. Training institutions were separate from the other services allowing flying, air power and the independence of the force to be underlined to RAF personnel. Thus, the aviator identity and technical mind-set of the RAF became increasingly reinforced. Additionally, whilst the espoused culture was built upon traditional processes and practices, the culture-in-action saw unofficial artefacts, traditions, customs and rituals emerge that resulted in very

---

<sup>6</sup> RAF Cranwell College Archive, CRN/D/2011/71, Character Book, Entry date 26/8/20.

distinct behavioural patterns developing within the new Service that also reinforced both the aviator identity and the technical mind-set of the RAF.

In the Staff College, the RAF senior officer cadre followed a syllabus that was traditional, and similar to what was being taught at Camberley. Nevertheless, with its own institution, the students could explore air power and its potential and were encouraged to do so. However, while the Staff College had an early influence on doctrinal thought, it rapidly became an institution that recycled Trenchardian thought. Indeed, while Trenchard sought out a Mahan for the RAF, its traditional hierarchy, processes and practices as well as Trenchard's own enormous personality traditional stifled a truly intellectual approach to the development of air power at the Staff College as well as more broadly across the officer cadre. Paradoxically, this traditional mind-set pervaded the Service at the same time as the aviator identity that gave the Service its youthful aspect.

Officers at Cranwell learned to march, followed traditional syllabi, hunted on horseback and played sports that were deemed to encourage the attributes required for imperial leadership. They were cast in a very traditional mould and contributed to the stuffiness of the inter-war RAF. However, the independence of a separate officer training school allowed the focus of Cranwell to be on flying. The emphasis of the aviator identity was gradually reinforcing a different cultural identity in the new recruits. Air-mindedness, the technical mind-set of the Service, high jinks, unofficial traditions and a new language were all reinforced through the process of structuration and emerging out of culture-in-action.

The new bases, messes and married quarters gave the RAF a very distinctive and modern home that was quite grand and signalled the RAF's



independence as well as its modernity as a deliverer of cutting edge technology. The architectural patterns gave RAF infrastructure a very distinctive look that imprinted a very strong corporate stamp on the Service. With its faux Georgian windows, columns, and messes and barrack rooms that were almost identical on the inside and very comfortable for the era, the RAF provided impressive working and operating spaces for its personnel throughout the 1920s and 1930s. James referred to the stations as 'two closed communities, one of officers and one of men' on which 'the ethos of a new Air Force was hammered out'.<sup>7</sup> The expansion period stations served to reinforce the expected standards of RAF deportment and ceremony that helped maintain the RAF as a peer of the other services.

Intricate ensign ceremonies took place at dawn and dusk while Station Warrant Officers ensured that 'good old peacetime discipline' for personnel such as Richard Caygill were 'in correct uniform, all buttons and boots ablaze, correctly shaven, and with proper haircuts'.<sup>8</sup> However, on those stations and, particularly on the more far flung dispersed airfields counter-institutional behaviour also took place that originally emerged as a product of the aviator identity and focus on technical professionalism but became increasingly accepted and reinforced. Whilst a distinct professionalism in engineering and flying skills emerged, so did a thread of disregard amongst some personnel towards military traditions and norms such as saluting, dress standards and the length of haircuts. This can be identified from the very early days of the RFC and the RNAS and, with time became a self-sustaining

---

<sup>7</sup> James, *The Paladins*, p.175.

<sup>8</sup> Caygill, 'Nearly a Somebody' underlined the differences between formal RAF stations and less formal ones. See also Essex-Lopresti 'Memories of a Wartime Erk in the RAF'.

reality that was reinforced with each generation and also by the popularisation and mythology of the Service.

Many aspects of the framework that Henderson, Sykes and Trenchard established still retain enormous cultural significance a century after they were established such as symbols, buildings, orders, doctrine, structures, ranks and uniforms. This supports Schein's argument, that 'cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group', certainly within the military context.<sup>9</sup> However, in addition to the emergence of a culture espoused by the early RAF leaders, culture-in-action also exercised a very strong influence on the way overall RAF culture developed. The aviator identity and the technical mind-set that flourished in the Service gave the RAF its own colourful language, distinctive personality and enormous pride. With time these aspects would be reinforced through structuration. However, some of the structures of the espoused culture as well as some of the darker aspects of culture-in-action would also stifle the organisation in various ways. The RAF struggled to develop as a constructively questioning organisation capable of really analysing air power principles and Trenchard did not grow the Mahan or Clausewitz he hoped for. Meanwhile, a series of deep silos emerged that encouraged competition and pride but were also sources of divisions within the Service. Nevertheless, an 'Air Force spirit' emerged that was young, vibrant and strong enough to see the RAF survive the challenges of the inter-war period and vanquish the Luftwaffe in total warfare over the skies of Britain in 1940. The blueprint from which the RAF culture grew has been emulated by

---

<sup>9</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, p.2,

other air forces around the world and has sustained the RAF through to this centenary year.

**APPENDIX I – APPRENTICE GRADUATION RATE - F540 RAF HALTON**

Date of Entry	Cadets	Graduates	Suspensions
1st Jan 1920	235	227	8
2nd Sept 1920	242	224	18
3rd Jan 1921	329	320	9
4th Sept 1921	409	393	16
5th Jan 1922	514	NOT RECORDED	NOT RECORDED
7th Jan 1923	453	396	57
8th Sept 1923	575	503	72
9th Jan 1924	668	576	108
10 Sept 1924	515	437	78
11th Jan 1925	350	305	45
12th Sept	494	425	73

## APPENDIX II - RAF HALTON APPRENTICE DAILY ROUTINE IN 1927. <sup>1</sup>

0630 hours Reveille (Sundays 0700 Hours)  
0730 hours Sick Parade (Sunday 0800 hours)  
0800 hours Colour hoisting  
Retreat (as detailed)  
1800 hours Duties Parade.  
2115 hours Tattoo (A/As)<sup>2</sup>  
2120 hours "Still" (A/As)<sup>3</sup>  
2130 hours Lights Out (A/As)  
2200 hours Tattoo Corporals and Aircraftsmen  
2210 hours Staff Parade  
2215 hours Lights Out (Aircraftsmen)  
2300 hours Lights Out (Corporals)  
2315 hours Sergeants (and above) Lights Out).

- i) Beds will be made up and kits folded within 15 minutes after Reveille. Beds may not be made down before 1700 hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and not before 1200 hours on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- ii) "Still" will last for three minutes. Silence will be observed during this period.
- iii) All Airmen will make themselves acquainted with trumpet calls and answer them punctually.
- iv) All Barrack Rooms are to be ready for inspection by the time of the first Working Parade, and on Sundays by the time ordered for Church Parade.

---

<sup>1</sup> Trenchard Museum Archive, 'Standing Orders for Apprentices' Wings Stationed at Halton Camp, 1927'.

<sup>2</sup> A/A denotes Airman Apprentice.

<sup>3</sup> "Still" was a period of silence that the apprentices were to observe lasting for three minutes.

### APPENDIX III - SUGGESTIONS FOR RAF RANK NOMENCLATURE – COMPILATION FROM TNA AIR 1/26

Equivalent RN Rank	Equivalent Army Rank	Modern RAF Rank	Proposed RAF Rank			13/14 <sup>th</sup> C	Bird Life –	Roman	Greek
Admiral of the Fleet	Field Marshal	Marshal of the RAF	Air Marshal	Ardian in Chief <sup>1</sup>	Air Marshal	Marshal	Millavian	Legatus Legionio	Polemarchs
Admiral	General	Air Chief Marshal	Capt General of/at Air	Ardian	Ardian	Bannerets	Centavian	Centurions	
Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal	Aviator General	Wing Ardian	Second-Ardian	Constable	Trigintavian	Primus Pilus	
Rear Admiral	Major General	Air Vice Marshal	Deputy Aviator General	Squadron Ardian	Third Ardian	Millenar	Vintavian	Optio	
Commodore	Brigadier General	Air Commodore	Master Aviator	Flight Ardian	Fourth Ardian	Centenar	Decennavian	Tesserarius	Lochages
Captain	Colonel	Group Captain	Squadron Master	Wing Ariel	Banneret <sup>2</sup>	Ventenar	Septavian	Matator	Pentekonfers
Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander	Squadron Leader	Squadron Ariel	Reeve	Dextrarii	Sexavian	Librarius	Enômotarchio
Lieutenant-Commander	Major	Squadron Leader	Flight Master	Squadron Leader	Squadron-Leader	Servientes	Quinquenavian		Enômoty
Lieutenant	Captain	Flight Lieutenant	Flight Leader	Flight Leader	Flight-Leader	Pauncenars	Primavian		
Sub-Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Flying Officer	Aviator	Aviator	Lieutenant	Hobelars	Avian		
Midshipman	Sub-Lieutenant	Pilot Officer	Sub-aviator	Sub-Aviator	Ensign		Sub-Avian		
Cadet	Probationary Officer	Officer Cadet	Aviator Cadet						

<sup>1</sup> Ardian is from Gaelic. Ard= Chief. Ian=Bird

<sup>2</sup> Banneret – Origin from Middle Ages. Rank above a knight allowing him to command a number of knights.

