

**R.A.F. VOLUNTEER RESERVE (WIRELESS OPERATOR/AIR
GUNNER SECTION)**

NOTES FOR THE INFORMATION OF CANDIDATES

1. Reserves for the Royal Air Force are derived from two sources: firstly from officers and airmen who have had service with the regular Air Force, and secondly, from men in civil life who are prepared to devote part of their leisure to the task of making themselves efficient for service in emergency.

2. The R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve has been created for men in the second category above, that is, for men who enter direct from civil life, and this pamphlet sets out briefly the conditions of entry and training of Volunteer Reservists as wireless operator/air gunners.

3. The paragraphs which follow are subject in all respects to the detailed regulations which have been, or may be, issued from time to time by the Air Council. It must be clearly understood that while every consideration will be given to the reasonable and legitimate interests of individuals, it will be competent for the Air Council at any time to modify the regulations governing the emoluments of the Volunteer Reserve, and no Volunteer Reservist will be entitled to claim any pay, gratuity or other advantage conferred by any provision therein in the event of such provision being at any time added to, varied or cancelled.

Conditions of Entry and Service

4. *Age limits.*—Candidates must have attained the age of 18 on the date on which the application is received, but normally must not, at that date, have attained the age of 32.

5. *Nationality.*—All candidates must be British subjects of pure European descent. They must also be the sons of parents both of whom are (or, if deceased, were at the time of death) British subjects, or naturalized British subjects; a departure from this rule will only be made on the authority of the Secretary of State for Air. Candidates who possess foreign as well as British nationality may in certain cases be regarded as ineligible for entry. Where there is doubt of nationality or descent, the burden of proof will rest upon the candidate.

6. *Education.*—Candidates should have had a good education which should be approximately up to the standard required for the school certificate of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board.

7. *Classes ineligible.*—(i) Registered medical practitioners, medical students, dental surgeons, dental students and members of police forces, prison services and fire brigades are not eligible for entry into the Volunteer Reserve as wireless operator/air gunners.

(ii) Candidates who are unable to give a reasonable assurance that they will be resident in the United Kingdom for a period of five years will not normally be selected. Obstacles are not however placed in the way of Volunteer Reservists who apply for permission to proceed abroad for short periods which do not interfere with their training.

(ii) Candidates who are serving in any branch of H.M. Forces (regular or non-regular) are required to obtain their discharge therefrom before they can be enlisted in the Volunteer Reserve.

8. *Selection and medical examination.*—(i) Candidates who, from their application forms, appear to be suitable for entry are invited to appear for interview before a selection board, which is normally held locally. Candidates to whom it is not possible to grant an interview are informed accordingly. No appeal against this decision will be considered, nor will reasons for non-selection be furnished.

(ii) Candidates considered eligible by the selection board are required to appear before a medical board. They must be fit for general service and for flying as combatant passengers in any part of the world. The medical standards are described in the Appendix to this pamphlet.

(iii) A railway warrant at Government expense is supplied to candidates who are selected for interview. No claim can be entertained in respect of other expenses incurred by candidates in connection with the interview or medical examination.

9. *Period of engagement.*—Volunteer Reservists are attested for a period of five years' service in the first instance, and they may be permitted to re-engage for further periods each of not more than five years. They will not however normally be permitted to serve as wireless operator/air gunners after reaching the age of 42.

10. *Rank.*—Candidates will be entered in the rank of aircraftman, second class, and reclassified as leading aircraftman on the following day. Subsequent promotion is referred to in para. 18.

11. *Liaison.*—(i) On enlistment, every Volunteer Reservist accepts the following obligations:—

(a) To report immediately should he receive a calling up notice or should he see a poster calling out the R.A.F. Reserve (which expression includes the Volunteer Reserve) in a national emergency, and to serve at home or abroad in such an emergency.

(b) To attend for training.

(c) To keep the Air Officer Commanding, No. 29 (Training) Group informed of changes of address.

