

SEMPER ALACER

THE STORY OF A SOUTH WALES WARTIME TRAINING AERODROME,

STORMY DOWN

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See also:

Airfields and Landing Grounds of Wales –South (2007) Ivor Jones The History Press

SEMPER ALACER

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INTRODUCTION

All but forgotten now, the Royal Air Force aerodrome On Stormy Down served a very important role in the training of both air and ground crews during the 1939-45 war. By modern standards the, grass airfield was tiny. The longest landing run was just 1010 yards. Never-the-less, more than 7,000 Air Gunners were trained there on courses, lasting from three to seven weeks, depending upon the weather. At a conservative estimate at least 10 percent of them did not survive the war.

Early in the war 400 Air Observers also trained there. Later some 2,000 Flight Engineers training at St Athan did a short ground gunnery course at Stormy Down. There were also a number of short refresher courses. In total more than-10,000 aircrew passed through the school. That figure-does not include pilots, many of the Fleet Air Arm, who underwent the armament phase of their advanced training before qualifying for their wings.

For 18 months from June 1940 a Ground Armament School was also based on the camp. It trained 1,800 RAF and WAAF armourers as well as several hundred sailors destined to become Telegraphist Air Gunners with the Fleet Air Arm. Towards the end of, the war when it ceased to be a flying station it parented a Free French Air Force depot.

The old aerodrome holds personal memories for me. As a young Air Training Corps cadet belonging to 1470 (Porthcawl) Squadron I had my first flight ever, in a Whitley on gunnery detail, from that grass

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THE BEGINNING

The story of Stormy Down aerodrome began in 1934 with rumours, instantly denied by the Air Ministry, that land on the downs overlooking the seaside town of Porthcawl had been bought for an aerodrome. Two years later it was announced that a bombing school, urgently needed by the expanding RAF, was to be set up using a range on Margam sands, between Sker and Port Talbot, with an airfield on the downs.

Initially there was local opposition at the loss of public access to the sweep of sands. Work started on the aerodrome in March 1938. The main contractor being Garrard and Sons of Manchester. The original estimates allowed £180,000 but by the time it opened some £210,000 had been spent with a further £70,000 needed to complete the hutted camp.

The only permanent brick buildings were residence for the Station Commander and Senior Medical Officer plus Married Quarters for 2 Warrant officers and 14 Airmen who had to be at least 25 years of age.

No 9 Armament Training School, RAF Porthcawl, opened on Newton Down on June 1939 as part of No 20 Armament Training Group. Training Command. Future plans included a ground armament training schools for Boy Entrants to be set up in March of the following years.

A week after opening the station, Wing Commander J C P Wood handed over to Wg Cdr T O Clougstoun who published the first Station Standing Orders. The total strength was then 9 officers including Flt Lts Morris, Ramsey, Fg Offs Jack, Thorniewell, Patters, Bangs, "Do" Jones and 180 airmen.

At the end of July the station became Royal Air Force Newton Down, near Porthcawl, but was more often referred to as RAF Porthcawl. Later, in November 1940, it became the more familiar Stormy Down to avoid confusion with RAF Newton, Nottingham.

As an armament practice camp it was used by advanced pupil pilots from the Flying Training Schools who together with aeroplanes and instructors were attached for three weeks air firing and bombing practice. Their syllabus included air to ground and air to air firing, bombing with 10 lb. smoke bombs from high level in which grouping and accuracy were tested. There were also low level attacks. The air to ground firing was carried out along Sker beach on the Port Talbot side of the Kenfig river. The range included four 10 feet screen targets numbered from North to South (i.e. Margam to Sker) with Roman numerals set out on the edge of the sand dunes. When the tide was out 8 fabric targets were laid out on the beach instead. A further four portable aiming targets, lettered A to D, were set on the beach for grouping practice.

Tow lines over the open sea were used for air to air firing. The targets were conical canvas sleeve targets towed by target tug planes, initially 6 Hawker Henleys. Off-shore, the outer limit of the danger area was marked by 5 buoys. Two tow lines flown at 1500 feet altitude were used for night

firing while others at 1000 to 1500 feet were for day firing. The area also contained a re-enforced pyramid shaped raft used as a bombing target.

On the Southerndown side of Porthcawl was another tow line at 100 yards from the shore running from Tusker Rock to Nash Point, for use by day at 1000 to 1500 feet. Parallel to this but 1½ miles further out to sea ran lines to be flown at 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Further out still was a target area measuring 3 miles by 5 miles. Also out at sea were three more practice targets and Tusker Rock itself was also used.

Air Attachments

The first of the pilot training courses to arrive was the Advanced Training Squadron of No 5 Flying Training School, RAF Sealand. It and subsequent armament courses are shown as Attachments in the Appendix. While at Porthcawl they were visited by the Air Officer Commanding No 23 (Training) Group, Air Vice Marshal L A Pattinson CB DSO MC DFC, setting a precedent which was followed for most of these attachments. The AOC in C, Training Command, Air Marshal Sir Charles S Burnett, KCB, CBE, DSO, visited the newly opened camp. It was something of a farewell visit as a week later he handed over to Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Murray Longmore KGB DSO who visited it in mid August.

A salvage party of 60 officers and men turned out on July 6 when a 217 Squadron Anson from Tangmere made a forced landing below the high water mark on Sker Beach. They were helped to drag it clear by Mr. Evan Evan of nearby Sker Farm, with a team of plough horses and farm hands. The pilot was the squadron commander, Wing Commander A P Revington. Subsequent salvage work was carried out by a party from 4 School of Technical Training, RAF St Athan. This was done despite a claim of ownership by right of flotsam made by Captain A M Talbot Fletcher, owner of the adjoining Margam estate

Organisation

The station consisted of Station Headquarters, Station Flight, Workshops, the Armament section and the Marine Craft section based at Porthcawl Harbour. The latter consisted of two armoured target boats A569 and A571 which arrived that September and remained until April 1941. There were also three 37½ feet Seaplane Tenders, 274, 282, and 283 for use as safety and crash boats. Personnel were housed in an old Victorian warehouse the ground floor of which was used as a workshop reached from the sea by a slipway alongside the breakwater.

Peacetime routine on the camp started with Reveille at 0630 hours followed an hour later by breakfast. There was half an hour of hut cleaning from 0750 hours. The first working parade with colour hoisting was at 0830 after which personnel marched to their work places by 0900 hours. There was a quarter of an hour tea break at mid morning and work stopped for the dinner hour at 1230 hours. Work finished for the day at 1630 hours (430 pm) and tea started 5 minutes later. The Navy

Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI) shut at 2130 hours when Tattoo Roll Call took place. All Corporals and Airmen not on leave, pass or duty had to be in their quarters and standing by their beds to answer their names.

Staff parade for those on station duties and defaulters was at 2200 hours and Lights Out sounded 15 minutes later. Wednesday afternoons were devoted to sports. Normally work ceased at noon on Saturday when dinner was at 5 past 12 and tea at 4pm. Sunday routine involved no technical work other than station duties. Reveille was at 0700hrs, breakfast at 0800hrs with hut cleaning at half past. Station parade was at 0900hrs followed by Church services. The canteen which opened at 1030hrs closed at 1140hrs in time for dinner at 1200hrs. Tea was at 1600hrs and Fire Piquet parade at 1700hrs, The evening routine was as for weekdays.

Station Duties included the Duty Officer, Orderly Officer, Range Safety and Despatching Officers. There were also a Senior NCO Duty Pilot, Orderly Sergeant, Duty Armourer, Duty Clerk and Duty Equipment Assistant as well as the Fire Fighting NCO and Fire Party. Most of these were changed daily except at weekends when the duty lasted from Friday until Monday. Personnel for the Duty Flight, servicing visiting aircraft, were detailed for the week.

Then there were the Defaulters serving punishments for minor offences. These hapless airmen did their normal work during working hours but were confined to camp for extra duties. Their day started when they reported to the guardroom 20 minutes after Reveille for 15 minutes of fatigues. They had to report to the Guardroom again at 1800hrs for two hours of punishment drill. They were then allowed to use the NAAFI between 2000 and 2100hrs, At 2200hrs they turned out on Staff Parade in full marching order which was best uniform and webbing equipment which included a full water bottle. On Wednesdays defaulters spent the afternoon on fatigues, On Sundays they reported to the Guardroom as usual after Reveille then at 1200 hrs after church parade and every hour on the hour until 2200hrs. Each appearance was in a different change of uniform.

Permanent passes were issued for a period of a month at a time. They were valid, for those not on duty or undergoing punishment, from after duty until 0100 hours for Corporals and below. These men had to book in and out at the guardroom in uniform unless given permission for civilian clothing. They had to pass inspection before being allowed out.

Senior Non Commissioned Officers, like the Commissioned Officers, could wear plain clothes off duty, did not book out and were able to go on pass from after duty until next required.

Accident

It was on Tuesday August 15 that the first flying accident was recorded, There was no wind when Sgt W A Doherty, returning from drogue towing in Henley L3334, overshot on landing. The brakes failed to hold on the wet grass and the machine ended up in the hedge,

On the last day in the month Pilot Officer Patterson returning from a visit to 5 ATS, RAF Sealand, in Henley L3361 became lost in a fog and ran into a ditch after making a forced landing near

Llandoverly.

War

On September 1, the day that Germany invaded Poland, 9 ATS became 7 Air Observer School with a new establishment. Next day the first Reserve Officer to report for duty, Pilot Officer C G B McClure, arrived. Some RAF Volunteer Reserve Sergeant Pilots arrived too. Among them was Cresswell "Joe" Viney who had joined in 1937 at Bristol. He was given a flight in the back of a Wallace, which he described as "a Wapiti with brakes". Standing up and clutching the scarf gun mounting he peered over the pilot's shoulder to see what he was doing before going solo to qualify on that type!

AC2 Harry Dickson had been posted to Newton Down from Padgate and was waiting training as Flight Mechanic (Engines). He recalls the huge biplanes, Wallaces, one of which was blown over onto its side with its wings all crumpled up. Another airman with memories of Wallaces was Benjamin Dodd. Newton Down was his first posting after passing out at Cosford as an AC2 FM(E). Responsible for one of the biplanes, he recalled zip fasteners on the access panels in the fuselage and a shortage of tools.

The day war was declared between Great Britain and Germany, Sunday September 3rd, 10 Wallace and 6 Henley aeroplanes arrived from No 1 Air Observer School, North Coates Fitties with 9 officers and 39 other ranks. North Coates on the East coast was one of a number of 25 Group Stations that were evacuated and left under care and maintenance parties immediately war was declared. The aircraft were dispersed to Aldergrove, Evanton, Penrhos, Porthcawl and West Freugh.

Evacuations were from Sutton Bridge to West Freugh; Acklington to Warmwell; Catfoss to Aldergrove; North Coates to Penrhos; ATS Leachers to Evanton. The Boys Squadron and Armourers Conversion Course at No 2 Air Armament School, Eastchurch, moved to Cosford. The Trainee Armourers, Naval Mechanic Observers, Armourer Car Crew and Explosives trainees left for Pembrey retaining the title No 2 AAS.

On the Tuesday September 5th four Fairey Battles were received from No 8 Maintenance Unit, RAF Little Rissington. The same day Plt Off M Ravenhill and Sgt Bruton returning from a dual flight came in to land in Henley L3340. Their approach was too high. They overshot and ran into the hedge writing the machine off.

Two weeks later 7 AOS collected the first Handley Page Harrow, probably K7014; from 6 MU, Brize Norton. Instructions were received and carried out that the undersides of all training aircraft were to be painted yellow and the upper surfaces to be camouflaged. Later, in 1940 a yellow band the same width as the blue was added to encircle the fuselage roundels and three equal width red, white and blue stripes were painted onto the tail fins with the blue nearest the rudder.,

The First Airgunners

Peacetime air gunner duties had been carried out on a part time basis by volunteer tradesmen awarded

6 pence a day flying pay in addition to their trade pay. Although this state of affairs was to continue for some time, it had been decided in January 1939 that Air Gunners were to become regular aircrew and formal gunner training be given to selected Wireless Operators.

When qualified they wore a brass winged bullet badge on the upper right arm immediately below the eagle badge until in December of 1939 they were awarded the half wing brevet. However they remained Aircraftmen until May 1940 when on qualification, they were promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

On Monday September 11 sixty Airmen Wireless Operators arrived from No 2 Electrical and Wireless School, RAF Yatesbury to form No 1 Air Gunner course. Training lasted 4 weeks and only two failed to pass out with the entry on Saturday October 7.

Instruction included the theory of sighting. Practice was done in the spotlight trainer, aiming a beam of light at model aircraft, or with a camera gun at models carried about on poles by classmates. While awaiting flights there was also clay pigeon shooting with a shot-gun from a turret on the ground. Trainees were to shoot off two camera gun rolls of film on the ground at passing aircraft or at targets in the air.

Weapons included the Vickers Gas Operated Gun, the Lewis Gun and the Browning Machine Gun. These were fired on 25 and 200 yard ground ranges. The 20mm Cannon was also included on the syllabus with a 200 yard firing range exercise which was rarely carried out.

There was also turret instruction and firing in flight. The minimum number of rounds fired per pupil were laid down as 200 air to ground and 800 air to air. Exercises included Free Beam, Free Quarter, Free Quarter Cross Over, Relative Speed (Nose and Dorsal or Ventral turret) and Free Under Tail Attacks. These indicated the direction from which the drogue and target tug approached the gunners' machine. Wireless Operator Air Gunners were also taught Morse Code at 18 words per minute on wireless and 8 wpm on Aldis signal lamp.

By the end of September the complete list of units within 25 Group read: No 1 Air Armament School (Manby); No 2 AAS (Pembrey); No 3 Air Observer School (Aldergrove); No 4 AOS (West Freugh); No 5 AOS (Jurby, Isle of Man); No 7 AOS (Porthcawl) ; No 8 AOS (Evanton); No 9 AOS (Penrhos) which had been joined by No 1 AOS on September 4th; and No 10 AOS at Warmwell.

Early October saw another change of command. Group Captain the Hon. Laurence John Evelyn Twistleton-Wykenham-Fiennes became the new Station Commander. During this change over there was a visit by Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore the AOC in C Training Command. Ben Dodd recalls the Group Captain well. He gave Ben a dressing down for running up the engine on his Wallace too near the hangars.

The second air gunner course of 30 Wireless Operators drawn from No's 10 and 78 Squadron assembled on Monday October 9. The re-organisation of 25 Group, with headquarters at Brize Norton, was now complete. Besides the two Air Armament Schools and six Air Observer Schools there were three Recruits Training Pools (No 1 RTP Catfoss, No 2 RTP North Coates and No 3 at

Sutton Bridge, this moved to Hawkinge on the 29th of October.)

Air Observers

A week after No 2 AG course started the first Air Observer Course assembled. It was made up of 30 direct entrant volunteers from the Civilian Observer's School (No 8 Civil Air Navigation School), Sywell. At the end of the eight weeks 27 passed out, 2 were given further training with No 2 Course and one was withdrawn. Instruction included the Course Setting Bomb Sight. Practice was done in the Air Ministry Laboratory (AML) Bombing Teacher on the ground using a painted landscape on a moving roller. There were also wind speed and direction finding exercises and the Smoke Curtain Installation (a euphemism for spraying war gases).

Practical work included bombing from four directions over the camera obscura or track recorder, application dropping on stationary targets, bombing moving targets (the armoured boats) and low level bombing. Observers also did the gunnery course and in theory had 12 hours gunnery flying compared with the gunners 18 hours.

The Saturday following the Observers' arrival a detachment from 2 FTS appeared with 9 Oxfords and 10 Harvards. Thirty seven of the aircrew officer trainees were billeted in the Sea Bank Hotel, Porthcawl, because the peacetime Mess was not big enough to accommodate all-the officers now on the station. Before the end of the month Air Vice Marshal H V Champion de Crespigny MC DFC, Air Officer Commanding 25 Group inspected 7A0S.

As yet there was no airfield control. The duty pilot merely logged aircraft in and out. Individual pilots taxied out, turned into wind and took off in what was virtually a free for all. So it was no surprise when on Saturday, October 28, Wallace K3569 being taxied out by Fg Off C P Smith was tipped onto its nose by the slipstream from a passing Harvard of 2 FTS.

At the end of October there were 4 Fairey Battles, 9 Handley Page Harrows, 12 Hawker Henleys, one Miles Magister and 10 Westland Wallaces on charge. On November 3 Hawker Audax K4422 of 2FTS flown by Flt Lt E McAllister was struck off charge after a heavy landing on return from a low level bombing exercise.

Two of the 37 foot range safety boats were engaged in a more warlike pursuit when the Senior Naval Officer requested their use, on Saturday November 4, to trawl for German mines in Swansea Bay. This hazardous task was carried out safely and a number of mines were landed on Port Talbot beach!

A week later the Air Officer Commanding in Chief of Bomber Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Edgar Rainey Ludlow-Hewitt KCB CMG DSO MC visited the station. On Sunday November 19 there was an ominous foretaste of the trouble that was to dog the airfield in future years - bad ground. Plt Off D S Pain of 3 FTS was flying Oxford L4632 on ferry duties when the detachment was returning to South Cerney. Landing he taxied towards the hangars. The surface covering a drain subsided, one wheel went down and the starboard undercarriage leg unlocked and collapsed.

Bombing and Gunnery School

On November 20th the Air Observer Schools were reorganised as Bombing and Gunnery Schools. Newton Down became 7 BGS. Each BGS was tasked to provide ground and air training for Observers, Air Gunners and Wireless Operator Air Gunners and the Advanced Training Squadrons of Service Flying Training Schools.

Before posting to the BGS, trainee Observers completed a 12 weeks course at Air Observer Navigation School. During their 6 weeks at the BGS they trained in gunnery and bombing, flying a minimum of 20 hours. Air gunner trainees were also supposed to have 20 hours flying time before posting to either a Group Pool squadron or an operational unit.

Initially both types of course at 7 BGS were to have a strength of 30 trainees with a planned increase of 40 for gunners. Courses were to overlap. Each BGS, commanded by a Group Captain, had a Station Headquarters, Equipment and Accounts sections, station workshops, station signals section, station sick quarters, a ground instructional section and a flying squadron.

The Chief Air and Chief Ground Instructors were both Wing Commanders. The CAI was an Armament Branch officer with 3 Squadron Leaders, 3 Flt Lts and sufficient instructors to give a ratio of one per 9 trainees.

The Officer Commanding the Armament Training Squadron was a Squadron Leader. He had a Flt Lt adjutant, 4 Flight Commanders who were also Flt Lts, 21 junior officer pilots and 25 airmen pilots. His four Flights had a total establishment of 36 twin engined and 18 target towing aircraft. All were to be equipped for night flying with landing lamps and General Purpose Wireless Telegraphy sets. With the exception of the target towing aircraft they were to be fitted with two Bomb Carriers LS type EM and 2 Universal Bomb carriers type EM/MF No 1.

At this time 7 BGS was well below establishment with 7 Fairey Battles, 9 Handley Page Harrows, 11 Hawker Henleys, 1 Miles Magister and 9 Westland Wallaces. Each BGS was to have ranges with two A-B and two C-D lines for air firing, three practice bombing targets and one low level bombing target. Aerodrome equipment included a mobile floodlighting set for night landings, 3 Flight Track Recorders for bombing practice over the airfield and 4 AML Bombing Teachers.

There was damage to Oxford L4539 of 2FTS when the fitter running it up on November 27 accidentally selected undercarriage up! Another of the FTS machines suffered damage on December 2 when the undercarriage of Oxford L4570 (pilot Sgt T Blanks) collapsed after a heavy landing.

On Tuesday December 5, the BGS lost Henley L3377. It was in a formation of three when the pilot, Sgt R B Halls, was blinded by smoke and spray and attempted a forced landing near Cowbridge. He overshot and crashed into a hedge writing the aeroplane off.

Anti Magnetic Mine Loops

Early in December two Handley Page Harrow aircraft were detached to the Royal Aircraft

Establishment Farnborough. Probably K6963 and K7020, they were fitted with magnetic loops known as Directional Wireless Installations for exploding magnetic sea mines. Joe Viney and Sgt Blake flew them to Farnborough. It was an exciting trip with poor visibility and an erratic compass. Later in the month a further two Harrows were detached to Farnborough for anti-submarine work.

Now more aircraft were arriving. The first Armstrong Whitworth Whitley (K7212) arrived from 166 Squadron. It was soon followed by a second and third as well as 3 more Battles from 19 MU at nearby St Athan. Thursday December 14 saw the arrival of Commandant Chassin of the French Air Force on a liaison visit to inspect air gunner training. Little did anyone dream that one day the station would become a French Air Force depot!

There were several interruptions to the training programme during the month. Twice the range was closed to allow the Royal Navy to sweep the area for mines and fog stopped flying on two more days. From December 12 until the end of the leave period a Wallace stood by daily for local anti-submarine duties.

Christmas brought 7 days leave for the AG and AO trainees. Permanent staff who remained behind enjoyed a traditional Air Force Christmas Dinner served by the Officers and Senior NCOs. First there was tomato soup, then salmon with parsley sauce, roast turkey with stuffing and sausages or roast pork with apple sauce, potato cutlets, sprouts, peas and asparagus tips. Christmas pudding with brandy sauce was followed by hot mince pies, stilton cheese and biscuits and fresh fruit. Besides free cigarettes there were beer and minerals to wash the feast down. The illustrated menu showed some of the unit's activities, a Battle dropping a bomb onto a floating target, a Henley complete with target banner hotly pursued by a Wallace, the Range watch tower at Margam and a high speed launch cresting the waves.

The holiday weather was fine with a haze developing in the afternoon of Christmas Day. Unfortunately the first day of the resumed training programme was wet with intermittent rain making it unfit for flying. At the close of the year the aircraft strength was 10 Battles, 9 Harrows, 12 Henleys, 1 Magister, 4 Whitleys and 9 Wallaces.

With the new year the planned training capacity was increased to 100 Air Gunners and 30 observers plus the various FTS attachments. The first four days of January like 17 others during the month, were unfit for flying; the last week was very cold with severe frosts that ran into February.

Life on the aerodrome became miserable when the central heating and lighting failed and were not restored until the welcome thaw set in. During this bad weather the aircraft were parked out in the open air. The Henleys were unaffected but in the thaw electrical circuits to the bomb racks on the Battles became moist and shorted out. The Whitleys fared badly. Ice formed inside the ailerons, plywood became wet and bulged and the Tiger engines were difficult to start in the cold.

Not all went well when it was possible to fly. On Saturday 13 January Fg Off H N Edge was flying Henley L3364 when the starboard leg released itself in flight. It would not lock down and the undercarriage collapsed on landing.

Five days later Plt off A B Lawton in Battle L5021 could not get the undercarriage to come down on his final approach. He did not have time to operate the emergency gear before touching down in a wheels up landing. The same day, on a Wind Speed and Direction exercise in Battle L5065 Flt Lt R de K Winlaw flew into a snow storm. He made a forced landing with the wheels up into a small field near Cowbridge. The aeroplane slithered into some trees and was wrecked. Perhaps it was inevitable the AOC 25 Group, AVN Champion de Crespigny chose that day to visit the unit! A visitor earlier in the month was Charles Gardener of the BBC who was gathering material for a talk on aircrew training.

On Sunday 21, new hutted accommodation was taken over for use by the Air Gunner and Air Observer trainees. They moved in four days later. At the end of January the aircraft strength was 11 Battles, 5 Harrows, 10 Henleys, 1 Magister, 9 Wallaces and 12 Whitleys.