<b>RN Rank – Other Ranks</b>	<b>RFC Army Rank – Other Ranks</b>	<b>Proposed RAF – Other Ranks</b>	<b>Modern RAF Ranks – Approximations</b>
Chief Warrant Officer			CAS Warrant Officer
Warrant Officer	Master Mechanic/Craftsman	Chief Mechanic Master Mechanic	Warrant Officer
Chief Petty Officer	Chief Mechanic/Craftsman Foreman Mechanic/Craftsman	Sergeant	Flight Sergeant/Chief Technician
Petty Officer	Leading Mechanic/Craftsman	Corporal	Sergeant
Leading Seaman	Air Mech/Craftsman 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Corporal	Corporal
Able Seaman	Air Mech/Craftsman 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Air Mech/Craftsman 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Junior Tech
		Air Mech/Craftsman 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Senior Aircraftman Tech
			Senior Aircraftman
			Leading Aircraftman

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

This thesis bibliography is broken down into three main areas: Archival Sources, Published material and unpublished material such as theses, dissertations.

1. Archival Material.
  - i. Air Historic Branch.
  - ii. King's College London Liddell Hart Military Archives.
  - iii. The Imperial War Museum.
  - iv. The National Archive.
  - v. The Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon, London.
  - vi. The Royal Air Force College Archive, RAF Cranwell.
  - vii. The Trenchard Museum Archive.
  - viii. The Central Flying School Archive.
  - ix. Command Papers.
2. Published material.
  - i. Books.
  - ii. Chapters in Books.
  - iii. Official Histories.
  - iv. Journals.
  - v. Biographies and Diaries.
  - vi. Official Manuals.
  - vii. Newspapers.
  - viii. Film/Artwork.
  - ix. Websites.
  - x. Podcasts.
  - xi. Official Papers.
  - xii. Mass Observation Report.
3. Unpublished Material.
  - i. Unpublished Theses.
  - ii. Papers presented at Meeting/Lectures.
  - iii. Miscellaneous & Unpublished Papers.

### **1. Archival Material.**

#### **i. Air Historic Branch.**

AIR 1, 2 and 8 collaboratively shared with TNA.

Air Council Minutes. 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 3 January 1918 – 154<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 4 March 1935.

AHB loose leaf collection boxes.



King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions for the Royal Air Force 1924.

**ii. King's College London Liddell Hart Military Archives.**

Brooke-Popham Papers.

**iii The Imperial War Museum**

Imperial War Museum IWM Audio files.

IWM EQU 4015

IWM INS 40252

LBY 80/1294

**iv. The National Archive**

ADM 1.

AIR 1.

AIR 2.

AIR 8.

AIR 10.

AIR 72.

CAB 38.

**v. The Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon, London.**

AIR 69.

Henderson Papers.

RAF Air Ministry Weekly Orders.

Seuter Papers.

Sykes Papers.

Trenchard Papers.

**vi. The Royal Air Force College Archive, RAF Cranwell.**

CRN/D/2011/71 Character Book.

CRN/D/2011/72 Cadet Register.

Variety of accessioned and unaccessioned papers.

**vii. The Trenchard Museum Archive**

Unaccessioned books, documents and papers.

**viii. The Central Flying School Archive.**

Unaccessioned Books, journals and papers.

**ix. Command Papers.**

Cmd. 467, 'The Permanent Organization of the Royal Air Force'.

**2. PUBLISHED MATERIAL**

**i. Books.**

A H S (Confirmed as Stradling A H), *Customs of the Service (Advice to those Newly Commissioned)*. Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1939 and 1943.

Alvesson, Mats, *Understanding Organisational Culture*. London: Sage, 2002.

Allen Charles, *Tales from a Dark Continent*. London: Abacus, 1979.

Allen Charles, *Plain tales from the Raj*. London: Abacus, 1975.

Ash Eric, *Sir Frederick Sykes and the Air Revolution*. London & Portland: Frank Cass, Digital Edition 2005 [1999].

Bamford Joe, *Surviving the Skies. A Night Bomber Pilot in the Great War*. Stroud: Spellmount, 2012.

Baring Maurice, *Flying Corps Headquarters 1914-1918*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1968.

Bartlett Squadron Leader C P O, *Bomber Pilot 1916-1918*, edited by Bowyer Chaz, London: Ian Allen Ltd, 1974.

Benbow Tim, *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011.

- Biddle Tami, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare. The Evolution of British and American Ideas About Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004 [2002].
- Bishop Patrick, *Fighter Boys*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004.
- Bond Brian, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1972.
- Bowers R C, *Seeing Life from a New Angle*. Honiton: Courtney Books, n.d.
- Bowman Timothy and Connelly Mark, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army 1902-1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Bowyer, Michael J F, *Fighting Colours; RAF fighter camouflage and markings, 1937-1969*. London: Patrick Stephens Ltd, 1970 [1969].
- Brooks Ian, *Organisational Behaviour*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2009 [1999].
- Brown Andrew, *Organisational Culture*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd 1998 [1995].
- Burgon Rob, *Piano Burning and Other Fighter Pilot Traditions*. Utah: Slipstream Publishing, 2016.
- Buss Arnold H, *Social Behaviour and Personality*. London and New York: Psychology Press, 2015.
- Cannadine David, *Class in Britain*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2000 [Yale University Press 1998].
- Cannadine David, *Aspects of Aristocracy, Grandeur and decline in Modern Britain*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Carreras Helena and Castro Celso, editors, *Qualitative Methods in Military Studies: Research Experiences and Challenges*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Chandler David, editor, and Beckett Ian, associate editor, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.
- Congdon Philip, *Behind the Hangar Doors*. Woodhall Spa: SONIK Books, 1985.
- “Contact”, *An Airman’s Outings*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1918.

Coombs Howard, editor, *The Insubordinate and the Noncompliant: Case Studies of Canadian Mutiny and Disobedience 1920 to Present*. Kingston and Toronto: Canadian Defence Academy Press and Dundurn Group, 2007.

Cooper Malcolm, *The Birth of Independent Air Power*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

Corbett Julian, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*. New York: Dover Publications Inc, 2004.

Cormack Andrew and Cormack Peter, *British Air Forces 1914-1918 (2)*. Oxford: Osprey, Publishing, 2001.

Cotter Jarrod, editor, *Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years*. Key Publishing Ltd, Souvenir Edition 2008.

Currie Jack, *Lancaster Target*. Bodmin: Goodall Publications Ltd, 1988, p.74.

Deal Terry and Kennedy Allan, *Corporate Cultures. The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*. New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1982]

Divine David, *The Broken Wing*. London: Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1966.

English Allan, *Understanding Military Culture. A Canadian Perspective*. Montreal, Kingston & London: McGill-Queen's University Press, Ithaca, 2004.

Farrell Brian and Hunter Sandy, editors, *Singapore, Sixty Years On*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002, pp.94-121.

Ferguson Niall, *The Pity of War*. London: The Penguin Press, 1998.

Francis Martin, *The Flyer. British Culture and the Royal Air Force 1939-1945*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Francis Paul, *British Military Airfield Architecture. From Airships to the Jet Age*. Yeovil: Patrick Stephens Ltd, imprint of Haynes Publishing, 1996.

French David and Holden Reid Brian, editors, *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation 1890-1939*. London & Portland, Or: Taylor Francis e-library, 2005 [Frank Cass Publishers, 2001].

Gagliardi Pasquale, editor, 'Symbols and Artifacts: views of the Corporate Landscape'. Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1990.

Geertz Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books Inc, 1973.

Gibson Guy, *Enemy Coast Ahead*, Manchester: Crécy Publishing Limited, 2007 [1986]

Giddens Anthony, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986 [1984].

Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Harmondsworth Penguin Books Ltd, 1968).

Gollin Alfred, *The Impact of Air Power on the British People and their Government, 1909-14*. London & Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989.

Gould-Lee Arthur, *No Parachute*. London: Grub Street, 2014 [2013].

Goulter Christina, *A Forgotten Offensive. Royal Air Force Coastal Command's Anti-Shipping Campaign, 1940-1945*. London: Frank Cass, 1995.

Gray Peter, *Air Warfare. History, Theory and Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, New York, 2016.

