OFFICERS ADVANCED TRAINING SCHOOL
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PRECIS: SQUADRON AND FLIGHT ORGANISATION

References: K.R. and A.C.I. paras. 52 - 73, A.P. 837.

Introduction

1. The tendency in Commands at present is to change their squadrons over from a static to a mobile or semi-mobile basis. This relieves squadron commanders to a large extent, of their former responsibility for ground personnel as regards discipline and organisation. As squadrons in the Tactical Air Force are fully mobile as opposed to the semi-mobile squadrons in Home Commands it is proposed to deal with fully mobile squadrons first.

Mobile Squadrons

2. Mobile squadrons were formed in this country after experience in the North African campaign. In this respect we have copied the Germans, who were far ahead of us in mobile warfare. The Germans called the airfield and maintenance layout the "Hotel system". The majority of squadrons in Fighter Command have been changed to a mobile basis so that they may be easily interchanged with squadrons of the T.A.F. who, from time to time, require a rest from operations or to re-equip. An example of a Spitfire squadron establishment in the T.A.F. is as follows and illustrates the difference between a mobile and a static squadron, viz :-

	Commanding Officer
	Adjutant
	Medical Officer
	Intelligence Officer
27	Pilots
1	Continuity Sergeant (Fitter)
1	Corporal Clerk.

3. Typhoon squadrons have extra personnel on the establishment mainly comprised of armourers and fitters. Light bomber squadron's establishment is pro rata. Servicing is carried out by fully mobile servicing echelons, those in T.A.F. being on Wing H.Q. establishment and Fighter Command on station strength.

4. This organisation leaves the C.O. and Flight commanders entirely free to devote their engergies to the flying and fighting efficiency of the squadron. Cases will occur, however, where a squadron commander or flight commander will be called upon to show his ability and ingenuity when moved to an A.L.G. in the battle He will have to attend to communications, supplies, safety of his aircraft, defence and feeding of personnel.

Responsibility

5. A squadron Commander is responsible for the maintenance of discipline, efficiency, and proper administration of his squadron and the officers and airmen under his command. This encompases men's welfare, delegation of responsibility to Junior Officers, training and operational efficiency of his squadron and its observance of station orders and disciplibe. A C.O. should allot a set time for inspections, interviews, investigating charges and dealing with correspondence, this saves people waiting about and leaves time for dealing with flying matters.

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6. A Flight Commander is responsible to the Squadron Commander for the efficient running of his flight both in the air and on the ground. He may be granted powers of a Subordinate Commander by the Station Commander. Essential that Flight Commanders and their N.C.Os work closely together. Watch progress of pilots, arrange leave roster.

7. The adjutant's duty is to assist his C.O. and see that his instructions and wishes are carried out by all ranks. He should attend to all routine matters so as to leave his C.O. more time to study the efficiency of the squadron. He should be tactful in his relation with senior officers. It is the adjutant's duty to bring to the C.O.'s notice all orders that affect his unit.

Control

8. Control of a squadron or unit depends largely on the choice of personnel. Where possible, choice should be made from officers and N.C.Os who are suitable to take responsibility combined with the necessary knowledge to do the job. Personnel in charge of sections should be allowed to run their own departments and be directly responsible to the Squadron Commander. Servicing personnel in most Commands are now responsible to the Officer i/c Servicing Wing.

9. Accommodation should be carefully organised so that all sections are able to work smoothly. This question is more important in operational commands than with static units owing to their particular type of work - readiness states, day and night operations requiring ground crews of each flight being kept together.

10. Duties of squadrons vary considerably in different commands. Coastal Command crews, with the exception of strike squadrons, have more or less routine patrols to carry out whether operational or reconnaissance, which may take from 10 - 17 hours to complete. Therefore, coastal crews have more or less a regular time-table of duty and time off.

11. Bomber Command are more tied down by day to day operations which are again regulated by weather factors. Normally operations are restricted in range during the moon period. Squadrons in the normal way know by 10.00 hours each day whether they are detailed for operations that night, if not, they are free to carry on with their training programme.