First Fatalities

February was just 3 days old when Plt Off G L Ritcher found, to his cost, that the ground was still frozen. He was taxiing Battle K7639 at speed when he skidded and the tail unit collapsed. The station's first fatalities happened on Sunday 11th, an overcast day with cloud at 1,000 feet. Flt Lt J Thornewell was on anti submarine patrol in Henley L3339 with Fg Off J Lemon as crew. As they approached the shore off Rest Bay, Porthcawl, one wing struck the water and the machine hit rocks and exploded. Both were killed.

Later that day Fg Off G Smith was flying Wallace K4340 over the range at Margam sands with trainee air gunner LAC Stratford on an air experience flight. The Wallace stalled at a low altitude and dived into the ground and burned out, killing both.

There were more frosts with snow 6 inches deep. The thaw did little to help the programme.

Rain and low clouds restricted flying. It seemed ironic that Summer Time started in the early hours of Sunday February 25. On the Saturday lodger unit 14 OTU wrote off one of its Hampdens, L4198 (pilot PLt Off R Redbourne) after the undercarriage collapsed.

Stoppages

By the end of February a total of 51 Air Observers and 154 Air Gunners had qualified. Sixteen officers of No 5 AG course who had spent a planned two weeks more training than had the airmen, passed out at the beginning of March. The lowest mark was 75% and the average flying time per pupil 10 hours. They each had fired 1015 rounds on the ground, 980 air to ground and 715 air to air,. Visiting Army personnel given flights on Wednesday March 6 experienced more than had been planned for them when they made wheels up landing in Battle L5025. As Flt Off Swann made his approach the undercarriage failed to come down and the warning horn did not sound. Luckily there were no casualties but the machine was badly damaged.

Illustrated magazine photographers arrived to cover a story on training. More distinguished visitors were Air Cdre Cuffe, Wg Cdrs Howsden and J L E A de Niverville, RCAF and Wg Cdr Brodie from Air Ministry.

Heavy mists, rain and drizzle, haze and snow were now affecting the training programme. When No 6 AG course passed out on March 23 they had managed an average flying time of just 7 hours 15 minutes. The gusty winds claimed a victim when Audax K3711 (pilot Sgt Burdett) of 9FTS making a slow approach stalled and tipped onto its nose on March 25.

At the end of the month the station commander, Gp Cpt Fiennes went to Manby on an Armament Course leaving Wg Cdr Busk , Chief Instructor as acting "Station Master".

That Spring one trainee on course at Stormy was C R Spencer who felt totally inadequate as, he sewed up his AG brevet after only 8 days training on the VGO and Browning. These kept developing stoppages after a 3 second burst because they were overworked and there was not enough time to clean them properly. However he recalled they had an excellent Sgt Armourer Instructor who managed to get them up to standard.

Foot drill

By the beginning of April there were 55 Officers, 651 Corporals and Airmen plus 3 Boy Entrants on the Ration Strength. In addition there were the Senior NCOs and those personnel "living out of camp". Although the country was at war a peacetime routine was still being followed. A four week programme of foot drill was started to smarten the unit personnel up. At 0815 each morning all Officers and NCOs paraded on the tarmac outside the main hangar for instruction by Warrant Officer Wray, the Station Warrant Officer. On Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, at the same hour, the airmen of A and C Flights paraded for instruction by disciplinary NCOs. Personnel of B and D Flights drilled on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Entertainment

There was little entertainment on the station. Each hut had a wireless set but not all occupants were willing to pay towards the 4 shillings a week rental. There was no camp cinema so occasionally the large NAAFI was used to screen pictures. One such showing was "A Fire has been arranged" starring Flanagan and Allen , four weeks later singer Richard Tauber featured in "Land without Music".

When ENSA concert parties visited the station they too played in the NAAFI. One company was "The Roger" who performed in April. Admission charges were Officers 1/- (5p), NCOs 6d (2½p), and Airmen 3d. A station amateur dramatic society also formed to entertain the personnel on camp.

Occasionally dances were held in the spacious Airmen's Dining Room. Admission was 1/- per head, or 1/6 for a double ticket. Free transport for the ladies was provided from Porthcawl, Port Talbot and Bridgend. It may have been sheer coincidence but the Daily Routine Orders announcing one dance also pointed out that the sheds on the east side of the station, farm buildings, were out of bounds! Another morale boost was the discovery of a mislaid Mail bag and a total of 53 airmen were requested to collect overdue post from the Station orderly room.

Issues

Identity discs were issued, two per man, to be worn around the neck on a cord. Fireproof fibre they bore the number, name and religion of the wearer and were to identify casualties. Regular airmen on the station replaced their old webbing equipment with the newer 1937 pattern issue and exchanged their peaked caps for side caps. Always there were regular work parties. Flight Commanders detailed an airman from each flight for coke and coal fatigues on Wednesdays and Thursdays. These involved taking solid fuel to each building where there was no central heating. The stoves were cleaned out by the room orderlies and the ash placed in bins on the side of the camp roads for emptying by fatigue parties.

Stop Watches

Although it improved, earlier bad weather had its effect on No 4 Air Observer Course which did not pass out until Wednesday April 10. All 21 personnel had been on an Instructors course at Manby and were posted to the Middle East via the RAF Depot, Uxbridge.

Practical work included turret manipulation and the spot light trainer but only theory was taught on the aircraft cannon and the Smoke Screen installation as no equipment was available. Wing Commander Busk commented that this, coupled with inability to use the 200 yard range plus bad weather had affected their training. The course obtained good results in High Level Application Bombing. Low Level Bombing was introduced to this course which also passed out at 8 words per minute sending and receiving Morse code. However they were unable to carry out Wind Speed and Direction training by timing on the Bead and Wind Gauge Bar method, an essential navigation procedure, as there were no stop watches available!

There was a mishap on Tuesday, April 9, Flg Off Graham was taxiing downhill in Harrow K6972. The brake pressure was low and he was unable to stop and ran through the hedge. Gp Cpt Fiennes returned from his course at Manby just in time to attend a meeting at Group HQ at Market Drayton to discuss the "Warmwell" system of organising a Bombing and Gunnery School, which was later adopted at Stormy Down and the other units.

The Warmwell Scheme

In December 1939 HQ 25 Gp advised No's 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 BGS's that the establishment of Armament Officers was complete, but there were serious overlaps of responsibilities. Detailed employment of these officers, at the discretion of individual station commanders, was to be discussed at a meeting with the AOC on 15 April 1940. Typical BGS organisation at that time was two pronged under the Station Commander. One prong was the Flying Squadron under the OC Flying who detailed aircraft, and the other was Training Wing under the Chief Instructor (a Wg Cdr Armament). Each had a Flt Lt as his adjutant.

Training Wing had five separate sections: the Station Armoury with a W. O. i/c; the Plotting Office, and the Range and Marine Section with a Flt Lt in charge of each; a Miscellaneous Flight under a Flt Lt. The Air Observer and Air Gunner courses were each controlled by a Sqdn Ldr.

Under the Warmell Scheme the station was divided into five squadrons: Headquarters; Bombing; Gunnery; Range and Maintenance. Instead of responsibility only for training on the ground, officers in charge of the Air Gunner or Air Observer courses were to have operational control of the aircraft provided for their specialist training.

The Bombing and Gunnery squadrons were each to be commanded by a Sqdn Ldr (Armament) in charge of air and ground training. Supervision of aircraft operations would be by a Flt Lt (Flying) responsible to the squadron commander for carrying out the flying programme. To make control easier each squadron was to have its hangars alongside its own lecture rooms and ground instruction equipment. When flying on air bombing or firing exercises pilots were expected to supervise and report on the efficiency of the trainees and were to be given special training for this. The scheme was designed to maintain closer liaison between air and ground training and was designed to eliminate the tendency for staff pilots to regard themselves as mere ferry pilots.

The Range Department would be in the charge of another Flt Lt (Armament). His responsibility was for the safety and maintenance of the Air Firing and Bombing ranges as well as the plotting and analysing of results.

The Maintenance squadron was to be commanded by a Sqdn Ldr (Engineering) responsible for servicing the aircraft allocated to the Bombing or Gunnery training squadrons. Unserviceable aircraft, except for those on daily inspection, were to be allocated to Maintenance squadron on the garage principle (i.e. needing repair or scheduled inspection and servicing). When this had been done they were to be returned to their original training squadron. In addition there would be workshops and

a maintenance armoury for servicing armament training equipment.

Under the scheme supervision of flying, maintenance and repair work of aircraft was distributed among several officers. Warmwell's station commander said that at 10 BGS the 60 aircraft had already been divided between the two Flying and one Maintenance squadrons. He argued that while it might appear more satisfactory for control of the flying programme to rest with the Wg Cdr or Sqdn Ldr in charge of the Flying squadron, it was better for this to be equally distributed among flying and armament staff, thus eliminating demarcation between ground and air training making the scheme as flexible as possible. The Warwell system was introduced at 7 BGS on 9 November 1940 with Sqdn Ldr Croce as OC Bombing Squadron, Sqdn Ldr Coventry as OC Gunnery Squadron and Sqdn Ldr Farnham as OC Towing Squadron,

In mid April ACMD Sir Ludlow-Hewitt former AOC Bomber Command paid a second visit, this time as Inspector General of the RAF.

No 8 Air Gunners Course

On April 20th the 31 airmen of number 8 AG course passed out with an average flying time of 7 hours 34 minutes. Since March 18, each, on average had fired 817 rounds on the 25 yard range, 304 air to ground and 758 air to air. This amounted to less than 4 minutes total firing with the VGO.

Geoff Almond was a member of that course. He was luckier than most as he recorded 9 hours in the air, mainly in Whitleys. He recalls being violently sick on air to ground firing detail in Battle L2051 while they went round and round the ground target area below. Eventually the pilot, Sgt Debenham, called out "For God's sake when are you going to fire?" In sheer desperation Geoff pointed the ancient VG0 gun over the side and pulled the trigger. Back at the aerodrome he staggered white faced from the aircraft after 1 hour 10 minutes of misery. To his astonishment the pilot slapped him on the shoulder, "Good show. Best bit of shooting I have seen for a long time." Geoff felt 10 feet tall as he strode back to the locker room. As far as Geoff knows he and Graham Briggs are the only two survivors from No 8 course.

The trainees were somewhat shaken on April 23 to see Hampden L4042 of 16 OTU (pilot Plt Off C Walker) wrecked when it over-ran into the hedge. There was another write off on May 1 when Audax K7319 of 9FTS (pilot Plt Off Pullen) made a heavy landing and tipped onto its nose.

Strength

At the end of April the aircraft strength was 3 Battles, 2 Harrows, 9 Henleys, 2 Magisters, 6 Wallaces and 18 Whitley I on strength. Between them they attained the highest monthly flying hours to date, 720 hours 25 minutes.

More Routine

In May the daily routine was revised with some concessions to the urgency of war. Reveille was still

at 06.30, beds were to be made up and all airmen washed, shaved and dressed by breakfast (now from 0700 to 0745). This was not a leisurely affair, it meant queuing at the servery before wolfing down the meal and preparing for first working parade at 0745. Later in the month Reveille was moved 15 minutes earlier and the meal extended by five minutes.

Each Flight fell in on its own parade grounds at 0745 hrs and was inspected before marching onto the marker waiting on the main road running through the camp. The parade faced the flagstaff and was joined by the officers before coming to attention while the RAF Colour was hoisted at 0800. A short prayer followed (Roman Catholics and Jews temporarily falling out to the rear of the parade for this).

By 0815 the officers had been dismissed and on their way to their various work places. Meanwhile the airmen underwent half an hour of foot drill before marching to work at quarter to nine. Other than those on leave or reporting sick, few were excused this parade. Among that few were the section key orderlies responsible for drawing the section key from the main guard room, opening up, lighting the fires during Winter (officially from October until April) and locking up at the end of the day. Individuals were detailed for this by the officer in charge of each section.

These included A, B, C and D Flight Offices, the Armoury, the Battery Room and the Workshops as well as the Armament, Equipment, Mechanical Transport, Mechanical, Medical, Parachute, Photographic and Towed Target sections. Also excused were the Margam Range party (including the Range Safety Officer) whose transport left at 0515. Uncooked rations were carried as the huts on the sand dunes included cooking facilities.

Room orderlies, responsible for general cleaning each billet after the rest had gone on parade, were excused too, and often made this duty an excuse to stay away from work for the day. By June this "skiving" stopped when they had to fall in with the afternoon working parade.

Between 1000 and 1045 each morning there was a welcome 15 minute NAFFI break with a mobile canteen calling at the various technical sections. Visiting squadrons, air gunner and observer trainees and non technical permanent staff were allowed to visit the Institute itself. Morning work stopped at 1230 ready for dinner which was served 10 minutes later. Afternoon working parade was at 1330 and work continued without a tea break until 1630, the tea meal started at quarter to five.

Guard Mounting was at 1800 hrs, put back in June until 1930. The airmen on guard duty fell in on the parade ground for inspection and were marched to their posts at 2000hrs. Final Staff Parade was still at 2200 with Lights Out 15 minutes later.

Sunday routine began with Reveille at 0715. Breakfast from 0730 until 0845 when first working parade was held. "Office hours" were worked from 0900 until 12.30 during which sports activities took place.

No 10 AG Course

After a short extension No 10 Air Gunners Course passed out on May 9. Among them was LAC C A

(Wally) Punnett who had enlisted in the RAFVR in May 1939 as a Wireless Operator Air Gunner under training. He arrived at 7 BGS on April 8 and was posted to 22 Squadron on May 13. Of the 30 on this course just two survived to the war's end.

Fire

That May the weather was not very good he recalls. However he managed to get in 15 hours flying time. The Battles and Whitleys were not front line aircraft and the instruments were not all they should have been. One Sergeant pilot used an old alarm clock to log his times up and down! The Whitleys had a mid under gun turret, "the dustbin". Gravity helped it go down quite easily. It was a different story when it came to retracting it. Often the hydraulics failed to operate and it had to be cranked up, by hand in flight.

Normally 6 trainee gunners went up at a time in a Whitley. Cramped in the rear fuselage aft of the bomb bay it was a "bloody shambles". Each pupils' bullets had 'their tips dipped into different coloured paint so the individual gunner's shots would be marked on the target drogue. What with wet paint, hydraulic oil, spare ammunition in the front turret and fuselage, plus usually an airsick gunner these trips were no tea party.

One day Wally and two others were detailed to fly in a Battle on air to ground target practice. They climbed in, heard the engine start and settled down ready to taxi out for takeoff. Then engine stopped and there was utter silence. One of them looked over the cockpit side to see the pilot lying flat on the grass some distance away, his half hidden face as white as a sheet. "What's the problem Sarge?" they called out. "The bloody engine is on fire!" came the reply. He was soon joined flat on the deck by three very frightened trainees while the fitter ran to get a fire extinguisher. To the pilot's disappointment it did not burn and was repaired for more flying. According to Wally legend had it that particular pilot had flown fighters but had been a "naughty boy" and was sent to 7 BGS as punishment.

A Battle also figured in more excitement. The crew of one on observer training reported a periscope out to sea. They had fired all their ammunition and dropped their 10 lb. practice bombs on it before returning to land at the aerodrome. Everyone was eager to get into the air and "have a go". However this aggressive spirit soon died when it was found that the periscope was a steel pole at the seaward end of a sewer pipe at Porthcawl.

Fireworks

The trainee AGs on 10 course waged a running war with the No 5 course trainee Observers. They shared same "ready hut" on the airfield but the AGs always seemed to be late getting there and usually found the Observers had taken possession.

One windy day it was raining hard and the observers locked the door from the inside so no one else could get in. The gunners cursed as they steadily got wetter and wetter. Then one of their

number, Charlie Underwood, later killed in action, climbed onto the roof and tipped 100 rounds of tracer ammunition down the stove pipe. There was silence for a moment or two. Then it was like Guy Fawkes Night! The door flew open and the hut rapidly emptied as tracers went off with loud bangs and trails of burning smoke. The coke from the stove blew out and the hut filled with smoke!

When questioned no one knew anything about the incident and there were denials all round. However that door was never locked again. The running war went on. Using the metal window stays the AGs prised the lead bullets out of the cartridge cases. Then they pulled out the sticks of cordite (the propellant). When lit with a match, a tongue of flame would shoot out. One night armed with lots of these prepared cartridges they raided the Observers' hut, strafing bedspaces with these homemade fireworks before beating a hasty retreat. Although it was fairly obvious who the culprits were, authority did nothing to punish them.

On the last week of Wally's course the Boulton and Paul turret appeared. All trainees weighing less than 10 stone 51b and shorter than 5 feet 6 inches were given intensive training in this.

During May there was one accident to a 7 BGS aircraft when on Saturday 25th Fg Off Nock returned from target towing in Battle L5002 to find his undercarriage would not come down and he had to make a wheels up landing.

Two days later personnel were shocked when Hampdens L4156 and L4158 of the 16 OTU detachment took off from the aerodrome never to return. They collided near Ilfracombe and all 7 crew, Flt Offs R C Frost, N G Dryburgh and T A Nixon, LACs R J Aitken, T Baird, H Sharpe and J Whyte were killed.

Numbers 5 Air Observer and 12 Air Gunner courses were posted at the end of the month. All 21 Observers passed out at the end of their 10 weeks during which they had flown an average of 32 hours 18 minutes, fired 2061 rounds, shot off 3 rolls of camera gun films and dropped 50 bombs. A new directive gave priority to High Level bombing. Low Level was no longer an advanced subject on the course. During their 4 weeks training the 50 air gunners had flown an average of 13 hours 45 minutes and fired 2038 rounds and 6.3 camera gun films.

During May two seaplane tenders, 294 and 295, arrived at the marine section. One of the three original boats, 274, was often unserviceable according to Malcolm Jones. As a Boy Entrant he was billeted at the base because it was considered safer from bombing than the aerodrome.

On May 10 the German Blitzkrieg began, all leave was cancelled and those on pass recalled. HQ 25 Group asked if there were enough Army in the area to provide aerodrome defence. Just over a week later the soldiers arrived and the officer in charge was given his own office and telephone (extension 28). The Army were also to train airmen in-bayonet fighting! Officers, Warrant Officers and Senior, NCOs were issued with pistols or revolvers, to be carried at all times except when in the air.

Light anti aircraft defences were supplemented with ground instructional turret stands (aircraft gun turrets mounted on a small cart with the necessary hydraulics powered by as petrol

engine driven pump). Equipped with guns they were normally used for manipulation practice before pupils took to the air. The authorised scale at 7 BGS was 5 Fraser Nash (one Mark FN5 1, one Mark FN 14 and three Mark FN3) and 1 Boulton and Paul Type A Mark II. These were to be manned by qualified air gunners, armament instructors or tradesmen. In practice three SNCOs were detailed each day in Daily Routine Orders, parading with the Guard each evening. On receipt of Air Raid Red, raiders expected overhead in 12 minutes, they manned their turrets.

No 14 AG course started on June 3. There were 39 trainees and among them was Len Hayton. Visiting the nearby seaside town of Porthcawl he was startled to see a number of Belgian soldiers. Realisation that they had been evacuated from Europe brought the war home to him.

A few weeks later the war came even nearer. Len was sitting on the ground near dispersal, with a full drum of ammunition at his side, waiting for a Wallace to taxi over and take him on gunnery detail. The air raid alarm sounded and everyone was ordered to sprint to the nearest slit trench and take cover as a German reconnaissance aeroplane flew up the Bristol Channel.

Jeers

One of the senior officers had an unpleasant experience with British troops evacuated from Dunkirk and billeted in Porthcawl. The OC Flying, Wg Cdr Ira (Taffy) Jones, DSO, MC, DFC, MM was billeted in the town's Sea Bank Hotel. He was a veteran of the First World War in which he had shot down 40 German aircraft over Flanders. One evening in the bar an Army captain looked at his ribbons and sneered "Here is another Dunkirk hero". A reference to the Army's belief that the RAF had deserted them during the evacuation. There were jeers from the other Army officers and Taffy complained to the General who promptly ordered them back to their quarters.

His experience was typical of the way the Army felt about the "Brylcream Boys" at that time. Often they vented their frustration with violence and several airmen out on pass were attacked and beaten up by soldiers.

Defence

Early in June a station defence scheme was set up. A party from The 4th Monmouthshire Regiment were on camp. The Netherlands Queen Wilhelmina's Royal Guard splendid in their blue uniforms and scarlet lined capes were stationed at Newton village. The Dutch provided the mainstay of defence, Standing To Arms from 0330 until 0445 at Dawn and 2130 to 22.30 at Dusk.

Then Royal Engineers arrived to prepare defensive positions, pill boxes and machine gun posts. Evening guard mounting was now a formidable affair with a Sgt, 3 Cpls and 54 Airmen parading for the Orderly Officer and the Orderly Sergeant.

One Cpl and 30 men formed the Rifle Party armed with the station's complete stock of .303 Lee Enfield rifles. Arms were in such short supply that every building contained a stock of sharpened spades to be used in hand to hand fighting if parachutists landed!

Nine airmen and a Cpl formed the fire picket. There were 6 men in the Anti-gas Party, 6 stretcher bearers, a Fire Piquet of 9 Airmen and a Cpl and finally a Cpl (Instructor) and 3 men forming a Fire Party.

For Air Raid Precautions the camp was divided into 4 quadrants centered on the main guardroom. Each day the Station Adjutant detailed the Orderly Officer and 3 Orderly Sergeants to act as Camp Air Raid Wardens.

The officer was responsible for the Officers Mess and Station Headquarters buildings. One Sgt looked after the hangars and Equipment Store, the second covered the West guardroom, the new (West) cookhouse, nearby NAAFI and Airmen's quarters. The remaining SNCO had charge of the original NAAFI and cookhouse, barrack huts and Airmen's Married Quarters. A warning in Orders reassuringly said personnel on the landing ground after 2100 hours would not be fired upon if they obeyed orders! These included passing either of the blockhouses en route and answering the sentry's challenge.

Royal Visitor

One Friday afternoon Len was in the Locker Hut waiting for another detail when Gp Cpt His Highness the Duke of Kent walked in. He was on a brief welfare visit to the station. Later that same afternoon, 21st June, there was an air raid alarm.

Len's course was the first to pass out as Sergeants. They were issued with their half wings and stripes on Friday afternoon June 23 and told these were not to be worn at Newton Down. However they were to have them sewn on before reporting to their new units. On Saturday they were taken to Bridgend railway station instead of the more usual Pyle. He duly arrived at 20 OTU, Lossiemouth and booked into the Sgts Mess feeling like a fish out of water and meeting disapproval from the "old sweats" at such rapid promotion.

There was consternation when they arrived at Training Wing the following morning. The instructors were still wearing LAC badges or Cpl's stripes unaware of the new Air Ministry Order that all aircrew hold the minimum rank of Sergeant. Len's lot carried out their arrival procedure and when they got back to Training Wing in the afternoon all the instructors were now wearing their new "tapes" too.

There were two aircraft accidents: on June 6th Plt Off G L Ritcher carrying out low level bombing practice in Battle L5053 made a forced landing on Margam Beach. The brakes would not grip on the soft sand. and the machine ran across the shallow River Kenfig, struck the opposite bank, and the undercarriage collapsed. Sgt Barnes taking off in Battle N2051 raised his undercarriage but was unable to see through the white smoke pouring out of his engine. He came down in a nearby field.