Gray Peter, *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the RAF Bomber Offensive from Inception to 1945*. New York, London: Bloomsbury Academic, [2012].

Gray Peter W and Cox Sebastian, editors, *Air Power Leadership*. London: The Stationary Office, 2002, pp.160-177.

Grinnell-Milne Duncan, *Wind in the Wires*, London: Grubb Street Publishing, 2014 [first published London: The Aviation Book Club, 1937].

Grove Eric, 'Air Force, Fleet Air Arm – or Armoured Corps? The Royal Naval Air Service at War', in *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years*, edited by Tim Benbow, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011.

Hamilton-Paterson James, *Marked for Death. The First War in the Air*, London Head of Zeus Ltd, 2015, p.158.

Haslam E, *The History of Royal Air Force Cranwell*. London: HMSO, 1982.

Henderson David, *Field Intelligence: Its Principles and Practice*. London: HMSO, 1904 (in IWM LBY 80/1294).

Henderson David, Brigadier General, *The Art of Reconnaissance*. London: Kessinger Legacy Reprints, n.d. [originally John Murray, 1915 1907, 1908, 1909, 1914].

Henderson GFR, *The Science of War. A Collection of Essays and Lectures*. London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Bibliolife [Longmans Green and Co, 1912].

Hering Squadron Leader P G, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Air Force*. Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1961.

H G, *RAF Occasions*. London: The Cresset Press, 1941.

Higham Robin, *Bases of Air Strategy. Building Airfields for the RAF 1914-1945*. Shrewsbury: Airlife Publishing Ltd, 1998.

Higham Robin, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain: 1918-1939*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966.

Hobart Malcolm C, *Badges and Uniforms of the Royal Air Force*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015.

Hofstede Geert, *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*. London: Profile Books Ltd, 2003 [McGraw-Hill International 1991].

Holmes Richard, *Redcoat. The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*. London: Harper Perrenial, 2002.

Holmes, Richard. *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front*. London: Harper Collins, 2004.

Hunt J, Pringle A and Morgan C, *Service Slang*. London: Faber and Faber, 2008 Edition [1943].

H W, *What's the Gen?* London: John Crowther Ltd, 1942.

Irving Lieutenant-Commander John, *Naval Life and Customs. Tradition, Lore and Language of the Royal Navy*. Altringham: Sherratt and Hughes, 1944.

James John, *The Paladins. A Social History of the RAF up to the outbreak of World War II*. London & Sydney: Futura 1991 [1990].

James T C G, *Growth of Fighter Command, 1936-1940: Air Defence of Great Britain*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2013[first published 2002 Frank Cass].

Jeffery Keith, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Jefford Wing Commander C G, *Observers and Navigators and Other Non-Pilot Aircrew in the RFC, RNAS and RAF*. London: Grub Street Publishing, 2014.

Jolly Rick, *Jackspeak*, Cornwall, Palamanando Publishing, 2007 [1989].

Jones H, *The War in the Air, Appendices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937, Appendix xxxv.

Jones Spencer, editor, *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, Helion & Company, Solihull, 2013.

Joubert de la Ferté Sir Philip, *The Third Service*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1955.

Keegan John, *The First World War*. London: Hutchinson: 1998.

Kilmann Ralf, Saxton Mary, Serpa Roy and associates editors, *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985.

Kirke Charles, *Redcoat, Green Machine. Continuity in Change in the British Army, 1700-2000*. London: Continuum UK, 2009.

Lanchester F, *Aircraft in Warfare, the Dawn of the Fourth Arm*. London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1916.

Lawrence T E, *The Mint*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1955.

Lewis Cecil, *Sagittarius Rising*. Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2009.

LoCicero Michael, Mahoney Ross and Mitchell Stuart, editors, *A military Transformed? Adaption and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945*. Solihull: Helion, 2014.

Macmillan Norman, *Sefton Brancker*. London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd, 1935.

Mahan Alfred Thayer, *Mahan on Naval Warfare*, edited by Westcott Allan, New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1999.

Mahan A T, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783*. Wroclaw: reprint by Amazon Fulfillment, [originally 1889].

McKee Christopher, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900-1945*. Cambridge Massachusetts, London England: 2002, p.46.

Meilinger Col Phillip S, *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, New Delhi: The School of Air Power Studies, Lancer Publishers and Distributors, 2000, p.48

Morris Alan, *Bloody April, The Heroic Story of the Fliers of World War 1*. London: Arrow Books, 1968.

Moulson Tom, *Millionaires' Squadron*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2014.

Orange Vincent, *Churchill and his Airmen. Relationships, Intrigue and Policy Making 1914-1945*. London: Grub Street 2013.

Ott Steven J, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*. Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole, 1989.

Paris Michael, *Winged Warfare. The Literature and Theory of Aerial Warfare in Britain 1859-1917*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992.

Parritt Brigadier Brian, *The Intelligencers. British Military Intelligence from the Middle Ages to 1929*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2011.

Partridge E, *A Dictionary of RAF Slang*. London: Pavillion Books Ltd, 1990.

Partridge Eric, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, edited by Beale Paul. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006 [1937].

Perkin Harold, *The Origins of Modern English Society*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002 [1969].

Pisano Dominick A, *The Airplane in American Culture*. USA, University of Michigan Press, 2006 [2003].

Pitchfork Graham, *Airmen Behind the Medals*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2015.

Pudney John and Treece Henry, editors, *Air Force Poetry*. London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1944.

Richey Paul, *Fighter Pilot*. London: Cassell 2003 [Originally published anon, B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1941].

Robbins Simon, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-18. Defeat into Victory*. Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2006.

Roskill Stephen, *The Naval Air Service. Documents Relating to the Naval Air Service, Volume I, 1908-1918*. Navy Records Society, 1969.

Roskill Stephen, *Naval Policy Between the Wars I. The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929*. Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2016 [1968].

Roskill Stephen, *Naval Policy Between the Wars II. The Period of Reluctant Rearmament 1930-1939*. Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2016 [1968].

Rubinstein W D, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain, 1750-1990*. London: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2003 [London: Routledge, 1993].



Rüger J, *The Great Naval Game. Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Sargent Eric, *The Royal Air Force.* Faulton and London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd, n.d. circa Second World War - marked 'Book Production War Economy Standard).

Schein Edgar H, *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass 2004.

Schurman D M, *The Education of a Navy. The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought 1867-1914.* London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1965.

Sharr Adam, Architecture & Culture, *Researching buildings spaces and documents.* New York: Routledge, Kindle edition, 2012.

Sheffield Gary, *Command and Morale. The British Army on the Western Front 1914-1918.* Barnsley: Praetorian Press, 2014.

Sheffield Gary, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Men Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War.* London: Macmillan, 2000.

Sheffield Gary, *The Chief, Douglas Haig and The British Army.* London: Aurum Press Limited, 2011.

Sherbrooke-Walker Ronald, *Khaki & Blue.* London: The Saint Catherine's Press Ltd, 1952.

Slessor Sir John, *The Central Blue.* London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1956.

Smith Malcolm S, *British Air Strategy between the Wars.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Sparkes E, editor, *Advances in military textiles and personal equipment.* Cambridge: Woodhead Publishing, 2012.

Spencer-Oatey Helen, *Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory.* London: Continuum, 2008.

Spiers Edward, *Haldane: An Army Reformer.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980.

Spiers Edward, *The Army and Society 1815-1914.* London and New York: Longman 1980.

Stephens Alan, editor, *The War in the Air 1914-1994.* Tuggeranong: Air Power Development Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2009.

Stradling A H, *Brass Hat. Being Hints on How to Make the Job Easier*. Aldershot: Gale & Polden Limited, 1951.

Sykes Sir Frederick Hugh, *Aviation in Peace and War*. London: Edward Arnold and Co, 1922.

Taylor B, *Halton and the Apprentice System*. Leicester: Midland Publishing, 1993.

Taylor John W R, C.F.S. *Birthplace of Air Power*. London, Putnam, 1963.

Terraine John, *Right of the Line. The Royal Air Force in the European War 1939-1945*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997 [1985].

Till Geoffrey, editor, *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in memory of Bryan Ranft*. New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

Trompenaars Fons and Hampden-Turner Charles, *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. London: Nicholas Brealey, 1997.

Unwin Simon, *Analysing Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge, Fourth Edition 2009.

Villard Henry Serrano, Allen Willis M, *Looping the Loop. Posters of Flight*. California, Kales Press, 2008 [2000].

Wallace G, *R.A.F. Biggin Hill*. London: Tandem Publishing Limited 1975 [Universal-Tandem 1969, First published Putnam &Co Ltd 1957].

Ward Paul, *Britishness since 1870*. London, Routledge, 2004.

Ward-Jackson C, *Airman's Songbook*. London: Sylvan Press, 1945.