(d) Not to leave Great Britain or Northern Ireland without first obtaining written permission from the Air Officer Commanding, No. 29 (Training) Group.

(e) To go into the air whenever ordered to do so.

(f) To attend for medical examination when so required.

(ii) Volunteer Reservists when called out for training or for service are subject to the Air Force Act. At other times they are subject to the Reserve Forces Acts as applied to the Air Force Reserve.

(iii) If at any time when his period of service would normally expire a national emergency exists or appears to be imminent, and he has been called up for air force service, a Volunteer Reservist may be retained for a further period not exceeding 12 months.

12. *Service with a foreign power.*—A Volunteer Reservist may not enter the service of a foreign power during his service in the Volunteer Reserve or for five years after discharge, without the consent of the Air Ministry.

13. *Discharge.*—(i) Candidates for entry into the Volunteer Reserve as wireless operator/air gunners must be prepared to serve for the full period for which they engage (see para. 9), and only in very exceptional circumstances are they granted premature discharge from their engagement. In the latter event Volunteer Reservists serving on their first period of five years' service are normally required to purchase their discharge at a cost of £30, reducible by £4 for each completed year of satisfactory service. Volunteer Reservists who have completed five years' satisfactory service or who join the regular Air Force or the Auxiliary Air Force may however be granted a free discharge.

(ii) A Volunteer Reservist may be discharged from the Volunteer Reserve at any time

(a) on account of medical unfitness,

(b) on account of unsatisfactory conduct,

(c) if it appears unlikely that he will become efficient in his duties, or

(d) if his services are no longer required.

Training

14. The training of wireless operator/air gunners is undertaken by fully qualified instructors under the general supervision of the Air Officer Commanding, No. 29 (Training) Group, and Volunteer Reservists must from time to time satisfy the examining officer on the staff of the Air Officer Commanding as to their progress in both ground and air instruction. The training is based on Town Centres, with each of which is associated an Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School operated by a firm under contract with the Air Ministry.

15. At the Town Centre, which is also available as a social centre, ground instruction will be given, and for this purpose Volunteer Reservists will be required to attend regularly on two evenings each week.

16. Instruction in the air will be given at the Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School, and on completion of the initial course of ground instruction at the Town Centre, Volunteer Reservists will be required to attend for each air instruction during every other week and (Saturday and Sunday), and on summer evenings when this can conveniently be arranged.

17. In addition to these attendances at week-ends and in the evenings, all Volunteer Reservists are required to attend for 15 days' continuous training annually; Volunteer Reservists who are able to spare the time may apply for permission to extend this period. The training, which as far as possible is arranged at times convenient to Volunteer Reservists, may take place at the associated flying training school or such other place as may be determined.

18. Volunteer Reservists under training as wireless operator/air gunners will be given elementary instruction in their duties during the first 9 months or so of their service, on satisfactory completion of which

they will be re-mastered as wireless operator/air gunners. Subsequently, advanced training in their duties will be given, and after not less than 3 years' efficient service as wireless operator/air gunners a limited number will be exceptionally considered for further training either as pilots or as observers.

19. *Distances*.—Volunteer Reservists attending at Town Centres and Elementary and Reserve Flying Training Schools for training are required to conform in all respects to the regulations laid down for the performance of training at such centres.

Financial Provisions

20. *Retaining fee*.—In respect of the year during which a Volunteer Reservist qualifies as wireless operator/air gunner (see para. 18) and for each subsequent year, he becomes eligible for a retaining fee of £20, payable at the end of each year of service, subject to the following conditions:—

(i) That he has attended for 15 days' continuous training in that year.

(ii) That such ground training as may be prescribed has been satisfactorily completed.

(iii) That he has completed not less than 15 hours' instruction in the air in that year.