Maybe as a result of this, an order appeared that in the event of a crash on or near the aerodrome only the fire tender party and ambulance were to go to the scene. All other personnel were to carry on working under threat of disciplinary action!

Eight days later Hawker Hind K6772 of 1 FTS was written off when Acting Leading Airman Evans stalled on approach. Four days later, on Tuesday 18th, Sgt J E Loughran was landing in Henley L3365 when his windscreen became smeared with oil. Unable to see properly he stalled at 10 feet. In the heavy landing that followed the under carriage collapsed and the machine was wrecked.

By now Identity cards (RAF Form 1392 for Officers and F1250 for Airmen) had been issued. Guards, Service Police and Air Ministry Constables were given strict instructions no one was to pass unless they showed these. Airmen also had a Permanent Pass (RAF Form 557) so they could book in and out of camp. From 2000 hours until 0700 hours only the East or main gate, near married quarters, was open. At other times personnel were allowed to use both the East and West (nearer Porthcawl).

On 20 June No 2 Air Armament School moved in from Pembrey, its story is outlined in an Appendix. Arriving by train they marched up the hill from Pyle railway station. Not counting officers there were 276 men and they were accommodated in huts on No 2 site near the Officer Commanding's residence. With their arrival the Ration Strength rose to 1469. The airmen's pay parade was now a huge affair and for safety's sake it was split up into a number of smaller ones dispersed around the camp.

Until now the camp laundry had been taking care of all the airmen's washing. This was now too much to handle and private washing was taken over by the Swansea Baths and Laundry Company Limited. The amount of issue clothing each airman could send to the camp laundry each week was laid down as: 1 shirt, 2 collars, 1 pr drawers, 1 pr socks, 1 vest, 1 hand towel i.e. a third of his kit, the other third was worn while the remainder was in his locker for inspection. He was also allowed to send 3 handkerchiefs. The two Boy Entrants had a further allowance of 1 pr pyjamas, 1 gym vest and 1 pr of gym shorts.

June ended on a sad note with the death from meningitis of Plt Off T Armstead MBE on Sunday 30.

More Defence

July began with two early morning warnings, each lasting an hour. Through the month there was a total of 27 Red and 31 Yellow (raiders estimated 22 minutes away) warnings. Orders were that on receipt of Air Raid Yellow the water supply from the high level Braithwaite tower was to be cut off. Booster pumps supplied fire fighting water from the underground static water tanks. There were buckets of sand and others of water, stirrup pumps, and soda acid extinguishers placed around the camp.

Everyone had been trained in anti-gas precautions and arrangements were for contaminated casualties to be treated at Station Sick Quarters and the uncontaminated wounded at the Station Commander's residence.

On a lighter note, routine orders pointed out that civilian air raid wardens had no authority to make members of His-Majesties Forces take cover during an air raid! So that personnel would not have their sleep broken by any bombing, Group Headquarters allowed Station Commanders to billet them at a convenient distance from their aerodrome. Trainees and instructors were moved to tents at Mount Pleasant Farm, about half a mile away. Unfortunately this site alongside the Nottage Road was outside the camp bounds and access was by the west gate which shut at 2000 hrs. Anyone remaining on camp after that time or going to work before 0700 hrs faced with a long cross country walk and the closing times were soon shortened by two hours from 10pm until 6am.

The peacetime practice of parking aeroplanes in neatly aligned groups near hangars was done away with. Two fields to the SSW of the landing ground were requisitioned for dispersal. By July the Observer syllabus gave priority to high level bombing rather than dive bombing. On passing out Observers were posted to Wellington OTUs while the Air Gunners went to either Wellington or Whitley Operational Training Units.

Airmen evacuated with the Continental contingent arrived on camp. They handed in their Pay Books (AB64) to the Accounts section. They were asked if they knew of the last known whereabouts of airmen missing after the evacuation. Their names were listed on the NAAFI notice board.

A branch of Toc H (Talbot House society of servicemen for Christian fellowship and social service) formed using the sports store, formerly the Accounts section, next to the flagstaff. Two masters and 10 cadets from Harrow Officers Training Corps arrived for a week's stay at the end of July. There was a royal visitor too, in the shape of Prince Bernhardt of the Netherlands who inspected the Dutch troops camped at Newton.

Offensive

There were a number of Yellow warnings on Wednesday July 10 and during one of these Wg Cdr Ira Jones spotted a German aircraft across the bay above Swansea. Leaping into a Henley he took off in pursuit. Diving out of the sun at the Junkers 88 he fired his only weapon, a Very signal pistol, before turning into clouds. The enemy gunner opened fire and hit the Henley's port wing. Returning to Stormy the machine developed a tail flutter and he considered bailing out. Managing to regain control he landed safely on the aerodrome after the only offensive flight made from the training unit.

A week later Flt Lt S E Pritchard and 5 other officers from CFS who had qualified on No 5 War (Flying Instructors) course arrived to give refresher and night flying training. Setting out in April with 3 Battle trainers they visited all 25 Group flying stations; Evanton, West Freugh, Aldergrove, Jurby, Penrhos, Porthcawl, Warmwell, Manby and Pembrey in that order, spending a week at each.

On July 19, two days after they arrived Wallace K5078 was severely damaged when Sgt Price, making a forced Landing into a field at Wick undershot and crashed into the hedge.

On July 27, the day No 17 AG course passed out there was a tragic reminder of the danger

facing trainees and staff when Battle L5293 was lost at sea. Flg Off Wheeler was on gunnery training when he made a forced landing off Porthcawl. The machine sank after about 75 seconds taking the pilot and pupils, Cpl Barringer and AC2 Barker with it. That same Saturday Plt Off Swyers landed Henley L3362 after the weather test and taxied into the fire tender!

Rescue Work

On the last day of July a Norwegian ship, SS Stalheim, blew up off Port Talbot. Believed to have been torpedoed in fact it hit a mine. Burning fiercely it sank within 3 minutes. Mumbles lifeboat was launched but seaplane tender 274 from Porthcawl was first on the scene and picked up the ship's captain, pilot and 10 crewmen and landed them at Port Talbot. The crew of 274, Cpl Hawkins the coxswain, LAC Jones (wireless operator) and LACs Eaton, Solway and Turley were mentioned in a Special Order of the Day. They also received a bottle of Champagne from the shipping company.

Now a shipping gateway the Bristol Channel became a Restricted Flying Area at the beginning of August. Aircraft outside the rigidly defined airspaces were in great danger of being shot at from air and ground defences. Early in the month there were four accidents involving attached aircraft of 1 FTS. On August 4th Hind K4652 was written off after Leading Airman Heath stalled at 20 feet and crashed onto the airfield. Hind K5471 ran into a stone after A/L/A Langdon made a forced landing into a field below Pencastell farm, Kenfig Hill on the same day. Two days later A/L/A Fletcher in Battle K7640 overshot on landing and ran into the hedge and on August 8th in Battle P5737 A/L/A O'Shea made a wheels up landing.

During the month the Range Party moved from the dunes to Sker House where there was a drogue dropping field. Including the Ground Armament School there were now 1152 personnel on the station. This included 42 officers, 88 NCOs and 1020 airmen and sailors. Visitors included the Secretary of State for Air, Rt. Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair and a party of officers from 4 S of TT St Athan.

Attacked

Enemy air activity increased. Bombs were dropped on RAF St Athan to the east, the surrounding Vale of Glamorgan, and from Port Talbot westwards. The aerodrome's turn came on Wednesday 21st August when three JU 88s roared across the airfield machine-gunning and bombing as they went. Four bombs landed on the airfield and exploded while a second four fell among the wooden huts. Four more fell beyond the camp and did not explode. Three were blown up by armament personnel but it was not until September 1970 that the fourth was found during quarrying and blown up by the Army.

Two airmen including the station postman were killed and 15 others wounded, several seriously. One hut housing the station post room was blown up and another damaged. Luckily the raid took place at 12 minutes to noon. Little more than half an hour later and most classes would have

been in the open, forming up to march to dinner. It happened so quickly that the ground defences were unable to come into action in time. Apparently one ground turret was manned but unable to fire as the essential cocking handle was in the armoury!

Two launches at Porthcawl, 436 and 437, were armed with a Lewis gun apiece to defend themselves if attacked.

Anti-invasion plans included the evacuation of training aircraft and personnel to Jurby, Isle of Man. There they would join parties from No 1 Air Armament School and the Central Gunnery School. These were then to fly Banquet missions bombing the landing beaches. This plan drawn up on August 27 was amended in January 1942 to give Fairwood Common as the offensive base.

Jimmy Eveson was on Number 20 AG course with "Panic" Fawkes, Desmond "Poppy" Flanders, Jack Engels, Geoff Groves and Bob Hall. Decades later he remembered the banana-oil smell of dope and the shattering experience of standing up in the rear cockpit of the Wallace and belting rather indiscriminately at ground targets on the Margam ranges.

Four more Whitleys were added to the establishment of 20 plus 16 Battles.

August weather was fine, only 3 half days were lost, and a total of 1,452 hours 40 minutes was flown with only one accident to a 7BGS machine. On the 28th Plt Off Swyers landing in Henley L3342 had the undercarriage collapse beneath him, fortunately without too much damage.

No Sunday Flying

When Operation Order No 1, Invasion Imminent, was issued on September 8th all leave was cancelled. By October there was a relaxation and only Station Defence personnel were restricted to camp. At the beginning of September a new routine stopped Sunday flying and work in the sections, except by visitors. A four Sunday rota of general service duties was set up for each of the more or less equal sized flights formed for this purpose. In turn each spent one Sunday morning on Station Fatigues which included Colour Hoisting parade at 0900 hours then general cleaning up and labouring until dinner at 1230.

Next week there was Barrack Room inspection beginning with 1 hour of Cleaning up followed by the inspection and then 1½ hours of sports activities, physical training foot drill. This was repeated on week four.

On the third Sunday the flight had one hour's Church parade from 0915 before returning to the barrack rooms to lay out their kit for a 1½ hour inspection.

The rota was staggered so that with the exception of Barrack Inspection and sports, no two flights were on the same activity.

A Flight consisted of airmen from the Mechanical Transport, Target Tacking and the Parachute Packing sections plus the Orderly Room staff. B Flight contained the Servicing personnel while the Armament section, Equipment, Inspection Pool, Signals and Workshops sections formed C Flight. The Cooks joined airmen from the Headquarters Armoury and Headquarters Aircraft hands,

Publications section and Station Sick Quarters to form D Flight.

Promotions and Postings

At the end of September a number of senior officers were posted. The Station Commander, Gp Capt Fiennes to Uxbridge and Wg Cdr C W Busk, promoted to Gp Capt, to Air Ministry. Wg Cdr C M de Crespignes arrived to take up the vacant post of Chief Armament Instructor, Flt Lt F E Groce became a Sqdn Ldr. Wg Cdr H G Wisher assumed command. Earlier there was a visit and inspection by the Inspector General. A week after his visit the weather broke with high winds and rain overnight. No 3 Bombing Target broke its moorings and ran ashore while the range quadrant shelters were damaged.

There was a boost to morale when single sized bed sheets were issued to all living-in airmen. One was to be exchanged for a clean one from the camp laundry each week. With a ration strength of 1270 there was a shortage of bed-space, even with the use of tents. Billets in Mary Street, Porthcawl, and at the Marine Base were taken over for the 91 incoming trainees of No 23 AG and No 8 Observer courses. Special buses took them to camp at 0715 on weekdays and an hour later on Sundays. The return journey was at 19.00 with the exception of Wednesday (18.00) and weekends (17.30)

Colour Schemes

At last continuing confusion about colour schemes for training aircraft was resolved. HQ 25 Gp had said in July that the upper surfaces of target towing aircraft were not to be camouflaged, probably a safety measure to protect tug crews from careless gunners. In August this was revised and all towing aircraft were to be given standard land camouflage on upper surfaces to aid effective concealment while parked on dispersal. Another rethink took place in September when it was decided that training Battles (Bombers), Defiants and Hampdens were to be in operational colours and. Battle (Trainers) and Masters were to be in training colours.

At the same time recognition lights were fitted to the wing tips of training aircraft. When flying within 5 miles of their aerodrome they were to use navigation lights instead. 7 BGS was issued with sets of lights for 16 Battle (S), 27 Battle (TT) and 24 Whitley aircraft. Red lights were issued first, then a week later green and a week after that, yellow.

During the month a total of 1191 hours were flown and there were four half days unfit for flying, there had been just 1 aircraft accident, on the 4th. Battle L5310 of IFTS (pilot A/L/A Morris) made a heavy landing and the undercarriage collapsed. 72 Red and 158 Yellow warnings were received.

Fires

Winter officially began on 1st October, when greatcoats were to be worn on parade and fires were authorised. In Barrack Huts and Institutes fires were permitted on Monday to Saturday from 1600 to 2100 hrs and on Sunday from 1100 to 2100 hrs. They could be lit in offices, classrooms and technical buildings on Monday to Saturday from 0800 to 1530 hrs and on Sunday from 0800 to 1100 hrs and in

No 3 GAS Dining Room from Reveille to 17.30 hours. Gp Capt A W Franklyn assumed command of 7 BGS on Thursday October 3rd when Autumn clouds were affecting the flying programme. That day the outer tow lines were unserviceable, Friday there was no flying and on Saturday both the Outer Towlines and the C-D lines were washed out.

That was when Battle K7626 of 1FTS was damaged in a wheels up landing. It was also the day that 22 AG course was posted to Kinloss on passing. None of them had fired on the 200 or 400 yard ground ranges as these were still uncompleted.

Many personnel wondered if the new official name Stormy Down was chosen because of the local weather which was often wet and windy. In fact it was a corruption of Sturmi the medieval minor lord who had once farmed nearby land. Happily leave, stopped at the beginning of September in anticipation of imminent invasion, was restored in October. From the 9th of the month Senior NCOs did not have to return until 2359hrs on weekdays and 0100hrs on Sundays. One place they could go was the newly opened YWCA canteen for all ranks at Pyle.

Lt Major RN of 1FTS made a wheels up landing in Battle K7626 on October 3rd. Taking advantage of a fine day, an intensive programme was flown on Friday 11th, all ranges were used and 197 hours flown. Next day 163 hours were logged and on Sunday flying but no bombing took place. Typically the weather deteriorated on Monday when only 51 hours, in the afternoon were possible. Whenever conditions allowed as many hours as possible were flown. One day when there was mist and drizzle with visibility down to 1000-2000 yards only 3 hours 40 minutes were flown.

After a week there was some improvement and on Monday 21st, despite clouds, drizzle and showers, 147 hours 40 minutes were attained. This achievement was marred by the accident to Battle L5688 flown by Flt Sgt Tingley who landed with his wheels up.

A similar accident happened to LAC K Dindorf, a Polish pilot, on Tuesday 29th when landing Battle L5741. Next day there was a further accident when Sgt T Lambert in Whitley K9016 undershot and hit the boundary hedge with his undercarriage, which then collapsed.

Although there was no Sunday flying, individual short weekend passes were no longer issued for the first weekend of the month. This was now a duty weekend with two flights on duty and two flights off on block release. There was no flying on the last day of October. Although 21 half days were lost to flying more than 1540 hours had been flown during the month. Pathé Pictures visited the station to film its activities. Incidentally there had been 60 Red air raids alerts.

Rain

November began with continuous rain. Flying for 7BGS was cancelled, all trainees spent that day and the next in lecture rooms. 1FTS carried on only to have Hind K6713 (pilot A/L/A McWilliams) skid, overturn and be written off before the day was out. On Monday 4th, flying started again as the rain cleared in the afternoon. Perhaps it was due to the rain that a RAF lorry and an Army car collided by the main gate. Cpt Rhys Jones, in charge of the 16th Welch Regiment detachment at the aerodrome

received a scalp injury

Although the Royal Engineers were still on the aerodrome, the Monmouth Regiment were replaced by a detachment of South Wales Borderers, then the Welch Regiment. Soldiers and RAF Station Defence personnel used the east wing of the GAS dining room. The RAF men were billeted in three huts in E Lines, G Company of the 17th Welch Regiment in five huts in A Lines, two in C Lines were occupied by 178 Company Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (later renamed the Pioneer Corps).

More buildings were completed and handed over to the RAF. They included technical facilities, ablutions and latrines, classrooms, offices, gun and turret buildings, workshops, camera obscura, air raid shelters and the two machine gun ranges. Recent courses suffered from a shortage of reflector gun sights (8 Observer) and cine-gun films (24 AG).

Accidents

On November 6 Hind K6770 suffered undercarriage damage when A/L/A Thompson drifted on landing. Next day AVM Champion de Crespigny, AOC 25 GP, arrived to give a pep talk to all the officers on the need to reduce flying accidents. Unfortunately on the morrow Sgt Subkowiak (Polish Forces) was taxiing Whitley K7194 from dispersal to the hangar when his brakes failed and he hit the hangar stanchions.

More aircraft were damaged on the 12th. Gale winds of up to 100 mph played havoc with a Battle, 2 Wallaces and 3 Whitleys. One of the Whitleys was blown right across the aerodrome, miraculously without colliding with any other aircraft. The roof of the main hangar housing the Station Workshops and Offices was damaged and a number of telephone extensions were cut off. The exposed Margam ranges suffered extensive damage.

On Monday 25th Fg Off J Swyrers flew Battle L5635 on air test after a 30 hour inspection but was unable to lower the undercarriage and had to make a wheels up landing writing the aeroplane off. Two days later, despite further gale warnings, flying continued. Approaching in Whitley K7212 Sgt E Holloway was unable to reach the aerodrome and pancaked from 10 feet half a mile to the South. The undercarriage collapsed and the machine was taken to 34MU for repair.

There was a tragic accident on the night of 21st when LAC James E Jones training at 3 GAS was knocked down and killed by a car driven by an RAF officer on the main road outside the camp.

More Billets

Individual courses were getting larger and buildings at Coney Beach fairground, Porthcawl were taken over as billets. By the middle of the month Air Gunner and Air Observer trainees were moved in.

On the camp a projection box was built onto the SP Aircraft Shed. Half of the hangar was curtained off for use as the Camp Cinema and the other half used for servicing aircraft. At the same time a Tannoy loudspeaker broadcast system was installed throughout the camp. Any possibility of a Night Flying programme was quashed by the HQ 25 Gp directive that it was not to take place without

a Relief Landing Ground, which Stormy did not possess. During the month more than 1952 hours were flown despite bad weather. There had been 64 Air Raid Red warnings and enemy aircraft were heard overhead on several nights.

Queen Bees

At the beginning of December Sqd Ldr Bathurst arrived from St Athan to arrange practice bombing on the range by W/T controlled Queen Bee aircraft. Results were to be observed by Stormy personnel. These were very encouraging with a bombing error of 1194 feet from 10,000 feet. Trainees had to get within 1000 feet of the target to qualify. Further such experiments took place throughout the month.

Mist and rain were now almost a daily feature with gusty winds quite common. Returning from target towing in Battle V1214 on Thursday 5th, Plt Off Davies attempted to land in gusts of up to 50 mph and undershot. The undercarriage hit the boundary bank and a wheel broke off. Neither the pilot nor the tow operator, LAC Lucas, were injured. Next day there were gales. By 10 am the wind had reached 80 mph and catching one Whitley at piquet twisted it around so that its wheels came off. Naturally there was no flying and the air party coming from Netheravon for advanced training had to delay their arrival.

Programme Change

In wartime Wales public houses, dance halls and many cinemas shut on Sundays. In order that airmen could enjoy these facilities the weekend working programme, was altered. Sunday became a full working day while Saturday had the early finish, leaving the afternoon and evening free.

Another 1FTS Hind was written off on the 8th when A/L/A Walsh undershot into the fence in K6762. On Wednesday 11th, Flt Sgt Lerner took off in Whitley K7187, with a rigger to operate the undercarriage and 4 trainee air gunners. With no lateral control he crashed from 200 feet 200 yards west of the aerodrome writing the machine off. The aileron locking pin was found to be still fitted. Less than an hour later Fg Off Burns made a one wheel landing in Battle V1213 which caused little damage. There were other incidents later in the month. On Friday 20th low cloud restricted visibility and Fg Off Franklyn diverted in his Whitley to 10 EFTS aerodrome at Weston super Mare. Around the same time Sgt Grant landed a Battle in a small field near Watchet, Somerset. It was too small to take off out of and the machine had to be dismantled and returned to Stormy Down by road!

The Christmas break began at mid-day on the 24th, but gunnery training carried on until 17.00 hours. In effect this meant few got away. However once again there was a traditional Christmas dinner. Crème of Tomato soup was followed by roast stuffed turkey, roast pork and apple sauce with brussels sprouts, parsnips and cream potato balls. Christmas pudding, brandy sauce and mince pies came next. There were nuts, oranges and apples with minerals and cigarettes.

Work started again at mid-day on Boxing day and the first aircraft took off at 1400hrs. On New Year's eve Whitley K8977 belonging to 10 OTU made a heavy landing and was damaged. It

was repaired by a contractor's working party from Marshalls of Cambridge and after repair allocated to Stormy Down.

January came in with a bitter cold spell. The COs parade was cancelled but the flying programme went on. Conditions were often marginal. For example on Monday 6th there was 10/10 cloud at 1,000 to 2,000 feet but inner tow lines were run in the morning. It was under these conditions that Sgt Tock had to divert to Weston super Mare with two trainees.

That was the day the NCO i/c Margam Range reported an unexploded enemy bomb on the foreshore. The Mobile Destruction Unit examined the hole and concluded the radiating cracks indicated that it had gone off underground.

A regular feature was now freezing fog extending right down to ground level. Tuesday-14th was such a day. 7 BGS ceased flying at 1330, but 1 FTS carried on despite the murk. On takeoff in the late afternoon one of their Hinds collided with parked Whitley, K7196. The bomber's starboard main plane and spar were damaged beyond unit repair facilities, the fate of the Hind is not recorded.

On Friday 17th the Queen Bee from St Athan carried out further bombing trials in snow showers. There was a heavy fall over night. The Station snow plan went into operation but the airfield was unusable over the weekend. As the snow melted the airfield surface became greasy delaying the flying programme even further. In fact with cloud and heavy rain there was no more flying until the last day of January when besides low level bombing on Tusker Rock by the Observer course the Queen Bee was again used.

The first day of February was fine. The Saturday Station Commander's parade was scrapped in the interests of a full programme. This was just as well as snow prevented-any flying on Sunday. Again whenever the weather, which often included snow, permitted, as much flying as possible took place. With the rain and snow the airfield surface became sodden, restricting the flying programme. On Tuesday 4th Flt Lt Faulkner made a belly landing in Battle L5736. Because of instrument faults the indications were that the undercarriage was down and locked when in fact it was still retracted.

At last the moving target range with model aircraft mounted on rails was ready. It came into use on Friday 7th but was soon unserviceable again and 30AG course passing out in mid March were denied its use. Journalist Godfrey Winn visited the unit preparing an article which was to appear in the Sunday Express on 23rd February 1941.

Sqdn Ldr M F Williams relieved Sqdn Ldr H R Coventry as OC Flying on the 18th. That was the day that Sgt Richards taxiing Whitley K7216 to dispersal struck a ledge and heap of stones causing some damage. After the second of the three nights of the Blitz on Swansea five suspected mines were washed up on Margam beach on Friday 21st but they proved to be floating flares. Although Saturday was a non working day a detachment from the aerodrome marched in the Pyle War Weapons Week parade and put on a display of RAF equipment to encourage National Savings.