Wellum Geoffrey, *First Light*. New Jersey: Hoboken, 2003 [Viking, 2002].

Wells Mark, *Courage and Air Warfare. The Allied Aircrew Experience in the Second World War*. London: Frank Cass 2000 [1995].

'Wing Commander', *The Odd Hint to the RAF*, n.d. (estimated prior 1918 - hand written date 1918).

## ii. CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

Ash Eric, 'Air Power Leadership: A Study of Sykes and Trenchard' in *Air Power Leadership*, edited by Gray Peter W and Cox Sebastian. London: The Stationary Office, 2002.

Per Olof Berg and Kristian Kreiner 'Corporate Architecture: Turning Physical Settings into Symbolic Resources' in '*Symbols and Artifacts: views of the Corporate Landscape*', edited by Pasquale Gagliardi. Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1990.

Burroughs Peter, 'An Unreformed Army? 1815-1868', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, edited by Chandler David and Beckett Ian. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Cotter Jarrod, 'Father of the Royal Air Force' in *Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years* edited by Cotter Jarrod. Key Publishing Ltd, Souvenir Edition 2008.

Cotter Jarrod, editor, 'Description of Ensign Ceremony' in *Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years*, edited by Cotter Jarrod. Souvenir Edition, Key Publishing Ltd, 2008.

English Allan, 'Leadership and Lack of Moral Fibre in Bomber Command 1939-1945. Lessons for Today and Tomorrow' in *The Insubordinate and the Noncompliant: Case Studies of Canadian Mutiny and Disobedience 1920 to Present*, edited by Coombs Howard. Kingston and Toronto: Canadian Defence Academy Press and Dundurn Group, 2007.

Ferris John, 'Student and Master: Airpower and The Fall of Singapore, 1920-1941' in *Singapore, Sixty Years On*, edited by Farrell Brian and Hunter Sandy. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002, pp.94-121.

Grove Eric, 'Seamen or Airmen. The Early Days of British Naval Flying' in *British Naval Aviation. The First 100 Years*, edited by Benbow Tim. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011.

Jordan David and Sheffield Gary, 'Douglas Haig and Airpower' in *Air Power Leadership*, edited by Gray Peter W and Cox Sebastian. London: The Stationary Office, 2002.

Kirke, Charles. 'Insider Anthropology: Theoretical and Empirical Issues for the Researcher', in *Qualitative Methods in Military Studies: Research Experiences and Challenges*, edited by Carrerias Helena and Castro Celso. London: Routledge, 2012.

Kochanski Halik, 'Planning for Wars in the Final Years of the Pax Britannica, 1899-1903', in *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation 1890-1939*, edited by French David and Holden Reid Brian. London & Portland, Or: Taylor Francis e-library, 2005 [Frank Cass Publishers, 2001].

Kreuger G P, 'Psychological Issues in Military Uniform Design', in *Advances in military textiles and personal equipment*, edited by Sparkes E, Cambridge: Woodhead Publishing, 2012.

Lambert Andrew, 'Education in the Royal Navy: 1854-1914' in *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in memory of Bryan Ranft*, edited by Till Geoffrey. New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

Meilinger Phillip S, 'Trenchard, Slessor and Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II', edited by Col Phillip S Meilinger, *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, New Delhi: The School of Air Power Studies, Lancer Publishers and Distributors, 2000.

Olsen Richard, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thomas Capper' in *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, edited by Jones Spencer, Solihull: Helion & Company, 2013.

Pugh James, 'David Henderson and Command of the Royal Flying Corps' in *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, edited by Spencer Jones, Solihill: Helion & Company Limited, 2015 [2013].

Pugh James, *Oil and Water: A comparison of Military and Naval Doctrine in Britain, 1912-1914, A Military Transformed? Adaption and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945* edited by Locicero M, Mahoney R, Mitchell S editors. Solihull: Helion, 2014.

Randall Peter, *Changes and Obstacles in Reforming the British Army, 1815-1854*, in *A Military Transformed? Adaption and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945*, edited by Locicero M, Mahoney R, Mitchell S, Solihull: Helion, 2014.

Schein Edgar, 'How Culture Forms, Develops and Changes' in *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture*, edited by Kilmann Ralf, Saxton Mary, Serpa Roy and associates. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985.

Spiers Edward, *The Late Victorian Army*, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, edited by Chandler David and Beckett Ian. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.

Stephens Alan, 'The true believers between the Wars', in *The War in the Air 1914-1994*, edited by Stephens Alan. Tuggeranong: Air Power Development Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2009.

Till Geoffrey, 'British naval thinking: a contradiction in terms?' in *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in memory of Bryan Ranft* edited by Till Geoffrey. New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

Travers Tim, 'The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* edited by Chandler David and Beckett Ian, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.

### iii. Official Histories.

Air Publication 3003, 'Short History of the Royal Air Force'.

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/shorthisoryoftheroyalairforce.cfm>, accessed 17 April 17.

'RAF Narrative: The Expansion of the Royal Air Force 1934-1939', Air Historical Branch (1) Air Ministry. G 106,640. AHB

*Works*, Air Publication 3236, Air Ministry, 1956. AHB.

### iv. Journals.

*Aircraft Year Book*, New York: Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America Inc. (1924).

'An Aircraft Apprentice's Day', *The Halton Magazine*, Vol XI, No 2, (Christmas 1939), p.22.

'An Observer's Badge', *Flight*, No 348 No 35 Vol VII, (August 27, 1915), p.624.

Ardley E L, 'On Ensigns and Standards', *Royal Air Force Journal* (n.d.), p.31. AHB Ceremonial Box.

Armitage, Michael Air Chief Marshal; 'The Origins of the Boys' Service in the RFC and the RAF', *Spirit of the Air*, Vol 1, No 2, (2006), pp.28-30.

Aycliffe Alec, 'RAF Navigation Between the Wars' in *A History of Navigation in the Royal Air Force*, RAF Historical Society Journal, 1997, pp.12-33.

'Barrack room Thoughts', *The Halton Magazine*, *The Daedalus*, Christmas 1932, p.31.

Bond Brian in Howard Michael, 'What is Military History?', *History Today*, Vol 34, Issue 12 (Dec 1984), pp.6-7.

Cartoon in *The Halton Magazine*. *The Daedalus* (Summer 1933), p.55.

Collins Michael D, 'A fear of flying: diagnosing traumatic neurosis among British aviators of the Great War', *First World War Studies*, Vol 6. Iss 2, (2015), pp.187-202.

Cooper Malcolm, 'Blueprint for Confusion: The Administrative Background to the Formation of the Royal Air Force, 1912-19', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 22, No.3 (July 1987), pp.437-453.

Cox Sebastian, 'Swords into Ploughshares? A Historical Perspective on Air Force Leadership in the Aftermath of the First and Second World Wars' in *Air Force*

*Leadership: Beyond Command?*, edited by John Jupp and Keith Grint. Cranwell: Royal Air Force Leadership Centre (2005), pp.92-105.

Daybell Wing Commander P J, 'Trenchard's Undisciplined Mob', *Air Clues* (October 1997), pp.372-374.

Dye Air Vice-Marshal Peter, 'France and the Development of British Military Aviation', *Air Power Review*, Vol 12 No 1, (Spring 2009), p.1-12.

Dye Air Commodore Peter, 'The Aviator as Superhero', *RAF Air Power Review*, Vol 7, No 3 (Autumn 2004), pp.65-76.

'Editorial Comment: The Air Pageant', *Flight*, No 602 (No 28 Vol XII) (Jul 8 1920), p.701. <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1920/1920%20-%200701.html>, accessed 19 Nov 15.

'Editorial', *The Hawk*, Vol 1, No1 (Christmas 1928), p.3.

'Editorial', *The Halton Magazine* Vol III No3 (Xmas 1926), p.5.

English Allan D, 'The RAF Staff College and the Evolution of RAF Strategic Bombing Policy', 1922- 1929, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 16, No 3 (1993), pp.408-31

Flanagan T, 'Demobilisation from the RAF 1945-47. Plans and Pains'. *Air Clues* (n.d.), Article held at AHB.

Frey Bruno S, 'Giving and Receiving Awards', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Vol 1 No 4, pp.377-388.

Gray Peter, 'British Air Power from Potential to Fully Fledged Service, 1914–45', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 159, Iss. 4 (2014), pp.36-43.

Greenald Jonathan, 'Sir David Henderson – Chief of the Royal Flying Corps and Architect of the RAF', *The Haltonian*, Issue 70 (December 2014), p.21.