21. *Pay and allowances*.—(i) Subject to the conditions laid down in the regulations, Volunteer Reservists when called up for service or when carrying out authorized continuous training (see para. 17) receive pay at the following rates:—

Aircraftman, second class	3s. 6d. a day
Leading aircraftman	4s. 0d. a day
Wireless operator/air gunner	6s. 6d. a day

(ii) Volunteer Reservists undergoing continuous training at an Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School receive in addition a daily consolidated allowance of 6s. This allowance is intended to cover the cost of obtaining accommodation and messing near the Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School during the period of training.

(iii) Family allowance at the rates and under the conditions laid down for airmen of the regular Air Force is paid to married Volunteer Reservists who have reached the age of 28 years, when in receipt of pay and allowances for training.

22. *Travelling and other expenses*.—Provision is made for the refund of reasonable travelling expenses incurred in connection with training generally on the basis of one return journey for each period of training. Allowances are also paid towards other out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with attendance for week-end, etc., training at Elementary and Reserve Flying Training Schools and Town Centres when payment under para. 20 is not admissible.

23. *Uniform*.—Volunteer Reservists are provided with a free issue of uniform, but are not required to wear it whilst attending for training at Elementary and Reserve Flying Training Schools or Town Centres; flying kit is kept at these schools and issued on loan as necessary. Volunteer Reservists will, however, be required to wear uniforms on any occasion on which the training takes place at R.A.F. units.

24. *Pensions and gratuities for disability*.—Volunteer Reservists who, in time of peace, are invalided from the Volunteer Reserve in consequence of injury or disease directly attributable to the conditions of service may be awarded pensions and gratuities as follows:—

(i) For disabilities resulting from flying accidents:—

A pension ranging from 10s. a week for a disability assessed at 20 per cent. to £28s. 6d. a week for a disability assessed at 100 per cent., with proportionate rates for each intervening 10 per cent. of disablement. For disability of less than 20 per cent., gratuity may be paid at a rate fixed by the Air Ministry.

(ii) For disabilities resulting other than from flying accidents:—

A pension ranging from 6s. 6d. a week for a disability assessed at 20 per cent. to £12s. 6d. a week for a disability assessed at 100 per cent., with proportionate rates for each intervening 10 per cent. of disablement. For disability of less than 20 per cent., a gratuity may be paid at a rate fixed by the Air Ministry.

25. *Insurance*.—(i) Volunteer Reservists are strongly advised to consider whether their individual circumstances or those of any person dependent on them render it desirable that they should effect private insurance to supplement such compensation as may be payable from official sources, or to cover contingencies in which no official compensation is payable at all.

(ii) Liability is accepted, subject to the conditions laid down in regulations, in cases of disability attributable to the conditions of service. Awards may also be made to widows and children or parents in cases of death similarly attributable. No liability would, however, be accepted in the event of a Volunteer Reservist being killed or injured for instance while participating in a private capacity, in a civilian air display.

(iii) Information regarding the facilities offered by different companies for insurance against flying risk may be obtained from the Air Ministry.

General Notes

26. *Application*.—Applications for entry into the Volunteer Reserve as wireless operator/air gunners should be submitted on Form 218 in accordance with the directions in the note accompanying this pamphlet.

27. *Entry into the regular Air Force*.—Volunteer Reservists are not debarred from consideration for entry into the Regular Air Force provided that they satisfy the appropriate regulations for entry. The purpose of the Volunteer Reserve is however to provide a reserve of personnel for employment in times of national crisis, and candidates should be aware that the Volunteer Reserve is not a normal channel for entry into the regular Air Force, nor will service in the Volunteer Reserve necessarily enhance a candidate's prospects of selection for service with the regular Air Force.

AIR MINISTRY,

January, 1939

APPENDIX

THE MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE R.A.F. VOLUNTEER RESERVE (WIRELESS OPERATOR/AIR GUNNER SECTION)

1. A candidate for the wireless operator/aerographer section of the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve must be in good mental and bodily health, and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with his instruction and the efficient performance of his duties at home or abroad.