By the last day of the month the aerodrome surface was so bad that flying had to be stopped

before noon. However the next day, Saturday, was a non flying day so it dried out enough for the programme to resume on Sunday.

On March 4 flying was stopped when it became cloudy. Later it restarted. Sgt Tock took off in Battle L5019 with LACs Staunch and Shepherd, No 30 AG pupils, on Quarter Cross Over exercises. A second Battle flown by Sgt Noble was towing the target drogue. The two machines passed each other at 2,000 feet and Sgt Noble saw Sgt Tock's machine turn steeply and head for Porthcawl with white smoke pouring from it. Sgt Noble turned and caught sight of Sgt Tock 500 yards away then lost sight of him again. He did not reappear. At 13.10 hours the police telephoned to say a civilian had seen an aircraft crash into the sea off Porthcawl. An air and sea search immediately took place but no traces were found.

No wonder an immediate search was mounted three days later when Flt Lt Faulkner headed out to sea and was lost to sight. Cloud was down to 500 feet and conditions deteriorating when he took off in Battle V1275 on target towing detail. When no trace could be found it was feared he had come down in the sea. Later, welcome news came through that he had force landed with his wheels up 7 miles inland from Weston super Mare.

Eight days after this Battle P6621 of 1FTS suffered some damage after a heavy landing by Lt Kidd RN. Finally on Wednesday 20th Sgt Siddaway taxiing Battle K7599 to dispersal hit an oil bowser.

Flight Engineers

April opened with heavy rain and no flying, the weather soon improved, but the month ended with gales and yet another non flying day. Training still suffered from faulty equipment. Number 31AG course were unable to use the 400 yard machine gun range as there were no serviceable breech blocks for the Browning machine guns. If any attempt was made to operate targets faster than 10mph on the moving target range the trolley jumped off the rails.

Trainee Flight Engineers now began arriving for gunnery instruction, 29 of them joining No 33 AG course.

On April 15 the aerodrome at Carew Cheriton was raided and next day the Stormy Down based Bomb Disposal Squad went there to deal with an unexploded bomb.

During the month there were several aircraft incidents. On the 4th 1FTS Battle K9298 (pilot Sgt Heslop) hit the fence when the brakes failed. Another of the 1FTS Battles, N2100, flown by A/L/A Henson, ran out of fuel and force landed on Margam Sands with the wheels up on the 20th. Two days later a third Battle belonging to that unit, K7614, pilot Lt Eustace RN, taxied into a half built pill box.

Three 7 BGS aircraft also had accidents. Late in the afternoon of Sunday, 20th, Sgt Dindorf (Polish Forces) took Battle L5072 on air test with ACs Richardson and Elliott of Maintenance Wing as passengers. The machine dived into the ground at Rockfields Farm, Cefn Cribwr killing all three.

Sgt (Pchor) K Dindorf aged 21 and AC2 H Elliott (954781) were buried at Nottage cemetery with full military honours. The following Friday, 25th, another Polish pilot, Flg Off Jakubowski taxiing Whitley K7193 struck one of the 1FTS Battles. Soon after the Whitley became an instructional airframe (33811). A third Pole Sgt Rozpara landed Battle K7672 in a gusty wind on Tuesday 29 and his starboard undercarriage collapsed under him.

Bad Weather

May had its share of bad weather too. There was a gusty NE wind on the 2nd when Battle V1211 on target towing crashed near Kenfig Pool in deteriorating weather. It burst into flames and AC E Williams the tow operator and Plt Off J Puklo (Polish Forces), aged 23, were both killed. The pilot is buried at Nottage cemetery. The same day two Hinds returning to 1FTS lost formation in the bad weather. L/A Paterson wrote off K6659 in a forced landing at Crickhowell and A/L/A Bush crashed K6737 at Pontypridd.

Two days later Sergeant Clouderay in Battle L5053 was over the sea when his engine seized up. Turning back he made a successful engineless landing. To his surprise he was the only one on board. Both trainee air gunners, LACs Shute and Roberts, misunderstanding his instructions, had jumped by parachute as soon as the plane crossed the coastline.

In the early hours of May 5 Kenfig Hill, about a mile from the aerodrome, was bombed with little damage although one unexploded high explosive bomb did create minor havoc when it was destroyed on the Friday by the Army. That same Friday, 9th, Sgt Clouderay suffered a second engine failure on Battle N2125. With 2 trainees he had to come down near St Brides. The machine ran into a hedge and was too badly damaged to be repaired at its base. Fortunately no one was injured. He had yet a third engine failure just 17 days later when taking off in Battle L5305. Luckily he made a very successful forced landing but the machine was badly damaged.

When weather permitted maximum effort was made. Both the 13th and 14th were fine and full programmes were flown, 21,750 rounds being fired on both days. Later in the month wind, rain and cloud again prevented any flying at all. On Tuesday 27th Sgt Sobinski (Polish Forces) flying Battle N1278 was injured when it was struck by lightning. He returned to base without incident.

More Re-organisation

Although the station had been running the Warmwell system since the previous November it was felt that Maintenance Wing needed further reorganising from June 1. It now consisted of Wing Headquarters, Station Workshops, a Maintenance Squadron and a Servicing Squadron. Full control of all aircraft as well as the maintenance and target towing personnel, other than the pilots allocated to the Bombing, Gunnery and Towing Squadrons, was in the hands of the Maintenance Wing Headquarters.

Fitters and mechanics previously employed in the Flying Squadrons were transferred to the

Servicing Squadron to form the Aircraft Handling Party. The Officer i/c Servicing Squadron took over all inventories for airframes, engines and technical equipment from the Flying Squadrons. On June 9 the unit became 7 Air Gunners School. By the end of the month it was divided into a Maintenance Wing and a Training Wing.

For parades Maintenance Wing consisted of A and B Servicing Squadrons. Training Wing personnel were in one of two squadrons consisting of all Officer and Airmen pilots, Instructors, Trainees, Range and Drogue Sections as well as the Parachute and Photographic Sections. Remaining personnel such as clerks, cooks, drivers and medical personnel formed a Headquarters Squadron. Mid month Wg Cdr P Haynes arrived as Chief Instructor Armament replacing Wg Cdr C M de Crespigny who was posted to Warmwell.

Landings

LAC D W King, a fitter at Stormy, often flew with Plt Off Gardener. His job was to operate the flaps and landing gear in the Whitley as there was no second pilot. One day on approach the undercarriage warning light stayed on. LAC King crawled into the mainplane to wind it down manually but the light stayed red. Mr. Gardener ordered the gunners to move forward to the bulkhead section in case they belly landed. However it was an electrical fault and the wheels remained firmly locked down. Then as they touched down both engines cut and the aeroplane coasted to a stop in the middle of the grass runway and had to be towed to dispersal.

On June 15 his place with Mr. Gardener was taken by LAC Cairns in Whitley T4163. With 4 trainees aboard they headed out to sea. At 500 feet a port airscrew blade snapped off. The pilot turned towards Sker and pancake landed on the sand dunes whereupon the starboard engine burst into flames. Four of the crew escaped from the crashed aircraft. But the pilot was still strapped in and one of the pupils was trapped in the front turret. They were rescued by Sgt A G Francis who was awarded the BEM, assisted by Flt Sgt Jones. LAC Cairns with ACs Duckworth, Davenport and Redwell also helping.

On June 20 Plt Off Bohuszewicz (Polish Forces) overshot when landing Battle K7693 causing slight damage. The same day in a Battle of 1FTS, P6720, A/L/A Pettit landed with his wheels up.

Fatal

Two days later, Sunday 22nd, Flt Lt Swann in Battle L5001 with Plt Off Kitching as observer took part in Army Cooperation exercises with the Home Guard at Margam. Five minutes after takeoff they struck the top of a 45 ft high tree, crashed and burst into flames. Home Guard Sgt Tom Felton was awarded the Certificate of Good Service for his attempts to rescue the crew, both of whom were killed. 1FTS pilots were luckier. Battle P6750 (A/L/A Duthie) was damaged in an overshoot on 25th and next day Audax K7327 was damaged beyond repair when it crashed on takeoff.

July's programme was delayed by early morning fog and, on several days, low cloud. Being

the height of Summer flying went on until late evening. For example on 21st there was local mist first thing. Flying started at 09.40 and went on until 20.30 hours. Target towing for this programme Pilot Officer Ghose (Indian Air Force) taking off in Battle V1212 was blinded by fumes and crashed, luckily with little damage.

This was the month that HQ Flying Training Command stopped bombing practice at Stormy Down. In future 1 FTS were to fly from Netheravon using stationary targets on the Pepperbox Hill range in Wiltshire. The armoured target boats had already left Porthcawl. In future the sea ranges were to be used only for air firing. Speaking of ranges the 200 yard machine gun practice was again out of order. Another 1FTS machine, Hind K5399, was damaged on 23rd when A/L/A Burrows taking off too close to another aeroplane was blown over by the slipstream and crashed.

August Rain

Despite the season this was not the best of months for training at 7AGS. Heavy rain and mist badly affected flying. On 13 days the programme was late starting or even cancelled. The month ended with a fatal crash. Sgt Naylor in Battle L5657, took LAC Bower and AC Sullivan from 3GAS as passengers. There were no survivors after they crashed into the sea.

In September unserviceability extended to the Spotlight Trainer and fog delayed the programme. Then, on what was a good day for flying, on 14th the range was fouled for 1½ hours as a convoy passed close inshore, flying balloons at under 1000 feet. The programme was now so far behind that the planned day off on Saturday 27th was cancelled, so that a full 9½ hour flying schedule could be followed.

With the formation of no. 46 Air Sea Rescue Marine Craft Unit at Porthcawl on September 9th the Marine Craft section, part of 7 A G S range facilities, was disbanded.

Hurricane Crash

On September 9th Hurricane BD723 of 32 Sqdn, then at Angle, took off from Stormy, Plt Off Dutt was the pilot. As he brought the wheels up, using the hand that had been on the throttle, the throttle lever moved shutting the engine down. He stalled and the machine was badly damaged in the crash, BD723 crashed again at Stormy Down. On December 18 Flt Lt Tripe undershot into a field 500 yards short of the boundary and it was again badly damaged. Sent to 29 MU for repair it went to Russia in April 1942.

Although the first Lysander had arrived to replace the Battle for target towing, the latter were still flying, and crashing!

On 12th Plt Off Ghose (Indian Air Force) made a wheels up landing in Battle L5663. Although there was considerable damage neither the pilot nor the tow operator, AC Coull, were hurt.

Five days later, Plt Off Brander in Battle L5737 could not get the starboard wheel to lock down even with the emergency gear and had to make a wheels up landing.

On 19th September Fg Off Jakubowski (Polish Forces) was on air firing detail in Whitley K7201 when the starboard engine ran out of petrol. This engine worked the hydraulic pump for flaps and undercarriage. The fitter went to the emergency hand pump. Before he had time to get the gear locked down the pilot made a forced landing on the aerodrome. After running along for about 200 yards the undercarriage collapsed.

From the 13th of the month orders were that a flare path be laid out every night from dusk until dawn for unstated emergency use even though the airfield was not used for night flying.

More Bad Weather

Once again mist or gale winds affected flying during October. When it was too gusty for target towing trainees did cine camera gun practice instead. More Lysanders arrived for target towing and some Defiants for gunnery training, superseding the Battles, A dual control Magister (serial unknown) also arrived for conversion training of pilots for Defiants,

Crash services, always on standby during flying, came into action when the month was two days old, Sgt Marves of 53 OTU overshot and severely damaged his Spitfire X4721,

Sgt Alexander was 3 miles out over the sea on the 13th in Whitley K8976 when the starboard engine failed. With a bang a connecting rod broke free and was slung through the engine cowling and embedded in the fuselage! He landed successfully with one engine,

A second Whitley K7216, pilot Fg Off Jakubowski (Polish Forces) suffered a similar mishap on the 30th. At 3,500 feet, again over the sea, the starboard engine began to shake and a hole appeared in the cowling where something had been slung out, Luckily he made a successful landing too.

There was a change of Station Commander in the middle of the month when Gp Cpt Franklyn took command of 2 AOS, RAF Millom, Wg Cdr P Haynes assumed temporary command until handing over to Wg Cdr C G Stemp on November 4th.

Gales

The bad weather story was repeated in November. Cloud and heavy rain stopped flying again on the first day. Then the whole of the programme on the 3rd was cancelled because there were no serviceable Whitleys.

Landing on the 5th in 1FTS Hind, K6653, A/L/A Forster wrote it off after braking fiercely and tipping over.

The programme was again interrupted on the 9th. A Warning received at 06.30 had developed into a gale by 0925, piquets were out all day. The port elevator fabric was blown off one Whitley and the engine cowlings off two more. The wind built up enough pressure inside the fuselages to force open the bomb doors on most of the others.

Next day despite gusts of up to 30 mph flying resumed, Sgt V P Friese-Green in Whitley E7198 suffered starboard engine failure after Stormy Down had closed through bad visibility. He force-landed in a small field 1 mile SE of Ewenny crashing through the far hedge.

There were more gales on the night of Sunday 16th and a double aircraft piquet was mounted to protect the aeroplanes on dispersal. It must have been a miserable duty as there was torrential rain too! It proved impossible to light the Glim lamps for the emergency flare path. The wind blew all Monday too and flying was stopped by fog before noon on Tuesday.

On the 27th there was so much turbulence that target towing was cancelled as there was danger that the cables might snap and foul the tug's tail unit.

Six pilots had now converted to Defiants and others were still training on the new types. One of these was Sgt Crawford making his first Lysander solo on the 24th. His approach in T1522 was too high, He stalled, dropped 15 feet to the ground damaging the undercarriage and starboard tail plane.

Ground Defence Training

At the end of the month all Officers and SNCOs were detailed for intensive ground defence training before the Station Defence Squadron was withdrawn. The first course of 10 Officers and 20 SNCOs started on November 27 with three Army Sergeants as instructors.

The Defiants had been at Stormy Down for just over a month when the first of them got into trouble. It was on Monday 1st December that N1683 (pilot unknown) made a wheels up landing. When the pilot throttled back the undercarriage warning horn remained silent so he carried on his approach believing all was well. On touching down on the aerodrome 3 Reds showed and the horn sounded as the undercarriage was not locked down.

Early in November Sgt C H Rogers was posted in after getting his pilot's wings at Brize Norton, Allocated to Towing Flight he found himself flying Lysander tugs, towing drogues for Whitleys, Defiants and the occasional Battle. He recalls Plt Off Gardiner taking a Battle up on air test. The previous pilot had made a one wheel landing causing slight damage. After repairs, Mr Gardner took it up only to find one wheel stayed up. He made a good one wheel landing with very little damage to the aircraft (serial unknown),

When Sgt Rogers arrived the Air Sea Rescue Officer was Fg Off Riches, His job was to lecture trainees on survival, i.e. taking up safe positions in an aircraft before ditching, ditching procedures, how to handle the dinghies and rescue techniques, He became the officer's assistant which meant he could not fly as often as he would have liked.

Tired Aeroplanes

Again misty weather affected the programme for about a third of the month of December which ended with a non flying day. The Whitleys were becoming tired and there was an acute shortage of

serviceable aircraft. Tow line and cine camera gun programmes had to be cut back, with alternate sorties being flown on the former.

By mid month the aerodrome was again waterlogged, hardly the appropriate moment for HQ 25 Group to announce that because of the intensity of the War Effort full use must be made of all available, flying weather. From now on a seven day a week was to be worked with half of the personnel off on Saturday and the rest on Sunday. Two note-worthy incidents during the month were the arrival of the BBC to record a programme called "Aircrew of Tomorrow" and the day when vehicle PHX234 towing the NAAFI break van collided with a 1FTS crew bus., No char and wads that morning!

On Monday 15th, Flt Sgt G E Siddaway with a crew of 6 was on Whitley K8942 when the canvas covering the mainplane started to come off. Heading for the nearest aerodrome he made a safe landing at RAF St Athan.

The Christmas holiday was from mid-day on 24th until mid-day on Boxing day. Air firing started just an hour later.

Early morning snow on the 28th turned to rain. The aerodrome surface became sodden, then it froze overnight. Next morning Sgt A Rawlings landed Whitley K7201 after an air exercise, As he taxied over the frozen ridges to dispersal the strain proved too much for the oleo tail leg which sheared and collapsed. The same day Battle N2105 of 1 FTS was damaged when A/L/A Bretton overshot into the hedge.

Now when the weather was unsafe for air firing Boulton and Paul turret manipulation in the Defiants became a regular training practice.

When 3 GAS moved to Weston in January it left behind an airfield that was again waterlogged and often unserviceable. Despite this 882 hours were flown by 7 AGS on the 32 half days that the weather permitted. The average number of rounds fired per cadet were, on the ground 1020, air to ground 194 and air to air 1871. Trainees also spent an average of 19 hours 32 minutes on turret manipulation and in the Spotlight Trainer.

There was a further set back to the flying programme on 6th when a number of the electric battery starters, better known as trolley accs, became unserviceable.

Tow Lines

Sgt Rogers remembered the tow lines. The North Inner at 1200 feet ran from Rest Bay to Port Talbot while the North Outer, at 3000 ft, ran parallel to it but further out.

The South Inner, also at 1200 ft, was from Newton to Nash Point and the South Outer, at 3000 ft, was parallel to it but out to sea.

These were flown in a figure of eight pattern, the gunnery aircraft always on the landward side and firing out to sea. The target tug flew in a straight line for 6 to 8 minutes. There was no firing on turns because the towing aircraft and target would then be in line.

The North C-D and South A-B lines, at 3000 feet, ran at right angles to the land from Sker and from Ogmore by Sea respectively, their direction indicated by a large marker arrow on the ground.

On these two the tugs sometimes flew to the Somerset coast giving a good run for firing. Often they were flown when the visibility was too bad for the Inner and Outer lines to be used.

The pilot of the gunnery aircraft (a Whitley) would signal the pupil to stop firing before the turn began. When in position and heading the other way he gave the signal to start firing again, Simple enough when the intercommunication system worked, difficult when it did not!

In that case with the gunner in the front turret and the instructor standing near him the pilot signalled " stop firing" by turning his thumb down. Thumb up meant commence firing. The instructor catching sight of the signal passed the message on to the gunner by tapping his shoulder,

If the trainee was in the rear turret at the far end of the fuselage a trainee gunner sat next to the pilot, a second was in the midsection while the remainder were in the rear fuselage waiting their turn to fire.

The instructor sat by the rear turret giving instructions to the gunner. The thumb signal was relayed down to the tail, wasting time, and with 6 trainees to fire on two drogues everyone had to be on their toes

The guns often gave trouble and there were many stoppages. On one trip when Sgt Rogers was flying tug the Whitley which ended the exercise after half an hour had only managed to fire 2 or 3 rounds!

The frozen rutted surface claimed another victim on the 11th when taxiing after landing the tail oloe on Whitley K7189 (pilot Sgt Williams) collapsed.

Two days later the AOC in C Flying Training Command, AM Sir William L Welsh presented the Czechoslovakian War Cross for Gallantry whilst flying to Sergeant Mensik.

The Air Marshal's arrival coincided with that of the first detachment from No 3 AOS, Bobbington, complete with their own Ansons, for air firing. Their own grass airfield was almost unusable.

To keep up with the programme HQ 25 Gp ordered that flying was not to stop if the Fire Tender or the Ambulance became unserviceable, A Flint stretcher (for back injuries) was to be fitted to any vehicle being used as a temporary ambulance.

Almost continuous bad weather badly affected 57 AG course who did not fly for a fortnight before passing cut on 24th, As a result an average of only 1419 rounds were fired air to air and 201 air to ground during an average flying time per pupil of 12 hours 12 minutes. The average percentage hits to rounds fired was just 8.2.

They had no camera gun training or 30mm cannon firing but they had shot an average of 1041 rounds on the ground ranges (25, 200 and 400 yards). To compensate they had each managed nearly 9 hours on turret manipulation on the ground and 5 hours in the Spotlight Trainer. Each pupil had fired 10 shot gun cartridges at clay pigeons also.

Botha

On the 28th, a Botha piloted by a Pole arrived from RAF Milom on trials as a possible replacement for the Whitleys which had no power operated turrets and a bad serviceability record.

Before it arrived those who knew the Botha told all the staff pilots they should apply for postings. Its appearance did nothing to brook confidence. It landed with one wing covered in oil from a leaking engine.

Sgt Rogers and the others watched it taxi out a few days later after being repaired. It went right to the far end of the aerodrome for the start of the longest run it could get into wind, It tore towards the far hedge and seemed to just clear the bushes before disappearing below the hill.

Most of the onlookers thought it had crashed. About three minutes later they saw it gradually climbing over the sea before coming round to land. Several days later it flew off leaving Stormy forever to the relief of the staff pilots who no longer doubted those awful reports.

The official verdict was that without runways the aerodrome was not suitable for all the year round flying by this type. Further equipping with Bothas would hinder the proposed introduction of night flying training on the air gunner syllabus.

During the time the Botha was at 7AGS, there were three accidents. Two were on the 28th. Master W8505 of 1 FTS was written off after A/L/A Thomson had engine failure on takeoff and crashed near Nottage cemetery. Sgt C H Armour landed Defiant AA293 and skidded on the slippery surface whereupon the port undercarriage collapsed,

Next day the airfield was unserviceable for Lysanders, the slippery surface and squally winds made them uncontrollable to taxi. Defiants could not use it either, the mud thrown up choked the radiators.

However a Whitley did get off and successfully drop parachutes near St Mary Hill outside Bridgend for a Home Guard exercise.

On the 30th two Defiants were damaged. Sgt T Kublynski (Polish) landed Defiant T4010 and taxied towards the marshaller. He skidded and his port main plane collided with stationary Defiant N1788. Next day 5 more Defiants arrived from 9 AOS Penrhos to help with the extra training load caused by the detachments from No 3 AOS.

The school's training commitment was now one course of 45 WOP AGs and one course of 45 straight AGs a month. From February 7th this became two courses of 60 straight AGs a month but included refresher courses for Empire Air Training Scheme trained gunners.

More Mud

The boggy airfield surface ensured that the first four days of February were non-flying days. There was little improvement on the 5th when Wing Officer Beecroft inspected the WAAF section. The date of the arrival of the WAAF on the station is not noted in the station diary. However LAC Harold Richards, an engine fitter on Station Flight, remembers that when they arrived the airmen of the MT section with whom he was billeted had to give up their bed sheets.

Harold looked after a Lysander and a Tiger Moth which were supposed to be ready to fly when the OC Flying, Sqdn Ldr Lewin opened his window and waved. The Lysander was always parked near the compass platform.

Harold's mate Bill Whitmarsh lived in Porthcawl and eventually Harold managed to get billeted there himself, somewhere near All Saints, the parish church. Appropriate really as Harold later became a minister and his superior was Rev P J Bowen, his former C of E padre at Stormy Down. In the MT billet was one airman who did the regular ration to Cardiff where he bet on the greyhounds. He had a good day if he lost only £10! With luck he made it up on the horses! Demobbed he too became a vicar!

The training programme was now so far behind that arrangements were made to use the runway at Llandow if Stormy Down became unserviceable again. A/L/A Shepherd of 1 FTS made his own alternative landing on the 10th. He was in Battle N2228 when the weather closed in, spotting the "wind sock" on the drogue dropping ground at Sker Farm he thought it was an emergency landing ground and landed. His undercarriage collapsed.