Hertz Carrie, 'The Uniform: as Material, as Symbol, as Negotiated Object, Midwestern Folklore'. *Journal of the Hoosier Folklore Society*, Special Double Issue Press, *Costume, and Bodily Adornment as Material Culture*, Indiana State University, Vol 32, Nos 1/2 (Spring/Fall 2006), pp.46-47.

'He Sold his Country for a Cigarette', *Tee Emm*, Vol 4 No 9 (December 1944). CFS Archive, unaccessioned.

Howard M, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, Vol 107 No 4, (Feb 1, 1962), pp.4-10.

Hudson Mary, 'RAF Heritage', *Spirit of the Air*, inaugural edition (2005), pp.8-9

Hughes Gwilym, 'The History of Cambridge University Air Squadron', *Air Clues* (October 1975), pp.364-367.

'Is this Air Force Bird...an Eagle...or an Albatross?', *RAF Quarterly* (1950), pp.256-259. AHB Ceremonial Collection.

Johns Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard, 'The Trenchard Vision and its Relevance in an Age of Joint Warfare', Trenchard Memorial Lecture, *The RUSI Journal*, Vol 142 No 5 (October 1997), pp.10-16.

Jones Edgar, "'LMF": The Use of Psychiatric Stigma in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War', *Journal of Military History*, Vol 70, April 2006, pp.439-458.

Jones H A, 'Sir David Henderson, Father of the Royal Air Force', *Air Power Review* Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.9-16.

Jordan David, 'Lieutenant-General Sir David Henderson: Forgotten Father of British Air Power?', *Air Power Review*, Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.19-20.

Jordan David, 'Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard (later Viscount Trenchard)' *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), pp.105-107.

Jordan David, 'Sir Frederick Sykes', *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), pp.74-76.

Joyce E, 'Remembering the Mutiny', *Aeroplane Monthly*, (Jan 1987).

Junior J, 'Men of the Day. Sir David Henderson', *Mayfair*, (March 1918), p.22.

Kier Elizabeth, 'Culture and Military Doctrine. France Between the Wars', *International Security*, Vol. 19 No. 4 (Spring, 1995), pp.65-93.

Kingdon Christopher, 'Behind Closed Doors: Revisiting Air Command's 'Lack of Moral Fiber and Waverer Disposal Policy' and its 'Treatment' of Neurotic Cases, 1941-1945', *Chicago Journal of History*, Iss 2 (Autumn 2013), pp.14-33.

Kirke, Charles, 'Organizational Culture And Defence Acquisition: A Key Internal Factor For MOD', *RUSI Defence Systems*, Vol.13 No.1, (June 2010) pp.97-99.

Kirke Charles, 'Organisational Culture – The Unexpected Force', *Journal of Battlefield Technology*, Vol 7, No 2 (July 2004), pp.1-17.

Lake Jeremy 'Conserving Military Airfields', *Context 66*, Institute of Historic Building Conservation (June 2000), pp.20-25,  
[http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context\\_archive/66/airfields/airfields.html](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/66/airfields/airfields.html)

Larkin Min Gp Capt, 'The RAF Halton Aircraft Apprentice Scheme', *Old Haltonians*, <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/news/Halton%20Story.pdf>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

Lee Peter, 'Remoteness, Risk and Aircrew Ethos', *Air Power Review*, Vol 15 No 1 (Spring 2012), pp.1-19.

'Les Triomphateurs du Michelin Grand Prix' in *La Vie au Grand Air* No 652 (18 March 1911).

Magee John Gillespie, 'High Flight', <https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/archive/75-years-of-high-flight-beloved-aviator-poems-75th-anniversary-celebrated-19082016>, accessed 24 Nov 2017.

'Mater's Day at Halton', *The Halton Magazine. The Daedalus*, Christmas 1932, p.41.

Meek V Lynn, 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses', *Organizational Studies*, Vol 9 Issue 4, (1988), pp.453–473.

Meilinger Philip S, 'Trenchard and "Moral Bombing": The Evolution of Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II', *Journal of Military History*, Vol 60 Iss 2, (April 1996), pp.243-270.

Meilinger P, 'The Historiography of Airpower: Theory and Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 64 No 2 (1 Apr 2000), pp.467-500.

'Message from Trenchard', *Royal Air Force Cadet College Magazine*, Vol 1, No 1 (September 1920).

Murray Williamson. 'Does Military Culture Matter', *Orbis*, Vol 43 Issue 1 (Winter 1999), pp.27-42.

Nathan Joseph and Nicholas Alex, *The Uniform: A Sociological Perspective*, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Jan 1972), pp.719-730.

'Netheravon Concentration Camp', *Flight*, No 288 (Jul 3 1914), p.696.

'On The Royal Air Force Staff College', *The Aeroplane* (13 December 1922), p.458.

'Other Annoyances', *The Daedalus* (Summer 1927), p.18.

Page David, 'The Early Years', in 'A History of Navigation in the Royal Air Force', *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal*, 1997, pp.6-11.

Parton Neville, 'The Development of Early RAF Doctrine', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 72 No 4 (October 2008), pp.1155-1178.

*Popular Aviation*, 1927-1928.



'R.A.F. Air Pageant', *Flight*, No 705 (No 26 Vol XIV) (29 June 1922), p.373, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1922/1922%20-%200373.html>, accessed 23 Dec 2017.

'R.A.F. Old Boys' Association', *The Halton Magazine*, Vol III No 3 (Xmas 1926), p.67.

Rood Graham, 'A Brief History of Flying Clothing', *Journal of Aeronautical History*, Paper No 2014/01 (n.d.), pp.3-54. <https://www.aerosociety.com/publications/jah-a-brief-history-of-flying-clothing/>, accessed 18 June 2017.

'Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom. Notices to Members', *Flight* (1 July 1911), p.569. <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1911/1911%20-%200567.html>, accessed 27 May 2017.

'Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) at Netheravon. The Concentration Camp'. *Flight*, No 288 (No 27, Vol VI) (July 3 1914), pp.670-677 [pphttps://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200698.html](https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200698.html), accessed 7 May 2017. Also in RAFM AC 73/35/1/18.

'Saluting' *Tee Emm* (May 1941), CFS Archive, unaccessioned p.20.

Seabright Squadron Leader Anthony J, 'RAF Ethos and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Air Power Review*, Vol 7 No 1 (2004), pp.91-112

Snape Robert, 'The New Leisure, Voluntarism and Social Reconstruction in inter-War Britain', *Contemporary British History*, Vol 29 Iss 1, (2015), pp.1-33.

'Suggested Amateur Film Play', *The Halton. The Daedalus Magazine*, Christmas 1932, p.27.

Sykes F, 'Review of Air Situation and Strategy for the information of the Imperial War Cabinet', reproduced in *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), pp.183-186. Also reproduced in Sykes, *From Many Angles*, pp.544-554.

Sykes F, 'Aircraft in War', *Quarterly Review* Article 13 (April 1914), pp.558-569. RAFM AC 73/35/1/16.

Sykes, 'Military Aviation', *The Royal Aeronautical Society Journal* (July 1913), pp.127-139.

'The Cranwell Alphabet', *The Piloteer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (n.d.), p.2. RAF College Cranwell Archive, CRN/0/2013/91.

'The "Old Boy"', *The Daedalus* (Summer 1927), p.12.

*The Piloteer*. Special Souvenir Number (April 1918). RAF College Cranwell Archive CRN/D/2013/113.

*The Piloteer*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (n.d.). RAF College Cranwell Archive, CRN/O/2013/90,

'The RAF Pageant', *Flight*, No 602 (No 28 Vol XII) (Jul 8 1920), <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1920/1920%20-%200701.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2015, pp.705-711.

'The Royal Air Force Staff College', *Flight*, 7 December 1922, p.720.

'The Royal Flying Corps', *Flight* No 289, (No 28, Vol VI) (10 July 1914) pp.723-726 (including useful photograph listing all officers present). <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1914/1914%20-%200722.html>, accessed 9 Jan 2016.

'The Royal Flying Corps', *Flight* No 178 (No 21, Vol IV)(May 25 1912), p.462, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1912/1912%20-%200462.html?search=sykes>, accessed 9 Jan 16.

'They Want to Turn Me into a Guardsman'. *Tee Emm*, Vol 4 No 2 (May 1944). CFS Archive, unaccessioned.

Trenchard Hugh, 'Aspects of Service Aviation', *The Army Quarterly*, Vol 2, No1 (1921), pp10-21. (Article derived from a speech given by Trenchard on 14 Oct 1920).

Waites B A, 'The effect of the First World War on class and status in England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 11 No 1 (1976), pp.27-48.

Wells Mark, 'Tribal Warfare. The Society of Modern Airmen' *Air and Space Power Journal*, Vol 29 Issue 3 (May-June 2015), pp.82-87.