2. The examination will be conducted on the following lines:—

- General examination.
- Review medical and surgical examination.
- Examination of the eyes.
- Examination of ears, nose and throat.
- Special medical examination in regard to air duties.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

3. (a) The candidate must be possessed particularly of sound lungs, heart and nervous system. Evidence of chronic bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, pleuritis or tuberculosis lesions absolutely disqualify. The condition resulting from operation for syphilis is not a bar to acceptance, if the lungs are healthy and the renal capacity is satisfactory. Owing to the importance of these organs, they will, in addition to the usual clinical examination, be tested by special tests employed by the board.

(b) In regard to the circulatory system, valvular or myocardial disease will disqualify a candidate.

4. The urinary system must be healthy, and the urine must be free from abnormal constituents.

SURGICAL EXAMINATION

5. A candidate found to be suffering from a complaint which would entail rejection but which is curable by operation, will be marked unfit, but the board may recommend re-examination after operation. The following conditions require special mention:

(a) *Head injury or operation*.—A history of severe head injury is a bar to acceptance. The degree of severity may be judged by evidence of a focal lesion (e.g., altered reflexes, various posures or aphasia), occurrence of a convulsive attack, or the persistence of sequelae such as headache or dizziness which incapacitated from work and exercise for a considerable period. Evidence of the skull need not be a bar to acceptance unless there is a history of associated intra-cranial damage, or of depressed fracture or loss of bone. Late severe head injuries need not necessarily entail rejection provided that sequelae did not persist acutely and have been completely absent for the past three months.

(b) *Neck*.—Scars, the result of the removal of glands, will not necessarily be considered a cause for rejection, but the time that has elapsed since operation, the position of recurrence, and signs of tuberculous disease are all points needing consideration.

* Full particulars of these tests are contained in "The Medical Examination for Pilots by Flight" (Air Publication 199, which is on sale at His Majesty's Stationery Office or through any bookseller, price 2s. net.

(c) *Abdominal operations*.—The fact of an abdominal operation having been performed will not, in itself, disqualify a candidate, provided that no hernial protrusion or marked weakness of the abdominal wall has resulted. Operations on the stomach and those involving either short-circuiting of the alimentary tract or partial or total excision of any important organ will disqualify.

(d) A history of tuberculous disease of joints or bones, recent or ancient, will disqualify the candidate.

(e) A dislocated shoulder or other joint may prove a permanent disability, even after operation. It, however, there has been freedom from pain or disability in an injured joint for over two years, in spite of thorough testing by stress or physical exertion, the candidate may be accepted, provided that the joint is moved at the time of examination. Flail chest of a chronic or recurrent type will be regarded as a cause for rejection.

(f) Surgical abscesses which are the result of developmental defects or disease will be noted. Attention is directed particularly to varicose veins, haemorrhoids, undescended testis, hernia and goitre. Heroin, undescended testis if in the canal or at the external abdominal ring, gutta, severe varicose veins and severe haemorrhoids are causes for rejection.

EYE EXAMINATION

6. (i) The examination for determining the visual acuity will be conducted with well-illuminated standard test types at a distance of twenty feet. The candidate must be able to read the test types without hesitation. A candidate must have a visual acuity of at least 4/6 in one eye and 6/6 in the sighting eye, without the aid of correcting lenses or surgery on the eye.

(ii) There must be no disease of the eyelids, conjunctive, cornea or iris, or vision which is likely to result, in progress, or become aggravated by service, or in any way to interfere with the satisfactory performance of duty at home or abroad. Fields of vision, as tested by hand movements, must be normal.

(iii) Colour vision must be either (a) normal or (b) colour defectiveness.

(c) *Colour normal*.—The candidate reads all the tishchen plates correctly, and is perfect on the Edridge-Goss Lantern.