Plt Off Read was killed two days earlier when Defiant N1716 stalled 200 yards short of the south boundary. LAC D Battle in the rear cockpit was injured. A memorial service for Mr Read was held in the station church on the following Thursday the 12th.

That was the day the BBC arrived to record an "Aircrew of Tomorrow Programme". The day of the visit was marred further when Lysander P1719 was totally wrecked in a crash into trees at Pont Sarn, Aberbaiden. The Canadian pilot, Sgt Ruffey (buried at Nottage) and the tow operator, AC Thomas, were both killed.

That weekend 7AGS gave a flying display at Porthcawl as part of the town's War Weapons Week. The following week Flt Lt Tripe led a formation of 3 Defiants in another display at Maesteg.

It was the day of the second display, Saturday 21st, that Sgt F Kern landing short, damaged Defiant N1648 on the boundary fence. Two days later Sgt Kern had another close call when he lost a wheel taking off in Defiant 13479 and had to make a wheels up landing.

There were two accidents on the 27th, Sgt F Feeney landing Lysander 79788 had to swerve when a Defiant landed right across his path. He hit a pole carrying a Tannoy speaker. Later Sgt W Kitchner was taxiing Defiant T3980 when the undercarriage collapsed.

Wg Cdr Stemp went on a week long Officer's Gas Course at Rolestone Camp leaving Wg Cdr F E Groce in command. On his return he was promoted to Group Captain.

Earlier in the month Flt Lt Bryan-Smith of 7AGS was invested with the Distinguished Flying Cross at Buckingham Palace, He earned the award whilst flying as a Gunnery Officer,

Defence Exercise

On Sunday 22nd February there was a full station defence exercise. Local Army units and the Home Guard were the attackers with the RAF defending the aerodrome. Harold Richards remembers it as a shambles that still makes him smile. The attackers gained entry by commandeering a brewer's lorry and the bus bringing living-out personnel to work!

For unexplained operational reasons the flashing beacon was lit nearly all night on Wednesday 25th.

RAF Regiment

RAF Regiment 2782 Squadron formed at West Hartlepool in February 1942 from 2782 Flight, Its records do not show it was ever in South Wales, However Stormy Down Forms 540 state 2 Officers and 70 airmen of 2782 Defence Squadron went to RAF Llandow on exercises on March 15th and on Sunday 22nd a detachment of 2 officers and 60 men took part in an exercise with the Home Guard at Port Talbot. Then on March 30th three officers and 82 men took part in a defence exercise at RAF St Athan.

Hopes were raised when March started well with Flying until 17:45 hours on the 1st. There was no more for nearly a week thanks to the wretched weather. During this period there was a visit to observe air gunner school training by Major Schwable, United States Marine Corps.

On the 9th Flt Sgt P Hoare ditched Lysander V9786 3 miles out to sea after his engine cut. HM Minesweeper Fairfax picked him and the tow operator, AC Nelson, up. Six days Defiant T4075 (pilot unknown) was slightly damaged when the tail wheel hit the perimeter fence.

There was near tragedy on the 20th, Sgt H Fothergill flying Defiant 11648, turned in front of the towing aircraft and fouled the tow cable which cut into the port leading edge. Fortunately he was able to carry on.

Seven days later two sets of undercarriages failed to lock and collapsed, Sgt K Jastrebski (Polish) was taxiing Defiant AA292 out when it failed. Later Sgt Denton suffered a similar experience in Whitley K7184.

Despite the bad start which meant 9 half days were lost 760 daylight hours were flown and 152 AGs passed out in March.

April was a black month for 7 AGS, There were gales galore. Only 17 half days were flown. However 1120 hours were clocked up. Three Lysanders took part in an exercise carrying out low level attacks on the Home Guard at Pontardawe. On the debit side there were no less than seven 7 AGS aircraft accidents and a fatal shooting.

On the 1st the Lysander and Defiant programmes were cancelled as the surface was too greasy to taxi safely. Despite these conditions Plt Off Habela (Polish) took off in Defiant AA293 with Sgt Menzies as crewman. The engine failed and they came down a mile to the SE of the aerodrome, writing the machine off.

Weather conditions on the 3rd forced Blenheim Z6089 of No 13 OTU to land at Stormy Down. The pilot, Flt Lt Srathers, overshot and to avoid hitting the Armadillo hut on the far boundary retracted his undercarriage.

On the 5th only three tow lines were flown because just 6 Lysanders were available because there was a shortage of servicing personnel. On the 12th there was a shortage of Defiants for the same reason. April 8th saw the fatal shooting and a near fatality when LAC Dummer was struck and badly injured by Defiant N1648 after Sgt Jastrebski (Polish) landed short near the perimeter track.

The same day Lysander T1423 flown by Sgt Rogers took off for air firing with AC Neave as tow operator, They circled the rendezvous area waiting for Whitley K8942 piloted by Sgt J B Denton with Sgt W J Dawson as the gunnery instructor. As soon as it was sighted the Lysander streamed the drogue and started for the South Inner firing line. The Whitley went into a fairly steep turn to follow. As it turned a RCAF Sgt AG on refresher training was in the front turret trying to clear a stoppage. He accidentally let off a short burst. A bullet killed Private Amy Lydia Slingo of the ATS standing outside an army cookhouse in Severn Road, Porthcawl.

A week later, 15th, Sgt Bluczynski (Polish) with tow operator AC Hocknell in Lysander V9793 went low flying in the Duffryn Valley, 2 miles east of Port Talbot. They struck High Tension cables, crashed, caught fire and were killed, Sergeant (Szer) W Bluczynski was buried at Nottage, Later that evening Sergeant McFall of 53 OTU, Llandow suffered engine failure over Porthcawl in Spitfire X4844 and made a wheels up landing at Stormy Down.

On the 17th the bad surface claimed another victim, Sgt V P Frieze-Green was taxiing Whitley K7206 when the tail oleo collapsed.

Lysander T1643 was written off on the 22nd when Sgt Steven overshot and crashed into the Armadillo hut. It was later re-assessed and repaired. On Monday 27th Lysander V9787 was being manhandled in a high wind when it was blown over the fence and its tail plane damaged.

On the 23rd a six hour Ground Defence exercise was held to highlight the problems of defending an aerodrome. It was organised by Sqdn Ldr Deag and Plt Off Houldswell of the RAF Regiment stationed at Stormy Down. Visiting officers included Gp Cpt Fear and staff from RAF Pembrey.

On the last day of April Sgt J Kobylinski (Polish) had to make a belly landing in Defiant T4G34 because the undercarriage lever jammed in the Up position.

During the month there were visits by Flt Lt Ramsay, HQ 25 Group Concealment and Decoy Officer and from the HQ FTC Chief Medical Officer who was enquiring into the major problem of air sickness in gun turrets.

Despatch Centre

HQ 25 Group laid down that an Instruction Centre should consist of a Despatch Centre (ideally at the midpoint of the aircraft marshalling area), classrooms and offices, a cine-camera workshop, a classroom and projection block, a Locker room for books and overalls, a building for synthetic training equipment, a Spotlight Trainer building, a Turret room Type B, a Target packing and repair section, an Armoury, a Link trainer, and a gymnasium.

A two storey Despatch centre had been designed to house Despatching personnel, pilots, cadets, CFI, his adjutant and clerk, OC Flying, Air Programme Controller and Duty Pilot, Flight Commanders, R/T equipment for aircraft control, a flying clothing locker room and two classrooms. Group declared that 7 AGS could not increase the number of AG courses until attachments of Air Observers from Bobbington stopped.

Senior officers at this time were Gp Cpt G C Stemp as Commanding Officer, Chief Flying Instructor Sqdn Ldr M Bryan-Smith DFC, and as OC Flying Sqdn Ldr P K Campbell who acted as Station Commander while the Gp Cpt was on leave.

Sgt Rogers was often detailed for the last tow of the day. This meant he missed the last bus to Porthcawl. Formally after taking off he circled the rendezvous waiting for the Whitley. One particular pilot failed to turn up. Questioning the mechanics Sgt Rogers discovered this pilot always ran his engines on one magneto. This meant when he tested his engines there was always a drop in revs making the aircraft unserviceable. Upon learning this Sgt Rogers always took off after the Whitley had become airborne.

During April, Moth Minor X9297 arrived from 20 MU by road and when it was assembled one wing locking lever was missing. After much telephoning around, one was located in a small factory at Charlbury near Whitney, Gloucestershire. Sgt Rogers flew a Lysander to a small airfield just outside Whitney and was driven to the factory and given a locking lever. Next day he had to repeat the trip as he had been given a lever for the wrong side. He cannot recall the Moth ever coming out of the hangar.

More Accidents

There was little improvement in the weather for May with high winds, mist, and lots of rain. There were more aircraft accidents too!

The first happened on May 2nd when the undercarriage of Defiant T3980 collapsed after Sgt K Jaskezebski (Polish) overshot. Four days later Sgt F Feeney in Lysander R9113 had a controlled crash onto Pyle and Kenfig golf course. Although the machine was severely damaged the pilot and tow operator were unhurt.

On 9th and 10th the high winged Lysanders were unable to taxi in the strong winds. Defiants and Whitleys were used for cine camera gun work and turret manipulation with no towed targets.

Visiting Blenheim T2432 of 236 Squadron (pilot Flg Off S Minster) overshot hitting the north boundary fence on the 11th.

So flying was possible on the 13th so Practice Alert No 2, "Station on Immediate Defence" was declared. Next day came Practice Alert No 1 (a non flying rehearsal of Operation Banquet), preparing men and machines for immediate departure to Fairwood Common,

Three incidents occurred on the 16th. Flt Sgt A Digby in Whitley K7194 landed with three greens showing only to find the wheels were not locked down and the undercarriage collapsed. One of the crew was RCAF Sgt AG Vernon M Smith on an EATS refresher course. He did not hesitate to tell the Flight Commander he thought of the aircraft reliability and was grounded for his pains.

Landing in Defiant N1648 Sgt T Shrimpton was unable to correct a swing to port and the undercarriage collapsed. The turret was found not to be centralised and stuck with the guns pointing to port and the rear door open causing the aeroplane to try to turn to port.

Finally Whitley K7201 was airborne for about 45 minutes when the starboard engine cut. The unnamed pilot made a successful single engined landing at Yatesbury,

Then on the 21st Sgt A Arter having landed Whitley K8989 was taxiing to dispersal when the aircraft swung to port and the tail unit hit a shelter.

The 27th was wet and cloudy. Flt Lt J Gardener in Lysander R9111 was on cross country when the weather closed in. Forced to land near St Davids he damaged the tail oleo.

Empire Air Training Scheme gunners came to Stormy for refresher training. One such course was No 64 (EATS) AG, which passed out in May. Average flying time was 9 hours 45 minutes. They fired on average 200 rounds at 25 yards, 500 at 200 yards (200 by night), 300 rounds air to ground and 1369 air to air. Each also shot 18 cine gun films from Boulton and Paul (Defiants) and Armstrong Whitworth (Whitley) Turrets at Defiants and Lysanders,

They had 10 shots each with a shot gun mounted in turrets at clay pigeons. Two hours ten minutes were spent on the Spotlight trainer and a further 4 hours 45 minutes on air turret manoeuvring on the ground. But there was still no 30mm cannon firing.

Protest

There was a protest by the Canadians that the food in the Sergeants' Mess was not good enough, A Canadian Sqdn Ldr arrived from Canada House to "read the riot act". Vernon Smith was elected spokesman but when he got up to speak he was told to sit down as he was only a sergeant. Soon after he was posted to RAF Uxbridge for a round of punishment duties, including orderly sergeant, in charge of escorts and funeral parties, before being sent back to Canada in October.

Another May visitor was Section Officer Viscountess Chetwynd from HQ 25 Gp who inspected the WAAF on the station.

On 30th three 7 AGS Whitleys dropped parachutes on the Gower in an anti-invasion exercise for Home Defence Forces.

During May it was agreed that 7 AGS trainee population was to be 240 in future.

Grenade Training

Many ground personnel must have suffered a twinge or two of fear when it was announced they were to undergo live grenade throwing courses from the 22nd. There could have been little comfort knowing a medical orderly was to be in attendance.

June with Double British Summer Time was a good month for training. In the light evenings flying went on until quite late, until 23:30 on at least one occasion. So good was the effort that a whole day's holiday was granted on Saturday 20th because up to the evening before 1240 hours had been flown to date during the month.

A new Flying programme came into operation. First sorties were not until 10.00 hours, giving aircrew time for physical training. Flying was planned until 10 at night and when it finished the day's training operations were assessed.

First mention of the Air Training Corps in the Operations Diary was on the 7th when a number of cadets were given flights within the training programme.

One or two at a time were allocated to a gunnery detail in a Whitley. Equipped with a Mae West inflatable life jacket and a parachute harness and carrying a parachute they sat on the rear fuselage floor with the trainee gunners.

If the cadet was very lucky the pilot might invite him to crawl up forward to the cockpit to see what was going on. Otherwise he just had to try and peer through a narrow perspex covered slit in the side of the aircraft.

More ATC cadets were given local passenger flights, usually on weekend afternoons, during the year. Flying was an eagerly anticipated feature for those on a week's camp too.

The Station Defence Gunners had a training day on Margam dunes on the 11th June when Lysanders towed sleeve targets for them to fire at from the ground. Weapons were set up and the unhappy pilot flew past at about 300 feet high at 150 mph some 300 yards in front of the guns. Behind and about 50 feet below him trailed the drogue at the end of 1000 feet of cable. As Margam

Mountains were behind the Moors there were some hectic moments for the pilot coming in from the sea!

Sgt D V MacGiles, a Southern Rhodesian, was on Number 67 (EATS) refresher course. In his group of 11, eight were fellow countrymen, one from Canada and two were Newfoundlanders. They were posted to 25 OTU Finningley on June 14 on completion of the course during which they had about 8 hours flying. Their log books were signed by F/O J W N Walker.

In June trials were carried out on the Margam ranges to see if Whitleys could be used for the air to ground firing practice previously done in Defiants. The results were good enough for this to go into the syllabus.

Visitors during the month included the Group Concealment and Decoy Officer and General Page, Commanding 9th Anti Aircraft Division. Visitors also came in biplanes. Wg Cdr Patter of 5FTS arrived on June 18th in Gauntlet K5291 and 5 days later Sqdn Ldr Brackenbury of 5(P)AFU landed in Gladiator K8042. Both had taken off from Pembrey (1AGS).

Tow pilots had a break in routine on the 28th when the Operational Naval Control at Cardiff suspected mines had been laid in the Bristol Channel. Two Lysanders were detailed to search the area Cardiff- Newport-Chepstow-Weston super Mare-Bridgewater for an hour but they saw no mines. HQ 25 Gp became concerned that the six week: EATS refresher courses for trained air gunners were overloading 7 AGS, The demand for straight air gunners increased as more and more four engined bombers came into service. The crux of the matter was there were facilities for only 240 trainees at any one time.

There were two aircraft incidents. On the 8th Flt Sgt Hoare made a heavy landing in Defiant T3990 distorting the front spar. Then on the 21st Sgt G Hinds (Rhodesian) was taxiing Whitley K8942 when he lost brake pressure and collided with Whitley K9004 which was parked.

Ancient Monuments

Early in July Sir Cyril Fox (of the national Museum of Wales) visited the station to discuss putting up signs and preserving the ancient monuments within the aerodrome. These included the Danish Camp at Twmpath y Delaiar and a Beaker burial site. Both have since disappeared into the quarry.

Pilots now did wet dinghy drill in Bridgend baths. Also in the interests of efficiency, the gunnery pilots were given a chance to fly Lysanders and stream targets as a practical lesson in the problems of towing.

On July 11 the new aerodrome control came into operation. Aircraft now had to wait for the green Aldis lamp signal from the caravan before taking off. This Control Post, marked with a black and white chequered flag, was stationed on the left at the leeward end of the approach, i.e. to the port of incoming aircraft. But until staff gained more experience of the new system no arrangements were made to control landings.

A peacetime practice, the Station Sports Day followed by a dance, reappeared on the 21st. Next day HRH Duchess of Gloucester, Air Commandant WAAF, inspected the station and the WAAF working there. Four days later the AOC in C 25 Gp, AVK E D Davies QBE. carried out his inspection. No 5 Bomb Disposal Squadron, a lodger unit, had their own inspection by Sqdn Ldr Rowland of Air Ministry several days earlier.

In the middle of the month 4 Whitley Mark Vs arrived and pilots familiarised themselves with the new machines. Shortly before their arrival the long awaited dinghy drill syllabus was issued.

There was a full scale anti-invasion exercise around Porthcawl on Sunday 19th involving both the Military and Civil Authorities. Thirty WAAFs billeted at the Marine Base acted as panic stricken civilians. Between 0500 and 0900 hours attacks were made on the town. Two Defiants swooped down low in dive bombing attacks and street fighting went on all morning to the delight of the many small boys who gathered to watch.

On the 23rd an aircraft was reported down in the Bristol Channel, Within 10 minutes a Lysander took off to search for it. Later the crew of the crashed aircraft were picked up in their dinghy and the Lysander returned home.

That evening when Sgt E Taylor (Rhodesia) landed Whitley K9005 the undercarriage collapsed beneath him. Apparently the gunnery instructor acting as 2nd pilot brought the wheels up instead of the flaps!

The airfield claimed another victim on the 30th when the tail oleo of Lysander T1423 collapsed while taxiing.

No 70 AG course passed out in July. Each gunner fired an average of 2470 rounds in the air and a further 700 on the ground. Turret manipulation averaged 7 hours and the time spent in the Spotlight trainer was 6 hours.

A summary of flying for the month reads:

Aircraft	Strength	Serviceable	Hours Flown
Whitley I	7	2	82
Whitley II	1	1	32
Whitley III	12	4	307
Whitley V	5	3	15
Lysander	25	12	678
Defiant	38	18	535
Totals	88	40	1649

Target Dropping

From the beginning of August the SE corner of the airfield was used for dropping drogues instead of the Sker Farm field. Towing aircraft flew E to W across the aerodrome to release the sleeves. Soon it was realised that if targets blew about before they could be picked up they might endanger other aircraft. So the site was moved to the SW corner and tugs instructed to fly into wind when releasing targets. This new procedure meant trainee gunners were able to examine their own targets immediately after landing.

A new Group Planned Flying programme was started. A specified number of aircraft were allocated each day and the plan was supposed to ensure that this number were in fact serviceable. Because of the one hour daylight saving (Double British Summer Time) the flying programme now ran from 0900 hours until 2100 hours daily.

Before the month was out there were complaints that morning parades were holding up the flying programme. It was agreed the aircraft handling party be excused parade. Mid month gales also badly affected the training programme because the tow Lysanders had difficulty in taxiing in the strong winds,

A new training procedure was introduced, In future trainees were to practice aiming by firing tracer into the sea from the air before air to air shooting at drogues.

Aircraft co-operated with 9 RAA by dive bombing over Danygraig and attacking Home Guard at Kenfig. Three Whitleys also took part in an exercise (David) at Fairwood Common.

During the Summer a series of week long ATC camps were held at Stormy Down, At the end of July there was a visit by Mr W W Wakefield MP, the Corps Director, A week later there was another, by ACM Sir H Robert Brooke-Popham (retired). No doubt the most welcome visitor as far as the cadets were concerned was Lt Trafford RNVR. Arriving the Following week in a Fleet Air Arm Fairey Fulmar he later took some of the cadets up in it.

On August the 23rd a Whitley and pilot were sent to RAF Fairwood Common to give ATC cadets camped there a flight.

Flight Engineer Courses

Flt Lt Doe (Org 2c, HQ FTC) arrived to discuss the proposed intake of 200 Flight Engineers for ground training. Establishment WAR/FT/120B was suspended and Evanton Establishment WAR/FT/11IB brought in because 7 AGS had been upgraded to train 240 pupils. The first of the two week Flight Engineer ground courses started on September 17th.

Another visitor was Major Wright, United States Army Air Corps, who arrived on Sunday 30th to observe air gunner training. He later returned to RAF Hendon by Lysander.

Military Funeral

On August 21st the funeral of Unter Offizier Walter Knoppick, aged 22, a Luftwaffe pilot took place at Cottage cemetery. He was accorded full military honours. Raiding Swansea on the night of August 4/5 his Heinkel He 111 (7497) of 8/KG 53 was shot down by a Beaufighter of No 215 Sqdn (Fairwood Common) off Ilfracombe. His drowned body was found at Newton on the 18th. The Intelligence Officer from RAF St Athan took charge of his personal effects.

Sgt Knoppick's remains were exhumed on 11 April, 1963 and he was reburied in the German War Cemetery, Cannock Chase.

There was a change of Chief Instructors when Flt Lt (Acting Sqdn Ldr) Bryan Smith DFC, posted to 2 AGS, was replaced by Flt Lt Custerson.

In a session at the open air baths at Bridgend all pilots were instructed on the K type dingy (the seat type, attached to the pilot's parachute harness).

There was only one flying accident during the month. On the 25th Sgt J Walker took off in Defiant T3959. The undercarriage would not retract and it collapsed on touchdown.

More Rain

By the beginning of September there was heavy rain. Sudden wind changes hampered the flying programme. When No 80 AG (EATS) course was due to pass out they had fired a bare 150 rounds per cadet having flown an average of just 3 hours 43 minutes. Often when firing was possible there were further delays as passing convoys in the channel fouled the ranges, for example on the 6th the South Inner and Outer Tow Lines were fouled for an hour.

There were disciplinary problems with the Canadian airmen. Several were fined for drunkenness. Three of the 52 SNCOs on 80 course were reduced to the ranks and 2 others sent on disciplinary courses. Gp Cpt Cameron, RCAF, was the inspecting officer at their passing out parade on the 8th.

Dinghy drill was now a regular feature for all pilots, tow operators and the aircrew attached from Bobbington. Both the Bridgend and Port Talbot swimming baths were used for this. The evenings were now drawing in and planned flying started at 0800 hours. The last detail was to take off 1800 hours, brought forward to 1700 hrs in October. This meant that it was still light enough for the ground crew to service the aircraft in the open air before black-out. Because the aircraft were dispersed around the aerodrome security patrols were mounted at night and on Sundays to protect them from possible sabotage.

The AOC in C FTC, AM P Babbington made his inspection on September 21st. Despite the weather 1,157 hours were flown during September. This achievement was marred by the fatal crash of Defiant T4075 on the 22nd. It dived into the sea off Port Talbot. The crew Flt Sgt T Shrimpton, RNZAF pilot, (age 25) and Sgt J S Tesky RCAF, AG are buried in Nottage cemetery.

On the 29th Spitfire BM575 of 3 Flt 421 Sqdn crashed into the mountainside behind St John's Colliery, Maesteg. Stormy Down sent an ambulance to recover the body of Sgt I H Mackay and return him to the squadron's base at RAF Fairwood Common.

Some airmen were managing to miss the first working parade with no official excuse. From the 1st October the officers in charge of billets were ordered to make sure all their men were on parade.

Sqdn Ldr Brackenbury (HQ 25 Gp Air Staff) arrived on the 13th for night flying trials in an Anson. He flew for half an hour from 1845 hours to see if the aerodrome was suitable for night landing. He concluded it was suitable only for Ansons. In November two were used for pilot conversion to that type as it was intended to replace the Whitleys with them in order that night flying gunnery training could take place.