'Where's that Zipped Lip?', *Tee Emm*, Vol 4 No 3, (June 1944), p.60. CFS Archive, unaccessioned.

Whitmarsh Andrew, 'British Army Manoeuvres and the Development of Military Aviation, 1910-1913', *War in History*, Vol 14 No 3 (2007), pp.325-346.

Wilson Peter H, 'Defining Military Culture', *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 72, Number 1 (January 2008), pp.11-41.

Zwiegle Zachary J, 'The British Royal Air Force: A Faulty Foundation and the Decision to Survive, 1918-40', *Hindsight Graduate History Journal*, Vol. VI (Spring 2012), pp.96-121.

**v. Biographies and Diaries.**

Allen Wing Commander H R, *The Legacy of Lord Trenchard*. London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1972.

Blacklock Group Captain G B, *Half a Life Remembered*, n.d. Trenchard Museum Archive, unaccessioned.

Borg Ron, *Stop Cryin' in the Rear Rank. A Serious yet Lighthearted Backward Glance at Ground Crew Life in the Royal Air Force, 1938-1949, and a New Life in Canada*. Ottawa: Hignell Book Printing, June 1998.

Boyle Andrew, *Trenchard*, London: Collins, 1962.

Boyle Sir Dermott, *My Life. An Autobiography by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Dermot Boyle*, self published edition, Central Flying School archive, unaccessioned.

Brickhill P, *Reach for the Sky*, London Collins, 1954

Deere Wyndham, *A Brat's Progress. The Whimiscal Reminiscences of a Royal Air Force Apprentice*. No publisher location: Bryn Illtyd Publications, 2002.

Emm T, *Tales of an Ancient Airman*. Trenchard Museum, Hand written personal account (n.d.). Trenchard Museum Archive, unaccessioned.

'Henderson, Lieutenant General Sir David', in *Philosophers of War. The Evolutions of History's Greatest Military Thinkers*, edited by Coetzee Daniel and Eysturlid Lee. Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: Praeger, 2013 [Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC].

Kimber Wing Commander C T, *Son of Halton. The Memoirs of an Ex-Brat*. London, Fakenham and Reading: Cox and Wyman Ltd, 1977.

Macmillan Norman, *Sir Sefton Brancker*, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1935.

Miller Russell, *Boom. The Life of Viscount Trenchard, Father of the Royal Air Force*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2016.

Olsen Richard, 'An Inspirational Warrior: Major-General Sir Thompson Capper' in *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914*, edited by Jones Spencer. Solihull: Helion & Company, 2013.

Porter K, *One of Trenchard's Brats*, n.d. Trenchard Museum Archive, unaccessioned.

Rawlinson H, *Chronicle of a Trenchard's Brat, 24<sup>th</sup> Entry by 565663*, n.d., Trenchard Museum Archive, unaccessioned.

Ross John, *The Royal Flying Corps Boy Service*. Dover, Buckland Press Ltd, 1990.

Seuter Rear-Admiral Murray F, CN, RN., *Airmen or Noahs. Fair Play for our Airmen*. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1928.

Sykes Sir Frederick, *From Many Angles*. London: George Harrap & Co Ltd, 1942.

Tams F, *A Trenchard Brat*. Edinburgh, Cambridge, Durham: The Pentland Press Limited, 2000.

'Trenchard, Hugh Montague, first Viscount Trenchard (1873–1956)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011,  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/article/36552?docPos=1>,  
accessed 22 Dec 2016.

Frederick, *A Trenchard Brat*. Studley: Brewin Books Ltd, 1999.

#### **vi. Official Manuals and Papers.**

Air Ministry Weekly Orders, 20 March 1918 to 31 March 1920, TNA AIR 72/1.

Air Publication 1, 'Ethos, Core Values and Standards' (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Jan 2008)

Air Publication 956, 'A Selection of Lectures and Essays from the Work of Officers Attending the First Course at The Royal Air Force Staff College, 1922-1923', Air Ministry, 1923, JSCSC Library, Shrivenham.

Air Publication 3000, 'British Air and Space Power Doctrine', Fourth Edition, Ministry of Defence,  
[http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/9E435312\\_5056\\_A318\\_A88F14CF6F4FC6CE.pdf](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/9E435312_5056_A318_A88F14CF6F4FC6CE.pdf). Accessed 20 Jul 2015, p16.

CAB 38/20/1 'Report of the Standing Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on Aerial Navigation', War Office, 29 February 1912.

Committee of Imperial Defence. Separate Air Force – Air Defence – Air Expansion – Cabinet Papers and Notes of Departmental Meetings. Draft Memoranda Etc). *Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence on National and Imperial Defence, HMSO, 1924*, reproduced in *Air Power Review, Special Edition (Spring 2013)*, pp.308-309.

DIOT Drill and Ceremonial Handbook, 1991 Issue.

'Officers' Mess Rules', RAF Linton-on-Ouse and RAF Wittering, January 2017.

'Officers' Mess Rules', RAF Leeming, November 2015.

'Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces', The Stationary Office, Thirty-fourth Report of Session 2006-7, 2007.

'Royal Warrant', Special Army Order, dated 15 April 1912, reproduced in *Air Power Review*, Special Edition, (Spring 2013), pp.65-72.

'Standing Orders Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing', HMSO, 1915. RAFM AC 73/35/1/14

Sykes F, 'Air Power Requirements of the Empire'. TNA Air 8/6 file Air Power requirements. Post war air force. Air Defence.

'Training Manual, Royal Flying Corps, Part II (Military Wing)', General Staff, War Office, 1915, Chapter II. AHB. Reproduced in *Air Power Review*, Special Edition (Spring 2013), pp.108-117.

'UK Armed Forces Quarterly Personnel Report', 1 January 2015.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/402633/quarterly\\_personnel\\_report\\_jan15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/402633/quarterly_personnel_report_jan15.pdf), accessed 1 Jan 2016.

'UK Defence Doctrine', Joint Services Publication 0-01, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2014.

#### **vii. Newspapers and Magazines.**

'Airmen in the Making. The New Vocabulary'. *Daily Mail*, July 19 1917, Issue 6643, p.4.

'Air Ministry Accused of Extravagance. An Aerodrome Demolished and Then Rebuilt', *The Times*, Nov 18 1925, p.16 Issue 44122, Col C.

'Air Service Organisation', *Daily Telegraph*, April 15, 1918. RAFM AC73/35 VOL III Part I

'Dorset as "An Armed Camp". Opposition to Proposed R.A.F Aerodrome', *The Times*, Nov 22, 1935, p.20, Issue 47228; Col E.

'Eagles Win', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 March 1970.

'Government and Hendon' *The Times*, Dec 29 1925, p.10 Issue 44155 col E.

Hammerton J, 'A.B.C of the R.A.F, Apprenticeship in the RAF', Amalgamated Press, 1942. Trenchard Museum Archive press cutting.

'Hampshire Aerodrome', *The Times*, Saturday May 30 1925, p.9 Issue 43975 col E.

'How the hell can you privatize water?' *The Guardian*, 24 Nov 2014. [www.theguardian.com/society/2014/nov/24/harry-leslie-smith-nhs-great-depression-ed-miliband-advice](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/nov/24/harry-leslie-smith-nhs-great-depression-ed-miliband-advice), accessed 17 Mar 2017.

Johns W E, 'White Fokker', *Popular Flyer*, April 1932.

'New R.A.F. Flag', *The Times*, London, 19 Apr 1919, p.10, Issue 42078, *The Times* Digital Archive.

'Preservation in Wiltshire', *The Times*, Aug 31 1936 p.9, Issue 47467, col E.

'Proposed Aerodrome Near Swindon', *The Times*, Feb 25, 1939, p.8, Issue 48239, col C.

'RAF Staff College', *The Times*, Mon Jul 17, 1939, p.3, Issue 48359, Col E.

Tanner D John, Letter from Director RAF Museum to Daily Telegraph, 27 April 1970, p.16

*The Edinburgh Gazette*, November 4, 1902, p1086.  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/Edinburgh/issue/11458/page/1086>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

*The London Gazette*, July 29 1902, p.4836.

*The London Gazette*, Sep 18, 1906, No 27950, p.6312.  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27950/page/6312>, accessed 22 Dec 2016.

*The London Gazette*, Jan 01, 1907, No 27982, p.32.  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27982/page/32>, accessed 26 April 2016.

*The London Gazette*, 21 September 1915, Issue 29304, p.9324.  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29304/page/9324>, accessed 21 Oct 2017.

*The London Gazette*, No 31674, p 15049, 5 December 1919,  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31674/page/15049>, accessed 15 Oct 2017.