(d) *Colour defective*.—The candidate reads correctly certain Ishikawa plates. In the sixth edition, published in June, 1952, these plates are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 12 and 13, and in the seventh edition, 1, 10, 14, 15, 22, 23 and 24. In other colour vision plates which correspond in colour contrast with the above must be used. On the Edridge-Goss Lantern he must be normal for all ordinary red and green tints, although he may interpret pale green as white, or orange as yellow.

EXAMINATION OF EARS, NOSE AND THROAT

7. In the examination of the ears, nose and throat, it must constantly be borne in mind that symptoms apparently trifling in importance on the ground tend to become considerably aggravated in the air.

8. *Ears*.—(a) *Hearing*.—The hearing in either ear must be acute, equivalent to hearing a broad whisper at 20 feet, the other ear being blocked. The candidate should stand sideways, the ear under examination being the one nearest the examiner. When it is considered that treatment may bring defective hearing up to standard, the candidate may be temporarily deferred and re-examined at a later date.

(b) *External ear, Middle ear and Eustachian*.—(i) Middle ear disease and obstructions, while not necessarily disqualifying a candidate, must be satisfactorily cured or removed before acceptance.

(b) *A permanent perforation* in a membrane with or without discharge constitutes a disqualification for air work.

(c) *Cicatrices of the drum* may be passed, provided that the scar is sufficiently strong to withstand the sudden alterations of pressure encountered in air work, that the hearing is up to standard and that there is no obvious cause in the nose, pharynx, or naso-pharynx for re-infection of the middle ear, or the production of Eustachian obstruction.

(iii) *Middle ear and Eustachian tubes.*—(a) *Catarrhal or suppurative otitis media.*—If the condition is acute or sub-acute, the candidate may be referred for treatment and subsequently re-examined. Chronic suppurative otitis media is a cause for rejection, as is also the radical mastoid operation, successful or otherwise. A healed operation for acute mastoid suppuration is not a cause for rejection provided that the hearing is up to standard and the tympanic membrane is sound.

(b) *Oto-sclerosis* constitutes a cause for rejection.

(c) *Both Eustachian tubes* must be patent. Permanent obstruction entails rejection, but cases of temporary obstruction may be passed, or, if considered necessary, deferred for re-examination.

(iv) *Internal ear.*—(a) *Cochlear apparatus.*—Nerve deafness (see sub-para. i) or any other affection of the cochlea or cochlear nerve tract must not be present.

(b) *Vestibular apparatus.*—This should be normal.*

Nose.—(i) *Deviated septum.*—If this causes marked nasal obstruction or is associated with frequent colds or headaches, it should be remedied before a candidate is accepted. Slighter degrees may be ignored.

(ii) *Turbinal hypertrophy*, associated with definite symptoms or signs, should be remedied by adequate treatment before a candidate is accepted.

(iii) *Infection of the accessory sinuses.*—Acute infection must be cured before a candidate is accepted. Chronic suppuration is a cause for rejection until cured by treatment.

(iv) *Nasal polypi* must be removed and the cause cured before a candidate is accepted.

(v) *Atrophic rhinitis* is a cause for disqualification.

10. Mouth.—Teeth.—Opposing molars must be present on at least one side. Carious teeth should be treated. Pyorrhea must not be present. Dentures do not disqualify, but care must be taken that the plates are well fitting and of a permanent nature.

11. Tonsils.—(i) Enlarged tonsils which produce obstruction, or become repeatedly inflamed or associated with attacks of quinsy, should be enucleated before a candidate is accepted.

(ii) Septic tonsils, even small remnants, which are the cause of repeated sore throats or chronic enlargement of the glands of the neck, should be enucleated before acceptance.

12. Naso-pharynx.—Adenoids, however small in amount, if they cause repeated colds, with acute or sub-acute Eustachian obstruction, or catarrhal or suppurative inflammation of the middle ear, should be removed before a candidate is accepted.

HEIGHT STANDARD

13. The minimum height standard is 5 feet 2 inches.

* See footnote on page 6.