During October there were three accidents. On the 20th Flg Off W Pershke (Polish) in Whitley K8992 overshot into dispersal as his airspeed indicator was not working. The pitot tube cover was found to be still on.

Five days later he was taking off in Whitley K8972 when the starboard engine failed at 50 feet. After he landed safely it was found that the number seven cylinder intake valve had broken. There was another Whitley engine failure on the 30th, Flt Sgt H Pattinson took off in T4154. The port engine started running rough and smoking. The oil pressure then fell. He shut down the engine and made a successful landing. A connecting rod in the engine had broken.

At the end of the month it was decided that for the future only airmen pilots were to be detailed as Duty Pilot. The junior officer pilots were promptly transferred to the Orderly Officer roster instead.

Latest orders from HQ 25 Gp were that from November 5th flying be carried out on every day of the week. Half the permanent staff were to work on Saturday and the others on Sunday. The working day was to be extended to 10 hours with an hour off for meals. Despite this, bad weather was again affecting the programme. No 83 (EATS) course passed out with an average of less than 7 hours flying time. The weekly station defence exercise on the 28th was cancelled so that a full ten hour flying day could be worked. Even so only 901 hours were flown for the month.

A return to Group HQ showed from May to October 1,990,965 rounds of .303" ammunition had been used for training in the air with a further 790,270 used in the ground firing.

There was an overnight stay by the AOC in C on the 9th/10th November.

Radio controlled aircraft used the North Inner Towline for bombing on the 13th and 15th.

There was a pleasant duty for Flt Lt R G Addy on the 17th. He went to Buckingham Palace to receive the Air Force Cross for meritorious non- operational flying in connection with air training.

Experiment

On the 10th of December Plt Off's A M Bullock and A Rawlings with a fitter were detached to 1 AGS Pembrey for 3 weeks with Whitley 11345. They arrived at 16:15 hours ready to begin night firing trials. These involved illuminated towed targets and incendiary (tracer) bullets. They returned from these trials, which had taken place both at night and day, on December 30th. Although results were good nothing came of the idea.

Bad weather meant little flying and for the second month in succession there were no accidents to 7 AGS aircraft.

However on the 11th two Lysanders of Number 1492 Target Towing Flight, Weston Zoyland, were en route to No 3 RAF Regiment School, Ronaldsway, Isle of Man. Faced by bad weather they diverted to Stormy Down. The aerodrome surface was slippery and they were unable to brake. R2001 eventually stopped safely but P1671 overshot and hit an MT vehicle.

On the 16th there was a strong southerly gale and a stray barrage balloon drifted across the airfield at 0945hrs in the morning.

Another course of instruction, the Free Gun course, started at the school in December. Only one AG course, No 90, an ab initio course, passed out during the month. Pupils had an average flying time of 10 hours 55 minutes, fired 1465 rounds each and spent a further 17 hours 22 minutes on turret manipulation.

On Christmas Eve visiting Whitley EB289 of 295 (Army Cooperation) Sqdn from Netheravon was written off when Flg Off M Collins RCAF overshot the east boundary. Work went on right up until 5 o'clock that afternoon. It restarted at 1400 hours on Boxing Day. Unfortunately mist prevented any flying until the 28th. This was the day that Gp Cpt W E G Bryant MBE arrived as supernumerary prior to taking over command from Gp Cpt Stemp.

The new year brought an increased training load with a planned trainee population rising to 490. Courses now included free gunnery Synthetic Training.

It was snowing on January 5 when Gp Cpt Bryant took over command. A week later the AOC of 25 Gp took a look at the new Free Gun sighting training. The following day AVM E D Davies presented the Station Crest to Gp Cpt Bryant. It comprised of six arrows on a central spot. The whole set within the usual unit badge wreath around which were the words VII AIR GUNNERS' School VII ROYAL AIR FORCE. Beneath was the motto SEMPER ALACER (always alert). Later in the day the Gp Cpt accompanied the AOC on an afternoon visit to 1 AGS Pembrey by air.

Heavy rain with its attendant problems was again a regular feature. On the 13th flying had to be stopped to prevent the ground being cut up by the aircraft. It was no holiday for the pilots, they all went pistol firing on the 25 yard range.

With increasing emphasis on Air Sea Rescue, dingy dropping exercises from Lysanders were held off Porthcawl. The launches from the Marine Craft Unit took part. Pilots also went to the base for a talk on procedures and were given a trip in the launches.

By mid January the airfield was so sodden that flying was impossible. Air Ministry Works Department engineers from HQ FTC made an inspection. They found water collecting in the broken limestone rock under the top soil. After heavy rain this overflowed and soil was washed out creating underground cavities which caved in when a heavy weight, such as an aeroplane, went over.

They drew up proposals to help alleviate the problem. These included parking the Defiants to the end of the airfield and the heavier Whitleys to the East where the ground was firmer.

Church parades were now held fortnightly with a quarter of the personnel working that day detailed to attend.

February began badly. A 7 AGS Defiant, N1646, flown by Sgt Bednavecczyk became lost in bad weather and landed at Dishley, the Brush Works aerodrome. It was damaged when it ran off the runway.

The airfield was still unserviceable for the first three days and when the programme started up on the 4th there was an accident. Lysander T1588 (pilot Plt Off K M Steven) was taxiing when the ground subsided and the starboard undercarriage collapsed.

Two days later Flt Lt G Wilson of No 53 OTU, Llandow, literally dropped in on the aerodrome. He was at 7,000 feet to the north of the aerodrome in Spitfire K8901 when his oil pressure dropped. He made a successful wheels-up landing.

On the 7th the range was fouled for 2 hours while No 61 Anti Aircraft Brigade at Swansea fired out to sea on an exercise with the Home Guard at Morfa Mawr.

Next day the programme was cut due to a shortage of maintenance personnel. Then on the 11th there was fog! The landmark beacon was flashing all day long.

Two aircraft collided on the 13th when Sgt R Horsefield taxiing out Whitley K8992 ran into with parked Lysander V9787. Later that day Sgt Kudlineczi (Polish) made a wheels up landing in Whitley K9054 after the undercarriage lever was fouled.

Despite gale force winds on the 15th the Air Sea Rescue Lysander searched between Nash Point and St Donats for the wreckage of Spitfires X4067 and R7822. Both from 53 OTU they were in formation when they collided. One pilot, Plt Off Wagner was injured and the other, Fg Off Nelson killed.

About this time Fg Off Riches (Air Sea Rescue Officer) was posted and Flt Sgt C H Rogers took over and within a week was commissioned as Plt Off.

A Mk 1 Lysander was flown infrequently and Mr Rogers sometimes took it up. It may have been the machine looked after by Harold Richards which was supposed to be ready to fly at a moment's notice.

Mr Rogers remembers that if it was put in Weak Mixture (for normal cruising) the engine faltered very badly. Not very comforting when flying just a few feet above the sea. He recalls that the Radio telephone, a TR9 wireless, was not very efficient either.

Towards the end of the month, unusually, camera gun exercises were flown in Whitleys with Lysanders and Defiants as the attacking aircraft.

Experiments by RAF St Athan with radio controlled Queen Bee aircraft dropping bombs on No 1 Bombing Target continued intermittently.

During February a High Frequency Direction Finding station, a navigational aid, was set up. Also a Horticultural Adviser was asked to look at the station gardens as the camp was trying to grow all its own vegetables.

On the last day of the month no tow lines were flown as the Whitleys were on tracer bullet demonstration and the Defiants flew on cine camera gun exercises.

There were four flying accidents during March. On the 3rd, Plt Off E Taylor (Rhodesia) was taxiing Whitley T4154 when both wheels subsided up to their axles causing some damage.

Flt Lt W Jakinowski (Polish) suffered engine failure in Defiant T3982 on the 6th. Without the engine driven pump there were no hydraulics and the undercarriage collapsed on touchdown. Neither he nor the tow operator, AC Domican, were hurt. He had another undercarriage collapse when taxiing Defiant AA288 on the 29th. Again neither he nor his crew, Sgt Mermel (Polish), were hurt.

On the 12th Sgt Mooring was approaching in Lysander V9787 when the actuating gear failed. This adjusted the angle of incidence of the tail plane and controlled horizontal movement. He went round again and landed but when he braked the machine nosed over.

No 1 EATS Short Gunnery Course passed out on the 3rd. There were 4 failures out of the intake of 50. On average they flew 4 hours 36 minutes by day and 1½ hours by night.

At the end of the month the new Wireless Operator emergency short ground course started.

Regular visits were now being made to the station by neighbouring ATC squadrons and whenever possible there was air experience flying for the cadets. For example those visiting on Sunday 14th flew in Ansons.

Whitleys flew tracer demonstration flights on the 26th while Defiants and Lysanders practiced formation flying in rehearsal for the next day when three Whitleys, Defiants and Lysanders flew over Porthcawl as part of the town's "Wings for Victory Week". Nine Lysanders flew information over Mountain Ash a week later for a similar cause.

The 25th Flight Engineer course passed out at the end of March. They had fired 500 rounds apiece (200 in simulated night conditions) and clocked up 2 hours 38 minutes of ground turret manipulation (Spotlight trainer).

Silver Anniversary

A traditional colour hoisting ceremonial parade was held on April the 1st to mark the Royal Air Force's 25th anniversary. Two days later the 100th Air Gunner course passed out. In seven weeks its pupils had flown an average of only 5 hours 46 minutes and a request for an extension had been refused. Standard free gunnery training had suffered although nearly 12 hours had been spent on turret manipulation.

On Sunday the 4th a Whitley and pilot flew over to Fairwood Common to give ATC cadets of 215 (Swansea) Squadron air experience flying during their visit to that airfield.

Winds of 30 mph held up the programme on the 7th. It was difficult to taxi and too rough for target towing.

There was a forced landing near the aerodrome on the 11th when Magister DL767 (430 Sqdn) en route from base (Dunsfold) to Aberporth suffered engine failure.

Orders came from the Air Ministry that the Station Landmark beacon be switched on from 21.30 hours on the 19th until 02.30 hours on the 20th. Later, in July word came down that it was no longer needed.

However in September it was moved to Morfa Mawr (near Margam Moors) and from November, under RAF Stormy Down control, was lit each evening from Sunset until Sunrise.

On April the 21st the new Summer Time Flying Plan came into operation. Flying now started at 0900hrs. Each detail was to last 50 minutes per tow. There would be a total of 16 details during daylight hours. The same day the first Miles Martinet arrived for target towing duties.

The first cooperation exercise with local anti aircraft units took place on May 2nd. An Anson flew around at 7,000 feet for two hours in the morning and again in the afternoon. Search-Light Battery stations within a 14 miles radius tried to locate the aircraft. The exercise was repeated four days later and became a regular Tuesday and Thursday commitment. An additional area, Maesteg and Neath, was allocated for these Army Cooperation Searchlight Exercises in the beginning of July.

Plt Off Siddaway suffered a rather nasty experience on May 4th when taxiing Whitley P5024 the tail oleo collapsed.

Next day Magister L8155 (No 3 Delivery Flight) en route to Fairwood Common aerodrome force landed on Margam sands with engine failure.

Another 7 AGS aircraft, Lysander R2621 flown by Sgt Simms, had to make an emergency landing on Stormy Down with engine failure. Sgt Simms went through the same experience again in Lysander T1581 on the 11th. Engine failure on the 7th also forced Fg Off Patrick to return before planned in Whitley K8942.

Martinets were first used for air gunner training at Stormy on May 5th. Because they were so much faster than any of the previous target tugs it was decided that the firing ranges might have to be extended. By the end of the month Anson and Martinet air firing details were flying the RAF Llandow Tow Line. This extended from Nash Point to Breaksea Point further up the coast. Whitleys used the South C-D line heading out across the Bristol Channel from Ogmore. Later because of the intensified programme No 19 Air Firing Range, Gower, was also taken over for use by 7 AGS.

Suddenly the weather became unseasonably wet, windy and cold. So cold that fires and heating which had been stopped for the Summer were authorised again on May 8th until such time as it got warmer.

On the morning of the 9th a strange aircraft joined the circuit and came down near the SE boundary. It was a partially deflated barrage balloon which had broken loose in the blustery wind and drifted from Port Talbot. It was picketed down until its owners collected it later in the day.

The weather soon improved and by the 11th flying was on again and on the 15th four Martinets flew over the Rhondda dipping in salute for Wings for Victory week. A similar flight by a formation of three took place over Aberdare eight days later and over Kenfig Hill and Porthcawl on the last Saturday in the month.

On May 12th, after trials with Ansons and Martinets, it was agreed that 125 mph was a suitable speed for target towing. Then an Anson and a Martinet were used on several special details to give the gunnery instructors experience before the change over to the new types.

There was also a photo call for the Martinet when the press arrived to take pictures of one flying low across the airfield.

On May 30th the Royal Naval Operations Centre, Cardiff, reported an enemy submarine sighted six miles west of Scarweather Lightship. An Anson was sent up to search the area for an hour but saw nothing.

By now Monday morning followed a well established routine. There was a parade followed by the station defence exercise. Sometimes the pilots were excused the exercise and sent to Port Talbot swimming baths for dingy drill and swimming.

It was on such a parade on June 21st that Flt Lt (Acting Sqdn Ldr) Higgs and Flt Sgt G Watts were both presented with Certificates of Commendation.

Week long camps for ATC cadets started up again and a Dominie arrived on loan to give them air experience flying. These camps continued until September with ACM A Brooke Popham, AOC in C of the ATC paying a visit in August.

In June Sqdn Ldr Mitchell and Fg Off Arnold paid a visit to 1 AGS at Pembrey. The Senior Air Staff Officer of Flying Training Command, Air Cdre M Thomas visited 7 AGS and then went to Pembrey by road. The following month there was a visit to Stormy Down by the Senior Medical Officer of 25 Gp. Wg Cdr T T Forbes.

A Search and Rescue Anson was sent out to the Ilfracombe area on the evening of June 24th but saw nothing. There was another search on July 16th. Three soldiers got into difficulties bathing on Margam Sands. Happily they were safe by the time the Lysander arrived over the scene.

Ansons were now used for air gunner training while one Whitley was used to give ATC cadets air experience flying. All 16 Lysanders on strength were replaced by 18 Martinets. It was on July 3rd that the first accident to a Martinet happened. Sgt E Guziau (Polish) taxying in N511 with AC Tarling' as the tow operator collided with parked Anson LT827. Just 15 days afterwards Sgt N Routledge on his third solo in the type swung landing Martinet J1538 and the undercarriage collapsed.

On July 2nd Fg Off Siddaway was starting up Anson LT879. Believing that he heard "Contact" called, he switched on. The starboard propeller struck Fitter IIE Cpl B Davies fracturing his skull. It is said that the fitter's twin brother was also serving on the station.

Later the same day because of the fog and poor visibility Flt Sgt Crawford in Anson LT889 made a forced landing at Wedmore (7 miles from Wells). Later he took off flew back to Stormy Down with his two Army passengers.

Although pilots were expected to do some physical exercise, generally when there was no flying they lounged around the crew room. From the beginning of August they were ordered to attend organised physical training and lectures instead.

In order to make full use of all available flying time the programme now started at 8 am. As a result, despite some poor weather, a total of 3,011 hours were flown by the 28th of August. The AOC sent his congratulations at this splendid effort.

The 28th Infantry Division of the American Army had arrived in South Wales and on September 5th four Engineer Officers stationed at Laleston, a small village about 2 miles away, were entertained in the Officers Mess.

At the Monday morning parade on the 6th Sgts Evans and Griffiths were presented with Mention in Despatches certificates. A ceremonial colour hoisting parade commemorated the anniversary of the Battle of Britain on the 15th.

There had been no accidents in August but on September 19th Sgt Lovett overshot in Anson LT831 and hit the east perimeter fence. Two days later Sgt P Strycharek (Polish) was in circuit in Anson LT888 when Lysander T1588 piloted by Sgt W Routledge with AC Bob Tarling as tow operator was ordered to take off. The two collided at 600 feet a quarter of a mile NW of the airfield. Both crews

were killed. Besides the two pilots and the operator these were air gunner instructor Sgt D Brunell and trainee air gunners ACs Penfold, Price and Ralph, Sgt Strycharek (aged 28) and AC Penfold (aged 20) were buried at Nottage cemetery on the following Monday.

Geoff Worley of 117 AG course recalls marching past the ambulance bays after this crash. Their instructor, Sgt "Killer" Kyle made some remarks to divert their attention from the stretchers propped up against the walls, drying out after being scrubbed clean.

During training Geoff flew with 17 different pilots, carried out seven different types of exercise between September 5th and 19th. He flew five sorties on 5th, three each day on 7th, 9th, 11th and 15th, one on the 17th and another three on the 19th.

He fired 200 rounds (four Vickers Gas Operated machine gun drums) each on Exercise G3 (Tracer Demonstration), Beam firing, Attack Tail Turret and Quarter Cross Over. He had also used 25 feet of cine film. His total flying time was 16 hours 50 minutes.

The morning after passing out they all had hang overs. The Drill Sergeant marched them round and round calling them all the names under the sun and threatened to stop their leave until they could march like sergeants. Eventually he released them and they made their way to Pyle and the trains home

On October 2nd Lancaster EE110 (619 Sqdn) returning from a raid over Hagen ditched off Llantwit Major. Launches from Porthcawl searched the Channel on several days. Then on the 5th Flt Lt D Atkinson in the ASRS Lysander searched the area SE of Scarweather lightship looking in vain for a body.

As usual at this time of year the airfield was again waterlogged, it claimed another victim when Sgt Mitchell in Anson LT883 landing N to S because of the state of the ground hit an obstacle.

A cine camera gun Flight was formed. It was a sub flight of Martinet pilots specializing in attacks with another sub flight of Anson pilots to fly cine camera gun aircraft. Soon Lieutenant D'Bordes (Free French Air Force) arrived on loan from the Central Gunnery School to instruct Martinet pilots in curve of pursuit attacks from Beam to Fine Quarters on the Ansons.

Flying Control

When the new Watch Office was completed it housed the OC Flying, the Duty Pilot, Airfield Control and the Flying Squadron orderly room. Flt Lt Bear of HQ 25 Gp arrived on November 11th to reorganise the Airfield Control.

Two weeks later preparations were made for the new system. The Airfield Control caravan was fitted with R/T and placed at the lee end of the landing run. It took over the airfield traffic control previously exercised by a post on top of the control tower. It began operations on December 1st but because the airfield surface was convex the caravan did not have an all round view across the airfield. So a look out was positioned on top of the tower to watch the blind spots. He was in R/T communication with the caravan.

By November two United States Army Piper Cub aircraft were attached for hangarage and maintenance. They operated from a landing ground alongside West Drive at Porthcawl. Liaison, aircraft they were attached to the Infantry Brigade HQ in the town but belonged to 107th Artillery Battalion.

On December the 2nd lightning struck two aircraft in flight. Sgt H Westmorland was at 2,000 feet in JH536 and 3 hours later Sgt V Smith was at 1,500 feet in MS525 when the incidents occurred.

On the 9th visibility was too bad for flying to take place. However Oxford LX282 of 6 (Canadian) OTU Silloth on cross country made a forced landing on the aerodrome. Flt Sgt Mckin (RCAF) making a fast landing on the waterlogged surface over ran into the hedge.

On the 11th Anson MG112 lost both engines over the sea and ditched. The pilot Sgt D Oldrenshaw transmitted on his TR9 but his call was not received. Happily the pilot, gunnery instructor Flt Sgt Harper and trainee gunners, ACs Grasson, Bowen and Taylor were picked up by the Swansea dredger. Mr Rogers recalls the Anson floated around in Swansea Bay for about 2 hours before finally sinking.

Because the radio TS9 was so unreliable the board of enquiry recommended that the more modern TR1186 be fitted in future.

Christmas Day fell on Saturday and that day and Boxing Day were holidays.

During the first week of January two Wellingtons with Flt Lt Lewis in charge arrived for a 5 weeks attachment. They were taking part in trials to see if they were more efficient for gunnery training than Ansons.

The aerodrome was so waterlogged that a week later, on the 13th, they were flown to Llandow because it had tarmac runways, A 7 AGS Martinet was detached to act as the attacking aircraft. When these trials ended at the end of February the results were said to be satisfactory.

Meantime, on January 6th, making his solo conversion flight on Ansons Sgt J Laidlaw force landed MG132 near Bridgend.

Flying was only possible on 11 days in January. The state of the airfield was so bad that on the 8th the decision was made to take over RAF Rhoose as a satellite for 6 months. During this period Stormy Down would be kept open for visitors and for servicing inspections.

It was too wet to parade on the 21st and all personnel assembled in the Turret Theatre. Here Gp Cpt Bryant presented Certificates of Commendation to Sqdn Ldr Carey and LACW Munsall. It was the last occasion he appeared as Gp Cpt, next morning he was promoted to Air Commodore.

On the 30th there was a fatal accident. Flt Sgt J Ruddell RCAF in Martinet MS525 flew into the mountainside at Penycae, 2 miles FE of Port Talbot. The pilot, 24 years of age, was buried as Plt Off Ruddell at Nottage cemetery on February 3rd.

On February 2nd part of the east-west runway collapsed. The airfield was completely unserviceable. An engineering inspection was carried out with a view to improving the surface. It was recommended that permanent repairs be made.

Whilst this engineering work was in progress air gunner training would continue at Rhoose. So on Tuesday the 8th twenty three Ansons, 20 Martinets and 50 pilots moved to what is now Cardiff (Wales) Airport. Air gunner training was to restart on the 10th.

This move of staff aircrew and trainees meant there were empty huts at Stormy Down and all 7 AGS ICOs and airmen living at Porthcawl Air Sea Rescue Marine Base were moved back into the camp.

The first accident at Rhoose occurred on February the 21st when Sgt Stanowski (Polish) taxiing in Martinet MS675 hit a lorry.

At the end of February notice was received that Gp Cpt T S Ivens would arrive as supernumerary to relieve Air Cdr Bryant on his posting to RAF Cranwell. However his arrival at Stormy Down was eventually cancelled.

Four aerodromes, Stormy Down, Llandow, St Athan and Rhoose were within a few miles of each other. Their circuits almost overlapped.

Early in March a meeting was held to discuss and mutually agree approach techniques and instructions. Air Cdr Bryant and Sqdn Ldr Addy (OC Flying) represented Stormy Down.

On March 10th USA Maurader 296192 en route to St Mawgan from West Africa made a forced landing on Margam Beach. Off course, it ran out of fuel. The Duty Pilot informed Porthcawl ASR Marine Base and the duty boat was sent to the rescue. However the crew were quite safe having waded ashore.

Another taxiing accident happened at Rhoose on the 19th. Plt Off J Kisielewicz (Polish) in Anson MG113 hit a bowser with the port mainplane.

There was a death through illness when Flg Off Ben Sussman RCAF, aged 24, succumbed to toxic polyneuritis at Church Village hospital. Dying on the 24th he was buried at Treforest three days later.

That day, the 27th, Martinet EM456 dived into the sea 14 miles off Porthcawl. Both the pilot Sgt Westmorland and tow operator LAC Reed were killed. Divers were sent down and it was found to be holed with 20 mm cannon shell. At this time the whole of the South West was full of troops preparing for D Day. It may have been downed by friendly fire.

Target tugs of 587 (anti-aircraft cooperation) squadron were also using Rhoose. The airfield must have been congested because orders were issued that to prevent collisions all 7 AGS aircraft were to have airmen at the wing tips when taxiing.