#### **viii. Film/Artwork.**

'Canada Bomber Crews get Wings', *Pathé* 1942.  
<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/canada-bomber-crews-get-wings/query/WINGS+FOR>, accessed 2 Mar 2016

Kennington Eric, portrait of Wing Commander Geoffrey Tuttle at the RAF Museum.

'Lord Trenchard – But rarely seen – and still more rarely heard – opens new Middlesex Auxilliary Air Force headquarters'. *Pathé News* (12 April 1934).

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/lord-trenchard/query/trenchard>, accessed 7 April 2017.

*Missed Date*, Analysis Films Limited, compiled on *The Royal Air Force at War, the unseen films*. Imperial War Museum, The Official Collection. 1943-1944.

'R.A.F. Pageant 1921' *British Pathé*, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/raf-r-a-f-pageant> , accessed 18 Nov 2015.

#### **ix. Websites.**

'1919: The RAF Biggin Hill mutiny',  
<https://libcom.org/files/1919%20The%20RAF%20Biggin%20Hill%20mutiny.pdf>,  
accessed 17 Mar 2017.

'A Brief History of Cranwell Station', RAFC Pamphlet,  
[https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/rafcms/mediafiles/95781F3A\\_5056\\_A318\\_A87B3C17C8FEA187.pdf](https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/rafcms/mediafiles/95781F3A_5056_A318_A87B3C17C8FEA187.pdf), accessed 27 May 2017.

'Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Ellwood biography,  
<http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Ellwood.htm>, accessed 12 April 2017.

'Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Henderson biography,  
<http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/HendersonD.htm>, accessed 2 June 2015.

'Air of Authority – A History of RAF Organisation', Paine biography,  
<http://www.rafweb.org/Biographies/Paine.htm>, accessed 2 Feb 2016.

Aylmore George, '*The Good Guts*', WW2 People's War, BBC, 9 Feb 2004, .  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/33/a2281033.shtml>, accessed  
10 Nov 2015.

'Badge, trade, Royal Air Force, other ranks',  
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30061852>, accessed 16 April 2016.

'Battle of Britain', <https://www.rafa.org.uk/blog/2015/08/14/battle-of-britain-15-august-1940/>, accessed 12 Dec 2017.

'Beards and Moustaches in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines', Admiralty Circular No. 36.-LMM, Admiralty, 24 June 1869,  
[http://www.pbenyon.plus.com/Navy\\_List\\_1870/Beards\\_Moustaches.html](http://www.pbenyon.plus.com/Navy_List_1870/Beards_Moustaches.html)., accessed  
7 Jan 2016.

'Biggin Hill History', <http://bigginhill.co.uk/history.htm>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

Bradbury Ann, 'A Halifax Rear Gunner', 20 Sep 2005,  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/50/a5969550.shtml>, accessed  
12 Dec 2017.

'Cable-Curry', RN Website,  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry>, accessed 13 Nov 2017.

'Cardington Number 1 Shed At RAF Cardington',  
<https://historicensland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114165>, accessed 19 Feb 2017.

Caygill Richard, 'Nearly a Somebody', WW2 People's War, BBC, 22 Aug 2005,  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/54/a5246354.shtml>, accessed 24 May 2015.

Churchill W, Speech 18 Jun 1940.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/speeches/churchill\\_finet\\_hour](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/speeches/churchill_finet_hour), accessed 15 Mar 2016.

Churchill W, 'War Decorations and Medals', Hansard HC Deb, 22 Mar 1944 vol 398 cc872-1002. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/sittings/1944/mar/22>, accessed 12 Nov 2017.

'Committee for Imperial Defence, Air Defence, Prime Minister's Statement', *Hansard*, HC debate, 03 August 1922, vol 157 cc 1661-3,  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/aug/03/prime-ministers-statement>, accessed 01 June 2017.

'Defence: Post-War Organization'. *Hansard*, HL Deb, 06 Dec 1944, vol 134) cc131-89.  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1944/dec/06/defence-post-war-organization>, accessed 27 May 2017.

Donaldson JJW, 1943: Life and Work in Madras; Heat; Tea Party; 'One Starry Night', WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Sep 2003,  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/74/a1289874.shtml>, accessed 9 July 2017.

Duncan David, 'Mutiny in the RAF – the Air Force Strikes of 1946', Socialist History Society, Occasional Papers Series, No 8  
[http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page\\_id=179](http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page_id=179), accessed 2 Jun 2017.

'Effective Striking Strength', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 25 Feb 1926, vol 192 cc820-824,  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0\\_19260225\\_HOC\\_402](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402), accessed 19 May 2015.

'Effective Striking Strength', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 25 Feb 1926, vol 192 cc813-75,  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0\\_19260225\\_HOC\\_402839-842](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/feb/25/effective-striking-strength#S5CV0192P0_19260225_HOC_402839-842), accessed 17 May 2017.



Essex-Lopresti Dr Michael, 'Memories of a Wartime Erk in the RAF', WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Aug 2004, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/40/a2939240.shtml>, accessed 24 May 2015.

Evans Oscar, 'To Become a Wartime Pilot', WW2 People's War, BBC 16 December 2003, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/99/a2136999.shtml>, accessed 24 Mar 2016.

'From World Power to Colonial Policeman', <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/history-of-the-battle-of-britain/from-world-power-to-colonial-policeman.aspx>, accessed 14 May 2015.

'Flt Sgt Steventon', The Wartime Project – The Second War, <http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/ww2/view.php?uid=1205832>, accessed 12 Dec 2017.

'Full Cry: A Hound Blog'. <https://houndwelfare.wordpress.com/tag/britannia-beagles/>, accessed 7 Mar 2016.

'Hendon Air Pageant 1924', British Pathé, <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/hendon-air-pageant>, accessed 23 Dec 2017.

'History of St Barbara RAF Armourers', <https://rafarmourers.wordpress.com/history-of-st-barbara/> accessed 17 Apr 2017.

'History of The Intelligence Corps', MOD, [http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/history\\_of\\_intelligence\\_corps.pdf](http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/history_of_intelligence_corps.pdf) accessed 21 Oct 2017.

Jack Gillard, 'Life in an RAF Spitfire Station', WW2 People's War, BBC 25 May 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/15/a4115215.shtml> accessed 17 Mar 2017.

'Late Arrivals Club', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGIkqDU4hBI>, accessed 3 June 2017.

Lewis Cecil, 'The Great War Interviews', BBC, 33:50-34:16 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p01tczfx/the-great-war-interviews-4-cecil-arthur-lewis#group=p01tbj6p>, accessed 23 Nov 2017.

Lutyens Martin, 'Lutyens and the Expansion of RAF Airfields in the 1930s', *The Lutyens Trust*, <http://www.lutyenstrust.org.uk/portfolio-item/lutyens-expansion-raf-airfields-1930s/>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

MacIsaac James, 'Glossary of WWII R.A.F Slang and Terminology', <http://natureonline.com/37/56-ap4-glossary.html>, accessed 23 Mar 2016.

Mackay Enid, 'Life as the wife of an RAF Pilot'. WW2 People's War, BBC, 23 Sep 2005, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/33/a5877633.shtml>, accessed 24 May 2015.

Mahoney R, 'Useful sayings for the D.S.', Feb 18 2016, Air Power History <https://thoughtsonmilitaryhistory.wordpress.com/2016/02/18/useful-sayings-for-the-d-s/>, accessed 22 April 2016.

Mason George, 'The Forgotten Father of the Royal Air Force', 28 April 2015, <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/blog/the-forgotten-father-of-the-royal-air-force/>, accessed 7 April 2017.

'Movember Foundation', <https://uk.movember.com>, accessed 3 June 2017.

'Mr. Chamberlain's Announcement', HC Deb 16 Mar 1922, vol 151 cc2474-2476, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/mar/16/mr-chamberlains-announcement#S5CV0151P0\\_19220316\\_HOC\\_379](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1922/mar/16/mr-chamberlains-announcement#S5CV0151P0_19220316_HOC_379), accessed 16 Oct 2017.

'Naval Distinction Lace', Royal Museums Greenwich <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/naval-distinction-lace>, accessed 17 April 2017.

'No 1 School, Halton. The Technical Training School for Aircraft Apprentices (R.A.F)', *Flight*, October 4 1923, <https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1923/1923%20-%200612.html?search=halton> accessed 26 January 2016.

Oldstone-Moore Christopher, 'The Rise and Fall of the Military Moustache', Wellcome Library Collection, 20 November 2015, <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2015/11/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-military-moustache/>, accessed 2 June 2016.

Ortiz Matthew, 'Deconstructing the Uniform', *Psychology Tomorrow Magazine*, July 2013, Issue 7. <http://psychologytomorrowmagazine.com/deconstructing-the-uniform/>, accessed Nov 7 2015.