12. Squadrons in Fighter Command or T.A.F. are always at some state of readiness. Squadrons operating in the South are operating on most flying days and keep a high standard of readiness.

13. Squadrons in Training Command and the O.T.U's keep to their own training programmes which are flexible and keep u/t pilots busy throughout the day.

14. Communications especially on dispersed sites, are important and should always be manned on operational units.

Personnel

15. It is most important that Squadron and Flight Commanders get to know the personnel under their command. Weekly meetings held by the Squadron Commander help considerably in bringing forward for discussion such matters as, maintenance, accommodation, welfare and discipline. It is every officer's duty to take an interest in the men's welfare.

16. Inspections should be made regularly by the Squadron Commander, of Barrack Rooms, Flights and Sections, paying particular attention to cleanliness and care of equipment.

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Efficiency

17. The efficiency of any squadron, unit or flight depends largely on the knowledge and enthusiasm of its members. The C.O. is responsible for the systematic and efficient instruction of both officers and airmen under his command in all their professional duties, and will encourage officers and airmen by every means at his disposal to avail themselves of the opportunities provided for improving their general efficiency.

18. The C.O. of a flying Unit should keep himself in constant flying practice by frequently flying every type of aircraft with which the Unit is equipped so as to maintain among the Pilots a high standard of morale. A. C.O. should fly with both flights of a Squadron and not show particular preference to one.

19. Visits to other Units should be encouraged as it broadens the outlook of all and often leads to increased efficiency by the adoption of new ideas. Visits should be made to Operations Rooms, G.C.I. Stations, and where applicable to a Happidrome. It is desirable that Squadron, Flight and Section Commanders of a Squadron should know the controllers personally.

20. Training programmes should be prepared so that full use is made of non-operational periods. These programmes are a great help to all concerned as they ensure the progressive training of the Squadron and gives the C.O. a day to day guide of what particular training is taking place at any one time. Organised training necessary at the present time owing to the large numbers of aircrew available in all Commands.

21. Liaison is necessary between C.O's and the Station Engineer Officer or C.T.O. who controls the Servicing Echelon, to ensure that the Flights have a minimum number of aircraft serviceable each day. Keep watch on flying hours so numbers of aircraft are not on inspections at the same time. It may be said that an efficient Squadron on the ground is an efficient Squadron in the air.

22. C.O.'s of Squadrons should make it a rule that every pilot should know the correct procedure for running up; if a multi-engine aircraft the pilot should wait until all members of the crew are present before starting up. Pilots should know how to refuel and re-arm, alternative methods of starting up, how to destroy secret wireless equipment, and how to swing a compass.

The Day's Work

23. Routine Work of a squadron varies with different Commands. If a Squadron is operational, routine work such as parades may have to be dispensed with. With Squadrons in quiet areas it is desirable that working parades and set times for attendance at Flights and Sections should be compulsory. This provides a good guide on discipline and efficiency to the C.O.

24. Daily inspection should be made at suitable times so that airtests can be carried out and a prompt start made to the flying programme. Pilots not engaged in flying duties can attend lectures, link trainer and Intelligence Room. Transport facilities should be organised between Messes and Flight Dispersals so that unnecessary running about and delays are avoided.

25. Leave rosters should be arranged showing the normal leave periods together with days off. This is much appreciated by pilots and aircrew as it allows them to make arrangements to spend their time off, whereas, if given a day off the same morning they may just sit in the Mess and become disgruntled.

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26. Operations differ in type in all commands, but certain principles are common to all. Punctuality both of take-off and rendevous and T.O.T. Briefing, accuracy of reports, R.T. discipline and ground organisation of both take-off and return of aircraft. Mobile servicing party for bomber aircraft should be available to deal with last minute faults. Planned marshalling and start up procedure to assure quick take-off. The C.O. or one of the flight commanders should be on duty at all times to take charge in case of emergency.

Amendments to this Precis:

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