The undercarriage of Anson MG134 (pilot Sgt J Laidlaw) collapsed on April 13th after it went off the runway.

Back at Stormy Down, on the 24th, Group Officer Dacre of HQ FTC, inspected the WAAF quarters. The WAAF site, complete with its own guardroom was opposite the former airmen's married quarters. Although they were out of bounds to RAF personnel the station gymnasium, at the far end, could only be reached by a path through them.

It became necessary to augment training flights from Rhoose and on April 25th six air to sea firing details were carried out from Stormy Down. Three days later Sgt W Winterbottom made a forced landing onto that airfield. After taking off from Rhoose both engines on Anson XG132 cut out at 5,000 feet.

There was a change the 7 AGS aircraft establishment on April 27th, Six Ansons were added making 27 for use with 10 in reserve plus two dual control machines. Martinets were reduced by 7 to total 18 with 10 reserves. Both the Miles Master and Tiger Moth remained but the DH94 was replaced by a Magister. On the 1st May three Ansons arrived from 9 (0) AFU, Penrhos to complete the strength.

On 4th May Sgt E Janiszewski (Polish) in Martinet JN420 ran out of fuel on his approach to drop a sleeve drogue on Rhoose. He force landed safely onto the aerodrome. AC Newman was his tow operator.

There was another emergency with Martinets on May 7th when the engine of MS836 (587 Sqdn) cut out on takeoff. The machine ran past the boundary into a field and turned over. Neither the pilot nor crewman AC Poulter were hurt.

Four days later 587 Squadron aircraft, attached for target duties on Thornbury Maritime Royal Artillery School range, returned to Cardiff aerodrome. The detachment of a Tiger Moth and 3

Martinets had arrived at Cardiff from Weston Zoyland in March, and had moved to Rhoose on April 8th.

Monday, May 8th was a black day for 7 AGS with 8 deaths. Three Ansons took off from Rhoose on cinegun exercise with a Martinet.

Ansons LV300 and MG131 collided about 1½ miles out at sea from Porthcawl Point. Immediately the duty boat put out only to find an empty dingy and some wreckage.

The crew of MG131 were Flt Sgt Deans (pilot), ACs Holland, Killman and Knowles, On board LV300 were Flt Sgt J Davies (RCAF) (pilot), ACs Robinson, Shoesmith and Grienthwaite, Eventually all their bodies were found and Flt Sgt Davies, aged 25, was buried at Nottage as a Plt Off.

There were two more accidents during May but luckily both were without injuries. On the 13th a visiting Cessna Crane, 43-31816 of the USAF, overshot at Stormy Down and hit a mound of earth near the boundary. Then on the 23rd Flt Sgt Head had engine failure as he was landing Martinet EM455 onto Stormy Down and ended up in a field.

In May No W68 Elementary Gliding School arrived at Stormy Down from Cardiff to teach gliding to ATC cadets.

A visit to both Stormy Down and Rhoose by the Inspector General, ACM Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt, on the 18th was followed next day by AOC in C FTC, AM Sir Philip Babbington. He inspected the reconditioning work and was interested in its progress.

On his return to HQ FTC it was decided that after hard standings and a metal runway had been installed the airfield was to be re-opened for full air traffic by the end of September. Then RAF Rhoose would be put on a care and maintenance basis. As a first step the airfield had to be levelled. Work on this started on 21st June.

The month of June began with a taxi accident on the 1st when Flt Sgt E Foes in Martinet JN419 hit an open door on a petrol bowser. On the 18th the Flt Sgt took off in Martinet MS675 with LAC W Stover as target operator. His engine seized at 1,500 feet and he made a good forced landing at Rhoose. Swinging to avoid parked aircraft he hit a picket block and the undercarriage collapsed.

Two days later Lt (A) L Twiss and navigator Lt (A) P Wheeler both RNVR from the Fighter Interception Unit, RAF Wittering, were making a liaison visit to Stormy Down in Beaufighter V8329. Undershooting in the strong wind they crashed.

WAAF Celebrations

On June 28th the Women's Auxiliary Air Force celebrated its fifth birthday. Stormy Down was open all that afternoon and evening to the relatives and friends of WAAF personnel serving there.

Angela Capel had been posted into 7 AGS as a Flight Mechanic Airframe straight from her course at 5 S of TT, Locking. She recalls working in the hangar on June 6th when the Tannoy boomed out news that the Second Front had been launched.

The WAAFs had worked for months with no time off. They were sent on rest and recreation to a house in West Wales for a week at a time. There were a lot of Welshmen on the station. According to Angela if you called "Dai" every other airman would look up. Often the girls persuaded the pilots to give them a "flip" after they did their Daily Inspections on the aircraft. Later she was posted to the Empire Air Navigation School at Shawbury.

Another WAAF at Stormy was Jessie Atkins who as a Carpenter 2 worked on the ATC gliders. She was posted to 1 AGS Pembrey when 7 AGS closed. Gp Cpt DMT MacDonald became the new Commanding Officer on July 4th. He replaced Air Cdr Bryant who was posted to RAF Cranwell where he subsequently died after a long illness, in September 1945.

The day of the change over Flt Sgt Ferguson, RCAF was taking off from Rhoose in Martinet JN510 when his engine faded. He landed straight ahead and stopped in the hedge.

ATC cadets in camp at Stormy Down were given air experience flights in an Airspeed Oxford which arrived from Cardiff on the 14th.

Suddenly news arrived that because of the reduction in training requirements the Air Gunner Schools were to be re-organised. No 7 AGs was to disband by September 2nd and No 8 AGS (Evanton) by August 28th. Nos 139 and 140 AG courses at 7AGS were to be posted to No 40 Initial Training Wing on August 21st.

Other units affected were: Nos 1 (Pembrey), 2 (Dalcross), 3 (Castle Kennedy) AGS with trainee capacities of 360 each. 4 AGS (Morpeth) and 11 AGS (Andreas) were to have 240 each. Capacity at 10 AGS (Barrow) was to be 240 WOP/AG, WOP/M/ and M/AG while at 12AGS (Bishops Court) there were to be 160 Flt Eng and Flt Mech trainees. No 9 (0) AFU Penrhos was to hold up to 120 AGs.

The last incident to involve an Anson was on July 19th when Flt Sgt Leiper in Anson LT417 made a good forced landing on Stormy Down after both engines cut out. The final accident to a 7 AGS aircraft was on the 21st when WO Slade undershot landing a Martinet at Rhoose and damaged one wing.

Because there were now no new intake of airgunner trainees, members of the last intakes on the six day Scanner Cinegun assessment courses were flown by the school aircraft.

The last aircraft to be allocated to 7 AGS, Moth Minor BK339 arrived from 5 MU Kemble.

Disbandment

On August 2nd all aircraft returned from Rhoose to Stormy Down and preparations were made to shut down the satellite. This was transferred to No 40 Group, Maintenance Command on November 1st.

All the aircraft were serviced and prepared for allocation to new units. They were to be flown away by Air Transport Auxiliary pilots before 2nd September.

It was decided that 7 AGS was to be replaced by No 40 (Pilot) Initial Training Wing which in turn was to reduce its establishment from 1150 to 850 cadets. Accordingly on August the 12th the CO at Newquay, Wg Cdr F W Moxham AFC, arrived at Stormy Down. He was accompanied by Wg Cdr Ashman (Senior Education Officer) and the Senior Administration Officer.

A conference was held with Gp Cpt Brill and Wg Cdr Lydall of HQ No 54 Gp and various HQ 25 Gp officers. After discussing the transfer Wg Cdr Moxham and his staff returned to Newquay.

The last passing out parade at 7 AGS was held on August the 18th when No 139 (Special) Air Gunner Course ended. Three days later 7 AGS disbanded and members of this course and the uncompleted 140 were posted to No 40 ITW.

Fg Off Rogers had been on a course at Hereford and returned to Stormy Down to find the station deserted except for administrative staff. He was posted as supernumary pilot to 1 AGS at Pembrey. Whilst at Stormy Down he had flown Lysanders for about 18 months during which he clocked up well over 400 hours making about 390 to 410 trips on the various tow lines. He also had flown Ansons and given flights to a number of ATC cadets. Although, converted to Martinets, he only flew three trips in that type.

40 ITW

No 40 ITW reformed at Stormy Down on Friday 1st September. Its cadets were able to carry out dinghy drill at the nearby Porthcawl air sea rescue base.

The unit took part in the Battle of Britain colour hoisting parade and service on the station. Personnel also took part in a parade at Bridgend during which a service was held in the Embassy cinema. It was organised by the CO of Bridgend (No 1092) ATC Sqdn. Flt Lt F D Coles. The ATC squadron adjutant. Fg Off Lloyd Isaac, was parade marshal. Wg Cdr Moxham took the salute.

40 ITW disbanded on November 27th. On the 22nd the 23 officers, 9 NCOs and 430 cadets left by special train from Pyle to join No 50 ITW at RAF Bridgnorth.

Free French Depot

Earlier, Gp Capt Tyrell MC, who was to command Stormy Down from December 1st, Wg Cdr Blake and Sqdn Ldr Dixon of No 4 Air Crew Reception Centre, RAF Filey, inspected accommodation at Stormy Down. They concluded that there was not enough room for both the Free French units 4 ACRC and No 23 ITW.

However back at RAF Filey Town a conference decided that if the row of huts (former classrooms) nearest the rifle range were allotted to the ACRC both units could be accommodated. Later these huts proved to be very damp.

Flt Lt Longhurst with Fg Offs Fitzmaurice and Brooks arrived from RAF Filey Town to allocate classrooms for the signals, armament and navigation sections of the ITW.

As the former 40 ITW personnel left instructional equipment began arriving from RAF Filey Town.

On the 23rd the first party with Sqdn Ldr Peterson in charge left RAF Filey by rail arriving at Pyle railway station the following morning. On Saturday the 25th the second party under Sqdn Ldr Dixon set out arriving at Pyle on Sunday after a journey of almost 22 hours. Both parties were met by transport which took them to the aerodrome on top of the hill.

By the beginning of December a programme of films had been arranged for the camp cinema. Being mid-Winter there was a heating problem. Oil lamps were used to try and keep the auditorium, which was still half a hangar, warm.

On the first Monday in December, the 4th, the full instructional programme started with a signals exercise for the Wireless Operator (Air), Flight Engineer, and Pilot Navigator Bomb Aimer cadets.

Inevitably so many changes of units since August caused confusion with the post. Mail was received for 7 AGS, 7 and 8 ITW, 40 ITW and RAF Filey Town. However by Christmas things had improved and many parcels and letters were received and dealt with promptly by the Station Post Office.

On December 13th a Ralph Reader Gang Show entertained the Sgts Mess. Bad weather two days later brought an unexpected aerial visitor when Warwick PI 742, piloted by Flg Off Croft of the ATA, en route from Carlisle to Filton, had to divert to Stormy Down.

On that date, the 15th, all Officers, NCOs and Airmen on the strengths of 4 ACRC and 23 I TV were transferred to Station Headquarters, RAF Stormy Down. The Senior Education Officer became responsible for the personnel at 46 ASRMCU at Porthcawl.

There were regular anti gas exercises. During the month 150 men were fully trained in fire fighting, five wet tests of fire hoses were carried out and a hose box with 400 feet of hose placed near the cinema. Equipment arrived for changing all the screw couplings on the fire hydrants to the instantaneous plug-in type used by civilian fire brigades.

There were swimming and dinghy drills in the baths at RAF St Athans and inter station matches were played regularly. Badminton and squash were made available to all.

There were film shows and ENSA concerts. A Gramophone Club formed and a recreational library opened on the station. The canteens were painted and decorated by off duty RAF volunteers. The NAAFI supplied the paint. A Station Welfare Committee was set up and provided extra comforts.

Early in December Squadron Officer Defraigne, HQ 54Gp, inspected the WAAF permanent staff.

Christmas

A Christmas Eve dance in the large NAAFI started off the holiday entertainment. On Christmas Day Huts D4 and D9 were judged the best decorated WAAF billets. A traditional dinner was served by the officers and SNCOs and a film show and a concert in the NAAFI for the French personnel followed.

A number of bicycles had been obtained so personnel could tour the area at weekends. In the best French tradition these were used for well supported cycle races around the perimeter track over Christmas.

On Boxing Day there was another dance in the NAAFI. Then on the 27th the cooks who had worked so hard over the holiday held their own party in the Airmen's Mess.

Festivities were marred a little by prolonged frost and intense cold which burst, several water pipes.

Less festive was the Christmas Eve conference held for all English Officers and SNCOs. The RAF Regiment commander explained the police believed there was a possibility that German prisoners of war at Bridgend might break out of their camp. Contingency plans were formed to man armed patrol points around the aerodrome if this happened. Every man present volunteered for this duty which, although they did not know it, they would be called upon to perform in the not too distant future.

Resulting from an inspection of the station's Service Police early in January by Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal Plt Off Wilcox a police dog was posted in.

Various entertainments included a dance in the Officers Mess and a MAFI staff party and dance and another at the Corporals Club.

VIP visitors included the AOA designate Training Command, AVM C N K Edmonds who accompanied by the Command Engineer Air Cdr Heslop arrived by road having flown from Woodley to Pembrey. There was also an inspection of 4 ACRC by the AOC 54Gp. Air Cdr Seward. The day that he arrived swimmers from Stormy Down took part in, and lost, a gala against RAF St Athan at the St Athan baths.

Saturday sporting activities on the 20th were cancelled because of bad weather. All training stopped after a heavy fall of snow on the night of 24/25th January. It was one of the heaviest on record. Severe frost and more snow followed. It was so cold that Air Sea Rescue personnel at Porthcawl were given extra woollen comforts to try to keep them warm at sea.

The snowplan was put into operation and training resumed but conditions were difficult as the stoves proved inadequate in the intense cold.

Gp Cpt R G Shaw arrived to take over command from Gp Cpt TyreII on January 31st.

By the first Sunday in February the weather improved enough for the Station Commander to hold a Church of England church parade.

Arrangements were made so the French personnel could meet other Allied servicemen in nearby camps. Meanwhile the French aircrew were upset because they were not officers and their pay was low. These grievances were forwarded to the appropriate authority.

The strength was now 992. The permanent staff of 542 was made up of 55 RAF Officers, 59 SNCOs and 139 airmen (Cpls and below), 5 WAAF Officers. 6 WAAF NCOs and 191 airwomen. The French element was 6 Officers, 30 NCOs and 51 other ranks. Trainee strength was 29 cadet Officers, 183 cadet SNCOs and 238 airmen cadets.

On February 13th Gp Cpt Cologuhon, SASO HQ 54Gp, visited the station to see a very realistic fire drill complete with smoke bombs. The Fire Section quickly had the situation under control. The following day both smoke and tear gas bombs were used for Station Respirator drill.

February 24th was a momentous day. The first course of Free French pilots to be RAF trained, 5 Officers and 22 SNCOs, arrived at 4 ACRU from 3 FTS, RAF Sutton Bridge. At their passing out parade AVM Champion de Crespigny had presented each man with two brevets, a full sized French one and miniature RAF wings.

French Personnel from 4 ACRU visited the Royal Ordinance Factory at Bridgend and other local factories. Arrangements were made also for long weekends at Milford Haven and for sea trips. There

were gifts of cigarettes to all from the Overseas League. The work of the station's General Welfare Committee became more and more appreciated as entertainment and recreation facilities increased.

At the beginning of March ATC officers from South Wales held a Dinning In night in the Officers Mess.

A few days later Commander Sarlly and Lieutenant Valton of the London based Free French Headquarters visited 4 ACRC. After a long discussion it was agreed to borrow sufficient accommodation from 23 ITW to house the increasing numbers of cadets arriving at the reception centre.

A request was made to the Area Lands Officer for permission to use part of Kenfig Pool for wet dinghy drill. By the end April the Senior Medical Officer had tested the water and presumably found it harmless. The Station Administration Officer was instructed to co-operate with the Garrison Engineer at Porthcawl to arrange for a hut to be used for dinghy storage at the Kenfig Burrows (former US Army) camp.

Escape

The shrill ringing of the telephone woke the Duty Officer at 5am on the morning of Sunday March 11. Sleepily he picked it up only to be galvanised awake. The call was from the Severn Sub-District Provost Marshal. There had been a mass escape of prisoners of war from the camp at Highland Farm, Bridgend. Stormy Down was to man the outer cordon posts surrounding the aerodrome.

The Duty Officer immediately roused the Defence Officer (presumably Sqdn Ldr Patie) who called for volunteers over the Tannoy system.

By 6am two vehicles carrying the cordon party and their arms left the camp. Within half an hour all five posts were manned. Orders were to stop all vehicles and check identities. If there was any doubt people were to be detained and the civilian police contacted. Anyone failing to stop was to be shot in the legs!

At 08.30 hours piquets were moved out. They were relieved every 4 hours. All parties of French personnel were commanded by RAF Officers or NCOs.

Colonel Burch, OC Severn Sub-district, arrived and discussed the situation with Gp Cpt Shaw. Four search parties, each about 70 strong made up of French Officers, cadets and other ranks combed the ground to the south and west of the aerodrome but found nobody.

At 3 pm Bridgend police telephoned that 10 POWs had been spotted near Laleston, approximately 2½ miles from the camp. As large a search party as possible was requested. Within 12 minutes two lorries carrying 57 men were on their way. They split up into parties of 5 or 6 with a British Officer in charge of each, and searched different areas of the wooded, boggy ground. Flt Lt A W Swanson party captured 5 Germans and handed them over to the police.

Shortly after 10 pm the picket on No 2 Outer cordon point captured four POWs in a ditch. An hour later two French ORs saw two more. One kept watch while the other fetched the Kenfig Hill police.

Next morning Port Talbot police reported that two or three escapees had attempted to break into a farm house some 5 miles NW of the aerodrome. They were believed to still be in the area. Within quarter of an hour 60 men set out but after a 3 hour search found nobody. Next day a second fruitless search was carried out in the area.

On the Monday afternoon there was another police request to search the ground between the aerodrome and Kenfig Hill village, approximately two miles to the North. Most of this land was cut up by numerous old quarries and gullies heavily overgrown with gorse and bracken. Nothing was discovered after a three hour search.

On Tuesday, in the middle of all this activity, the AOC in C Training Command A M Sir Phillip Babington arrived on a two day inspection of the station. He also visited 4 ACRC.

Parties were now being sent out to search the same ground as had been covered previously. Local Home Guards and others were called in to help with the search.

Mrs Pamela Cottrell recalls her father, Flt Lt Percy Mockett, RAF VR Training Branch, CO of Kenfig Hill Air Training Corps, going out with a walking stick to beat through bracken on Stormy Down in the search for escapees.

Meanwhile Porthcawl's mounted Home Guard unit lost themselves on Margam Mountain!

By Saturday evening all the 67 who tunnelled out had been recaptured. The 24 hour guard which had been mounted over all arms, ammunition and transport for the emergency were stood down.

Official reaction was swift. On March 31 all 1600 Germans, many ardent Nazi's were moved from Island Farm which became No 11 (Special) German PW Base Camp. Its new residents included Field Marshals Walther von Brauchitsh, Eric von Manstein, Ewald von Kleist and Gerd von Rundstedt, Herr Walther Dornkerzer, Admirals Hans Woss and Hans Hartman, Generals Hasso von Manteuffel and Heinrich Eberbach and Luftwaffe General Von Seidel.

Routine

The excitement over, life at Stormy Down returned to its more humdrum routine. The Officers Mess decided to keep chickens and several officers went to Cardiff to ask advice on egg production from the War Emergency Agricultural Committee.

Squadron Officer de Fraine and Flt Lt Pope arrived from HQ 54 Group to judge the Group WAAF Billet competition. Presumably Stormy Down did not win it as there is no further mention of the event.

Concerts held on the station included shows by the Adastrians (from 54 Group), Blitz and Pieces (ENSA) and Out of the Blue (RAF St Athan).

On Easter Sunday, April 1st, a full church parade for all C of E personnel took place. The following Friday the Station Commander held a parade and inspection at which the music was provided by the Flying Training Command band. On this parade Sqdn Ldr Dixon commanded the 190 NCOs of No 4

ACRC. They formed 3 flights. No 1 Sqdn of 23 ITW had 70 cadets on its nominal roll. During April ACRU added a Free French intake of 21 Officers, 73 Air Force and 19 Naval personnel to its strength. The Sqdn Ldr was posted in May when Sqdn Ldr D R Strachan took command.

With Summer approaching there were worries that men living out with their families in rooms in the seaside resort of Porthcawl might be evicted to make room for the more profitable holiday makers. The Station Commander with his adjutant met Porthcawl Urban District Council to discuss protection for these airmen. They were given a promise that the local authority would try to help.

During April there were more visits to works and factories. A Station dance was held at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl. The diary notes that it was possibly over crowded. About now, all WAAF Personnel on 48 hour leave pass were given vouchers for free accommodation at the YWCA hostel in Porthcawl.

Victory

On the evening of Monday, May 7 came the long awaited news that the European war was over. The next day would be VE Day and a holiday. On Tuesday the King's speech was relayed throughout the station on the Tannoy. Later in the evening there was a dance and just before midnight a large bonfire was lit and in full blaze by 00.01 hours on Wednesday which was a half day holiday. This was Ascension Day and the French personnel went to a special Mass. Despite the excitement everyone was well behaved and the guardroom cells remained empty on both VE Day and the following day.

On Friday there was a Dinning In Night at the Officers Mess. Guests included Colonel Coustey, Legion of Honour, Commanding the French Air Force in Great Britain, Colonel Poulinqin, his second in command, the AOC No 54 Group, Air Cdr W J Seward CBE and Gp Cpt Black OBE, Senior Air Officer 54 Gp. On his arrival Col Coustey inspected a French Guard of Honour.

The following Sunday there were thanksgiving services and parades in the neighbouring communities. The Free French personnel took part. Gp Cpt Shaw took the salute at the parade at Porthcawl.

On Whit Monday, May 21, a Wellington made a forced landing on the aerodrome which was still in occasional use.

Next day the Station Commander held the first of his weekly parades for all RAF and WAAF personnel. On Wednesday the Station Sports were held and on Friday afternoon prizes were presented by Mrs R G Shaw the station commander's wife.

During May tennis courts were built on the WAAF site and behind the Officers Mess. There was a full programme of cinema and variety shows. A WAAF drum and pipe band formed and made their debut on the COs station parade.

Morale appeared to be high. Few applications were made for legal aid, help or advice.

By June there were four cinema shows a week and regular variety concerts by ENSA companies. This pattern of regular entertainments was to continue. A miniature rifle range opened too.

Bastille Day

Traditional Bastille celebrations were held on July 14th. No training took place and there was a march past at Porthcawl. Sqdn Ldr R E Bismuth and 30 NCOs of 4 ACRC paraded with arms. There was also a flight of RAF personnel with a band and the WAAF's with their pipe band. The parade marched through the town to the cenotaph where a wreath was laid by a Free French Officer. The salute was taken by Gp Cpt Shaw and Mr T H Austin JP, chairman of Porthcawl UDC.

Afterwards there were sports at the camp and that evening, two hangars having been cleared and decorated, there was a dance at which the bands of RAF Flying Training Command and the RAF Eastchurch Dance Orchestra played. Everyone was allowed to invite a guest. Conduct was excellent, no one was charged or taken into custody.

Five days later Gp Cpt E A Healey took over command from Gp Cpt Shaw.