Ott Steven J., 'The Organizational Culture Perspective', 2012 <http://www.slideshare.net/sandhyaajohnson/the-organizational-culture-perspective-stein-ott>, accessed 12 June 2016.

Pemberton Billing, 'Clause 3', Hansard, HC Deb, 16 November 1917, vol 99 cc749-78, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1917/nov/16/clause-3-transfer-and-attaching-to-air>, accessed 13 Nov 2017.

Pilot's Wings, <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/taking-flight/historical-periods/pilots-wings.aspx>, accessed 17 March 2016.

'RAF College Cranwell. Building the College',  
<https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcollegecranwell/recruitment/buildingthecollege.cfm>,  
accessed 27 May 2017.

'RAF pilot wins moustache battle',  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north\\_east/7451939.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/7451939.stm), accessed 2 June 2016.

'RFC Centenary' [https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc\\_centenary.aspx](https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc_centenary.aspx), accessed 5 Dec 2014.

'RN Slang. Colours', TNA Digital Archive  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/rn-life/navy-slang/covey-crump-a-to-aye/cable-curry> accessed 21 Oct 2017.

Rood Graham, 'A Brief History of Flying Clothing', *Journal of Aeronautical History*, Paper No 2014/01, pp.3-54. <https://www.aerosociety.com/publications/jah-a-brief-history-of-flying-clothing/> accessed 18 June 2017.

Royal Air Force, [http://www.britairforce.com/imagepages/xraf\\_capbadge\\_1918.htm](http://www.britairforce.com/imagepages/xraf_capbadge_1918.htm), accessed 15 Mar 2016.

'Royal Naval Air Service, 1914 – 1918', [http://www.britairforce.com/rnas\\_1.htm](http://www.britairforce.com/rnas_1.htm), accessed 15 Mar 2016.

Schofield John with contributions by Bouton A Angus, Cocroft Wayne, Cole Steve, Dunlop Gair, Lee Tony, Penrose Sefryn, Wilson Louise., 'Artists and Airmen: Documenting Drawdown and Closure of RAF Colitshall (Norfolk)', <http://medieval-europe-paris-2007.univ-paris1.fr/J.Schofield%20et%20al..pdf>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

Sheffield Professor Gary, 'Has History misjudged the Generals of World War One?', BBCiWonder production. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zq2y87h#zsx3wmn>, accessed 7 Jan 2016.

'Short History of the Royal Air Force', AP3003,  
<https://www.raf.mod.uk/history/shorthistoryoftheroyalairforce.cfm>, accessed 27 May 2017.

Smith RA, 'Henderson, Sir David', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxie.bham.ac.uk/view/article/33808?docPos=1>. Accessed 12 June 2015.

Spencer-Oatey Helen, 'What is Culture?' *GlobalPAD Core Concepts*, 2012,  
[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/all/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/globalpad\\_-\\_what\\_is\\_culture.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/all/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/globalpad_-_what_is_culture.pdf), accessed 17 April 2017.

'Squadrons of the Battle of Britain: No. 601 Squadron', 17 July 2015, <https://www.rafbf.org/news-and-blogs/squadrons-battle-britain-no-601-squadron#sthash.cKVEOAW3.dpuf>, accessed 16 Oct 2017.

'Staff College & Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Draghunt', <http://www.sandhurstdraghunt.co.uk/about.html> , accessed 7 Mar 2016.

'Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Essex', <http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/history/>. Accessed 11 May 15.

'Strength', *Hansard*, HC written answer, HC Deb, 19 July 1923, vol 166 c2509W, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written\\_answers/1923/jul/19/strength#S5CV0166P0\\_19230719\\_CWA\\_1](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1923/jul/19/strength#S5CV0166P0_19230719_CWA_1), accessed 16 May 15.

Sykes, 'Sir Frederick Hugh', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/view/article/36393?docPos=1>, accessed 22 Jul 15.

'The Air Force', *Hansard*, HL Debate, 27 July 1922, vol 51 cc 902-44, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0\\_19220727\\_HOL\\_101](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1922/jul/27/the-air-force#S5LV0051P0_19220727_HOL_101), accessed 21 Oct 2017.

'The Central Flying School', [http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc\\_centenary/the-afc/the-central-flying-school.aspx](http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/rfc_centenary/the-afc/the-central-flying-school.aspx), accessed 29 Nov 2015.

'The evolution of an Air Ministry', [http://www.rafweb.org/Organsation/Air\\_Boards.htm](http://www.rafweb.org/Organsation/Air_Boards.htm), accessed 5 Dec 2014.

'The Failing Aviator', published online 2009, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WecvU\\_QYt\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WecvU_QYt_c), accessed 16 April 2017.

'The Goldfish Club', <http://www.thegoldfishclub.co.uk>, accessed 12 April 2016.

'The Royal Air Force Ensign', <https://www.raf.mod.uk/history/theroyalairforceensign.cfm>, accessed 29 May 2017.

'The University of Glasgow Story. Lieutenant General Commanding David Y Henderson, Sir', [www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178](http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=178), accessed 2 June 2015.

'UK Medals – MSM', <http://www.stephen-stratford.co.uk/msm.htm> accessed 24 March 2016.

'Uniformes Equipements de Vol, Insigne métallique du personnel navigant', [http://albindenis.free.fr/Site\\_escadrille/Equip\\_uniformes.htm](http://albindenis.free.fr/Site_escadrille/Equip_uniformes.htm), accessed 17 March 2016.

**x. Podcasts.**

RAFM. 'Hendon Air Displays and Pageants', <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault/podcasts/hendon-air-displays-and-pageants/>, podcast accessed 18 Nov 15.

**xi. Dictionaries.**

*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 10th Edition.

**xii. Mass Observation Report.**

Mass Observation Report, Royal Air Force. Assorted material sent in by other Observers in the RAF. Letter Dated 1942. Redacted and address removed. <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/Documents/Images/TopicCollection-29/1708#Sections>, accessed 17 Mar 2017.

**3. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL**

**i. Unpublished Theses.**

Dye J, 'Air Power's Midwife – Logistics support for Royal Flying Corps Operations on the Western Front 1914-18'. (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013).

Gibson Barbara, 'Intercultural Competencies needed by Global CEOs (PhD Thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2014).

Gray Peter, 'The Strategic Leadership and Direction of The Royal Air Force Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany from Inception to 1945' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009).

Higgins Simon, 'How was Richard Haldane able to Reform the British Army? An Historical Assessment Using a Contemporary Change Management Model', (MPhil Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010).

Jordan David, 'The Army Co-Operation Missions of The Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force 1914-1918' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997).

Mahoney Ross, 'The Forgotten Career of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, 1892-1937: A Social and Cultural History of Leadership Development in the inter-War Royal Air Force' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2014).

Parton Neville, 'The Evolution and Impact of Royal Air Force Doctrine:1919 – 1939' (PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009).

Pugh James, 'The Conceptual Origins of The Control of The Air: British Military and Naval Aviation, 1911 – 1918' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012).

Romans Elinor, 'Selection and Early Career Education of Executive Officers in the Royal Navy c1902-1939', (PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2012).  
<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/10701/RomansE.pdf?sequence=4>, accessed Aug 2016.

Wilkinson Frances Lousie, 'The Territorial Air Force 1925-1957 – Officer Cass and Recruitment' (PhD Thesis, University of Wolverhampton, 2017).

## **ii. Papers Presented at Meetings/Lectures.**

Desson Kenneth and Clouthier Joseph, 'Organizational Culture - Why Does it Matter', paper presented to Symposium on International Safeguards International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, Austria, November 3, 2010.

Gibson Barbara, 'Intercultural Competency and Global CEO' paper presented at SIETAR Europa 2015 in 'Refreshing the Cultural Paradigm', edited by Venegas Barbara Covarrubias, Dalipi Merlinda, Darder Fidel Leon, SIETAR Europa, 2015, pp.9-19.

Kirke Charles, 'Organisational Culture: A Key Internal Factor'. Lecture given to DE&S 29 Sep 2009.

Kirke Charles, 'Organisational Culture: A Key Internal Factor'. Paper presented at RUSI 29-30 Sep 2009.

Kirke Charles, Unpublished speech notes for RUSI speech 29-30 Sep 2009.

## **iii. Miscellaneous & Unpublished Papers**

Greenald J B, *The First Air Chief*, unpublished Draft (n.d.). Copy passed to author by Greenald in July 2015.

Mason R, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922-1972*, unpublished paper written at the RAF Staff College Bracknell, 1972. Copy held at Joint Command and Staff College Library, Shrivenham.

Wong Leonard, Kolditz Thomas A., Millen Raymond A., Potter Terrence M., 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War', US Army War College, Strategic Studies Paper, July 2003.