Funeral

On June 26th Sgt Lachassagne, a Free French Pilot, was buried with full military honours at Nottage cemetery. Sqdn Ldr G Le Febere was in charge of the parade which consisted of a firing party and a flight of 30 NCO bearers from the reception centre.

The Sgt was serving with 329 Sqdn (G.C. 1/2 'Cigognes') stationed at Fairwood Common. He crashed into the sea off Margam in Spitfire PT 652 on the 23rd. His body was recovered and taken to Stormy Down. He was exhumed and returned to France on 18th November 1948.

VJ Day

On the 15th August there came another welcome break in the programme as VJ was celebrated. Only a skeleton staff remained on duty for the two days holiday. A victory parade was held at Porthcawl on the following Sunday with detachments of the Free French taking part.

Disorder

Two weeks later the French forces were back in Porthcawl in strength. Trouble between a number of them and local civilians had been brewing for some time, possibly over girl friends. Frenchmen walking back to camp through Nottage late at night were sometimes set upon and beaten up.

On the evening of Tuesday the 29th a number of Frenchmen, many of whom had broken out of camp (i.e. gone out without permission), went to Porthcawl to settle old scores. Fighting broke out on the sea front which was crowded with holiday makers. The situation began to look very ugly. Men of the RAF and the Army Garrison (West Yorkshire Regiment) stood to arms. Strong Glamorgan Constabulary reinforcements rushed from Bridgend, Port Talbot and Maesteg. They soon regained control.

All personnel, except those on 7 days leave, were immediately confined to camp. Andrée Larvor, a Cadet WOP/AG had arrived earlier in August and was on camp when the trouble broke out. Like most of the Frenchmen he knew nothing about it until afterwards.

Discipline was soon restored and more recreation facilities provided. In September the Station Model Aeroplane Club opened. A Rover Scout Crew, the St Exupery, formed with about 30 members. André, a former Boy Scout, was asked to start it by Capitaine Schaffer, the French adjutant. One of the modellers was persuaded to make a plywood badge for the troop. A combination of Wings, Anchor and the Lily of France it represented the Air Force, Naval Air Arm and France itself.

In October a Station handicrafts exhibition was held. It reflected the many hobbies and handicrafts being followed and even included a domestic section complete with cakes, no mean achievement as food rationing was still in force.

Regular station dances were held, but by November dancing had to be to the music of gramophone records. The station band was no more because its personnel had been either posted away or demobbed.

Christmas

Just before Christmas there was a party for the children of RAF families. Fifty orphans from Porthcawl and Bridgend were invited. In the best tradition Father Christmas came down a realistic chimney and gave every child a present with their name on the parcel. Chocolates, sweets and oranges were sent to 92 blind children in Cardiff.

On the day itself despite rationing there was a traditional dinner. Crème of Victory soup was followed by roast Turkey, ham and sausage seasoning, roast pork, creamed and roast potatoes, sprouts and tinned peas. Afterwards there was Christmas pudding in whisky sauce and mince pies. Fruit, beer and cigarettes were put out on the tables.

Besides serving the meal the many of the officers were asked to autograph the individual menus. They included Gp Cpt Healey, Commander Mondain (Senior French Liaison Officer) and his adjutant Cpt Schaffer, the French Fleet Air Arm Captain and Lieutenant M Auffroy of that service as well as Lt Maison the Almoner or padre. Monsieur Maison used the station gymnasium as a chapel holding Mass there every Sunday.

Closing Down

New Year's Day was kept as a public holiday by the French although the RAF and WAAF worked as normal. During January the weather became severe, three cinema shows had to be cancelled because it was too cold for comfort in the cinema. Sometime during the month No 4 ACRC disbanded.

A National bus strike at the beginning of February saw service transport used to bring the civilian workers on camp to work and to take them home again at the end of the day.

On the 21st February the Station Commander, OC 23 I TV and the Senior French Liaison Officer, together with a detachment of French airmen paraded at Nottage cemetery in a farewell ceremony to the memory of the French personnel buried there.

Two days later the Station Commander flanked by the Officers commanding 23 ITW and 32 PRC took the salute at a special parade of the French at Stormy Down. Leading them was the Senior French Liaison Officer, Commander Mondain. That evening there was a farewell dance in the NAAFI where the French airmen had so often sung "Alouette, gentille Alouette".

On the 25th the first party of 279 French personnel left for France travelling via Newhaven and Dieppe. They were followed on Thursday the 25th by another 279.

The RAF and WAAF element and the Initial Training Wing remained until April. During March there were farewell dances in the Officers and Sgts Messes. On April the 4th there was a ceremonial colour lowering parade. Gp Cpt Healey, Commandant De Cort, French Naval Air Forces, RAF and French Naval Air parties took part. Then No 23 (French) ITW moved to Bridgnorth.

Two weeks later on Sunday the 21st Gp Cpt Healey moved to RAF Market Harborough as station commander. RAF Stormy Down airfield and station closed down leaving just a Care and Maintenance party commanded by Flt Lt G H P Potter. All that remained was No 68 Gliding School for the Air Training Corps which moved to RAF St Athan in March 1947 when the Care and Maintenance party left.

-----**Post War**-----

By October 1946 most of the camp had been transferred to the Ministry of Supply and Penybont Rural District Council wanted to use the barracks huts for housing accommodation.

The last aeroplane to land at Stormy Down was Miles Magister G-AJHE of Darlington Flying Club. It was the 1st November 1947 when Mr David Wagg en-route from Staverton to Fairwood Common found the Swansea aerodrome fogged in. Unaware that it was closed he diverted to Stormy Down. He took off again two hours later after investigation by the local police.

Some huts were used as billets for workers building the new steel works at Port Talbot and in 1948 the gymnasium was converted to a cinema by the Steel Company. It was open to the general public and closed in 1953. Meanwhile much of the land was sold for agricultural use.

For while there was an experimental radar station on the site.

Most of the hangars were dismantled and in 1951 one was used as the Sophia Gardens Pavilion in Cardiff. Thirty years later in January 1982 it collapsed after a very heavy snowfall.

In the 1960's some of the buildings were used by the Home Office and WVS as stores and part of the airfield was used by Porthcawl Gliding Club. Most of the huts have been swallowed by quarrying. The station sick quarters and main stores form part of a resettlement centre which in 1993 was soon to close.

The main road through the camp was diverted because of the quarry and runs next to the harmonisation range which is used by the Territorial Army and is the only Ministry of Defence property there.

In 1986 the remaining buildings and land were bought by a private owner and is the scene of a Sunday market and an indoor Go-Kart track.

Very little remains besides the former married quarters (now private houses), the Braithwaite water tower, the big aircraft shed and one hangar which was used as the old station cinema. When the hangars were reclad in 1991 the steel work was found to be as good as the day it was put up over 50 years earlier.

IN MEMORIAM

During the time that Stormy Down was a flying training station 53 Officers and men took off from the aerodrome never to return.

Eleven of them are buried at Nottage Cemetery. Their names are given below. May they rest in peace.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Aircraftman 2nd Class H Elliott - 20 April 1941

Aircraftman 2nd Class W S Penfold u/t air gunner age 29 - 21 September 1943

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

Sergeant Alfred V Roffey Pilot age 24 - 12 February 1942

Sergeant J E Tesky Air Gunner age 23 - 2 September 1942

Pilot Officer J Ruddell Pilot age 24 - 31 January 1944

Pilot Officer J Davies Pilot age 24 - 8 May 1944

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE

Flight Sergeant T Shrimpton pilot age 25 - 22 September 1942

POLISH FORCES

POR (Pilot Officer) J Puklo age 23 - 2 May 1941

PNOR (Sergeant) K Dindorf age 21 - 20 April 1941 .

ST SZER (Sergeant) W Bluczynski age 21 - 15 April 1942

Sergeant P O (Pilot) Strycharek age 28 - 21 September 1943

NO 46 AIR SEA RESCUE UNIT

In August 1941 RAF Stormy Down was told that the Marine Craft Unit at Porthcawl was to disband. The expanding Air Sea Rescue Service would establish No 46 Air Sea Rescue Unit in its place. Under the control of 19 Group of Coastal Command it would be a lodger unit at 7AGS.

In September two 41½ feet Seaplane Tenders, Numbers 436 and 437 were allotted to the new unit. The establishment WAR/CC/234 allowed for 2 Cpls and 6 airmen. In November the new unit was visited by the Inspector General of the RAF.

That month there were complaints that boats could not get in or out of the harbour for two hours before until two hours after low water. Also in rough weather it was impossible to anchor off Porthcawl. It was early in 1942 that HQ Coastal Command replied. The points were not considered to have a very great effect on operations. Although the mooring buoys would be moved nearer to the pier for better protection.

In February lectures on Air Sea Rescue procedures were given to pilots from 7 AGS and they were taken to sea on the launches.

In May the Resident Naval Officer, Commander Hugh T Pricked RN, ordered that the rowing skiff was only to go out past the pier head in calm seas. In future, he added, only he would issue instructions to go to sea, or in his absence, the duty coastguard. If it was necessary to give the engines test runs, this was only to be done between Nash Point and the Fairy Buoy (off Porthcawl).

By the end of September 1943 the Porthcawl unit had responded to 25 Emergency calls since its formation twelve months before.

By October Air Sea Rescue facilities in the Bristol Channel included STs 1512 and 1513 equipped with R/T at 1740 Kcs stationed at Barry, STs 436 and 437 at Porthcawl, and at Swansea, the Mumbles Lifeboat and Pinnaces 1249, 1250 and 1297. One of the pinnaces was always at sea or in bad weather sheltering at either Ilfracombe or Appledore. Tenby also had two High Speed Launches fitted with R/T tuned to 1740Kcs.

On October 2nd the duty boat put out on a crash call to search for the crew of Lancaster EE110 (619) Sqdn which ditched off Llantwit Major when returning from a bombing raid on Hagen.

Two days later ST437 responded to a call that 3 airmen were in the sea three miles SE of Scarweather lightship. There were heavy seas running and all the loose gear on board was washed overboard.

About mid November ST437 was found to have damaged planking and went to 97 MU, Ferryside for repair. In her place ST1513 was attached from 45 ASRU Barry. She was soon replaced by ST1574 which was not ideal for use at Porthcawl but as no 41te feet craft were available it had to remain. The two boats on station were now 436 and 1574.

On 11 December Anson MG112 force landed on the sea near Scarweather sands. The crew were rescued by the Swansea dredger. ST436 set out but the heavy seas crashing over the sands damaged the wheelhouse.

In 1944, on March the 10th, the duty boat responded to a crash call when a USAAF Marauder ditched off Margam. The crew had already waded ashore when the launch arrived.

Two days later there was a fruitless search off Llantwit Major after flashing lights were reported at sea. Nothing was found. Another fruitless search took place on the 27th when Martinet EM456 was lost.

There was another tragedy on 12th April. An American soldier and a girl were swept off Porthcawl breakwater by the waves. AC Westhorp saw them go and sounded the alarm. LACs George Ash and Derek Shackell put out in the dumb dinghy. Rowing close to the breakwater they recovered the body of Miss Hilda Cull. Despite their efforts they did not find the American whose body came ashore at Newton next day.

The following September a Letter of Appreciation from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute awarded George Ash and Derek Shackel £1 each for their gallantry.

Because of the superior facilities available at Porthcawl boats from Barry were now being sent to Porthcawl for slipping, inspection and repair.

Following the collision between two Ansons on the morning of May 8th the duty boat searched between one and two miles off shore but found only a dinghy and wreckage in the water.

Next day an American Army Diving Unit and a salvage party from 78 MU began a search for bodies. This lasted for nine days without success.

Most of the dead airmen were washed ashore but AC Killman was picked up at the outer moorings on the 29th and AC Shoesmith was recovered off Southerndown on July 10th.

The American Army had a diving boat moored in Porthcawl harbour. On June the 2nd ST1574 was out of service all day after fouling both propellers on the American's lines.

Two days later ST1574 put out to assist Motor Vessel Tilley which was dragging anchor off Porthcawl. However she managed without RAF help.

There were heavy seas were running on June 13th when an American Army diving pontoon moored at the outer moorings broke in half. The duty boat picked up the crew before the front of the pontoon sank. The stern went ashore at Trecco Bay.

In September the Mooring vessel Swift arrived to replace the outer mooring trot with two separate single moorings. These buoys weighed one ton each and were fitted with 15 fathoms of ground cable.

On September 15th the duty boat, ST437, stood by Steam Tug 672 of the US Army which was in distress. The tug had been towing US Army MTL 660 when she ran aground on Tusker Rocks. The RAF were told no assistance was required and the duty boat returned to outer mooring with MTL 660.

Porthcawl coastguard asked the American coxswain to come ashore and give details of the situation. As they rowed in strong west winds swept the RAF dinghy ashore at Coney Beach. They made their way back to the slipway keeping in the shelter of the Eastern promenade.

In the afternoon LACs Shackel and Rees put out in the dingy to rejoin ST 437 which lay at the outer moorings. Within minutes the dinghy was capsized by heavy seas. ST437 slipped her moorings but the low tide and heavy seas prevented her reaching the pair in the water.

LAC Rees was lost but LAC Shackel managed to swim ashore where a human chain caught him.

Two hours later Steam Tug 672 capsized on the Tusker rocks and a number of the crew drowned. The rest came ashore by boats at Ogmores and Dunraven Bay. Meanwhile MTL 660 had gone aground in Trecco Bay. She was refloated on October the 3rd and towed into Porthcawl harbour.

Six days after the tragedy the Salvage Tug Robert Emery and MTL 8126 arrived off Tusker Rocks to salvage Steam Tug 672. Then on the following day MTL 8126 signalled that she was in distress. The duty boat began towing her to Barry but because of the strong SW winds was forced to return to Porthcawl where they both moored up. Next day the duty boat escorted MTL 8126 to Swansea

There was a crash call on October 4th when the Margam look-out reported an aircraft missing and smoke seen two miles SSW of Margam. Both 437 and 1513 searched but found nothing.

On three days early in November there was dinghy practice using Q type dinghies. Then on the 15th Margam control tower reported a Spitfire down at sea, 3 miles to the NW. ST437 searching the area found oil stains but nothing else.

Three days afterwards a British and an American destroyer collided off Scarweather. ST 437 put out to sea but was forced to return with engine failure caused by air locks in the fuel system.

There were two crash calls in December, On the 8th a Spitfire was reported down a mile off the shore. ST 437 searched but found nothing. The second call on the 19th was for an aircraft said to have come down off Jersey Marine. Again nothing was found.

Throughout 1945 both 436 and 437 were on station. They were joined by 1513 which answered a call on February 13 and began to search for a body reported off Nash Point. The object proved to be a mine and the tender left the area.

On the 5th March ST437 responded to a call that an aircraft was down off Mumbles Head. Nothing was found of the aircraft, Spitfire SM355 of No 66 Sqdn.

On 19th May ST437 recovered the body of a boy who had fallen off Ogmores Cliffs. Then on June 24th when fishing vessel SWAN SA48 got into difficulties off Ogmores, ST437 towed her into Porthcawl harbour.

There was another call on 23rd July when ST436 turned out for Spitfire PT652 of 329 Sqdn which crashed off Margam. Two days later there was another crash call but nothing was found.

At the 27th of August the harbour practically emptied when No 419 Landing Craft Flotilla left for Appledore.

In January 1946 Porthcawl Urban District Council sent a letter of appreciation to the base for the rescue of two boys in a canoe drifting out to sea off Newton.

On 1st March the unit became No 1105 Marine Craft Unit with an establishment of 16. Seaplane Tenders 436 and 437 were allocated to that unit which finally disbanded on the 31st March 1959.

**BOATS SERVING AT PORTHCAWL MARINE CRAFT SECTION AND N0 46 AIR SEA
RESCUE MARINE CRAFT UNIT**

40 feet Armoured Motor Boats

A 569 From September 1939 to April 1941

A 571 From September 1939 to April 1941

37½ feet Seaplane Tenders

ST 274 From September 1939 to May 1941?

ST 282 From September 1939 to May 1941

ST 283 From September 1939 to May 1941

ST 294 From 26' May 1940 to August 1940

ST 295 From 26 May 1940 to August 1940

41½ feet Seaplane Tenders

ST 436 From November 1941 to July 1946

ST 437 From lawmber 1941 to December 1943

ST 1513 From December 1943 to December 1943

ST 1574 From December 1943 to July 1944

ST 437 From July 1944 to July 1946

Dates allocated are as shown on AM Form 564 and may differ from actual dates of movement

ATTACHMENTS

Pilots on the advanced phase at Service Flying Training Schools carried out armament exercises which included air to ground, air to air firing , high and low level bombing. The Advanced Training Squadrons were attached to Armament Training Stations for this. RAF Porthcawl, Newton Down and Stormy Down, as it was variously titled, was one such unit to which these detachments were sent.

Attachments, beginning in July 1939 and continuing until March 1942, were as shown below.

1939

31 July	Detachment arrived from 5 FTS, RAF Sealand,
25 August	Detachment returned to 5 FTS,
29 August	Detachment arrived from 3 FTS, RAF South Cerney.
17 September	Detachment returned to 3 FTS,
19 October	Detachment arrived from 2 FTS, RAF Brize Norton with 9 Oxfords and 10 Harvards.
5 November	Detachment returned to 2 FTS,
5 November.	Detachment arrived from 3 FTS, RAF South Cerney
19 November	Detachment returned to 3 FTS,
? November	Detachment arrived from 2 FTS, RAF Brize Norton,
5 December	Detachment returned to 2 FTS,
6 December	Detachment arrived from 9 FTS, RAF Hullavington,
20 December	Detachment returned to 9 FTS.

1940

1 January Detachment arrived from 3 FTS (No 28 course).
19 January Detachment returned to 3 FTS.
25 January Detachment arrived from 2 FTS with Harvards,
? February Detachment returned to 2 FTS,
? February Detachment arrived from 3 FTS (No 29 course).
? February Detachment arrived from 185 (Reserve) Sqdn, Cottesmore.
1 March Detachment returned to 185 Squadron,
4 March Detachment returned to 3 FTS (No 29 course).
4 March Detachment arrived from 2 FTS with 7 Harvards 57 Officers, NCO's, Airmen and Civilians,
4 March Detachment arrived from 7 (Reserve) Sqdn, Upper Heyford with Hampdens,
15 March Detachment commanded by Sqdn Ldr V B Fleming arrived from 185 Sqdn with Hampdens,
Party of 4 officers, 7 NCOs and 20 Other Ranks.
21 March Detachment returned to 2 FTS.
21 March Detachment arrived from 9 FTS with Audax.
8 April Detachment arrived from 2 FTS (No 43 course).
8 April Detachment arrived from 3 FTS (No 30 course).
25 April Detachment returned to 3 FTS,
26 April Detachment returned to 2 FTS,
? April Detachment arrived from 9 FTS.
10 May Detachment arrived from 3 FTS,
11 May Detachment returned to 9 FTS,
16 May Detachment from 3 FTS recalled.
17 May Detachment returned to 3 FTS.

1940 (cont)

7 June	No 14 OTU (former 7 Sqdn) detachment moved to Pembrey,
7 Jun	No 16 OTU (former 185 Sdqn) detachment moved to Weston-super-Mare.
8 June	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS, RAF ffetheravon. (These were all Naval Cadet Pilots. As Acting Leading Airmen they wore the normal rating's uniform with a white armband and messed in the Officers Mess, The day that they arrived at Sewton Down dive bombing was taken off their training syllabus.)
21 June	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
? July	Detachment arrived from 7 FTS, RAF Peterborough.
19 July	Detachment returned to 7 FTS,
1 August	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 10 course).
16 August	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
? September	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 11 course?).
? September	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.
24 September	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 12 course).
11 October	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
25 October	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 13 course).
5 November	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
6 December	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 14 course).
21 December	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,

1941

8 January	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 15 course).
25 January	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
8 February	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS,
22 February	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
14 March	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS,
28 March	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
17 April	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS,
2 May	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.
15 May	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS.
May	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.
16 June	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS,
27 June	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
8 July	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 20 course),
24 July	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
14 August	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (No 21 course).
? August	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
12 September	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (G Flt of No 22 course).
16 September	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (S Flt of No 22 course).
25 September	Detachment returned to 1 FTS (G Flt of 3No 22 course).
26 September	Detachment returned to 1 FTS (E Flt of No 22 course),
9 October	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (H Flt of No 23 course).
14 October	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (F Flt of No 23 course).
23 October	Detachment returned to 1 FTS,
5 November	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (E Flt of No 25 course), officer in charge Flt Lt Taylor,
15 November	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.
? November	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS (G Flt of No 25 course),
26 November	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.

1941 (cont)

? December	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS.
22 December	First half of detachment returned to 1 FTS,
23 December	Second half of detachment returned to 1 FTS.

1942

1 January	Detachment returned to 1 FTS.
? January	Detachment arrived from 1 FTS,
6 February	Second half of detachment arrived from 1 FTS.
6 March	Last detachment returned to 1 FTS.

Midnight on 7 March RAF Netheravon passed from FTC to Army Cooperation Command. A number of courses from 3 Air Observer School, Bobbington did air gunnery training at 7 AGS in 1942.

13 January	Detachment from 3 AOS arrived with Ansons for gunnery training. With the party from No 3 course Air Observer Navigators were Flt Lt R Kimber and Fg Off H H Cowen.
24 January	Flt Lt Kimber returned to Bobbington.
5 February	Number 9/2 course returned to 3 AOS..
6 February	Number 10/2 course arrived from 3 AOS,
2 March	Number 4 course returned to 3 AOS to start Navigation training.
6 March	Number 5 course arrived from 3 AOS.
? March	Number 5 course returned to 3 AOS

No further regular attachments appeared to have taken place but in a letter dated 27 April HQ 25 Gp said 7AGS could not increase the number of Air Gunner courses until it lost the Air Observer Courses from Bobbington.

On 28 August an entry in the F540 reads that a detachment of 18 cadet u/t Bomb Aimers arrived from Bobbington for one week's air firing, A further entry on 16 September says the Bomb Aimers have returned to their unit. Even allowing for bad weather it seems doubtful that this is the same detachment. It seems to safe to assume that two, if not three, took place during this period.

THE GROUND ARMAMENT School

The Ground Armament School at Stormy Down had chequered antecedents. In November 1937 the original Air Armament School at Eastchurch became No 1 Air Armament School on the formation of No 2 Air Armament School at East Coates. On 1 March 1938 they exchanged numbers, North Coates became No 1 AAS and Eastchurch No 2 AAS.

On the declaration of war the men at 2 AAS moved to RAF Pembrey while the Boy Entrants and Airmen's conversion course went to RAF Cosford.

It was decided to open 6 BGS at Pembrey and 2 AAS moved to Stormy Down on the 20th June 1940. Included in the move were 6 Fitter Armourer Direct Entry Courses. Having sat their final examinations at Pembrey, 19 Fitters from No 9 DE, the senior course, were posted from Stormy Down on July the 1st.

In addition to these direct entry fitters there were also 11 courses on conversion from Armourer to Fitter and 3 Naval Air Mechanic (Observer) courses undergoing the 16 week ground element of their training.

The move caused little interruption to the training programme. Most of the pupils were accommodated in huts on NO 2 site which was to become the WAAF site later and used classrooms at the other end of the camp.

Sqdn Ldr L E Dowse took command of the school which transferred from NO 25 (Armament) Gp to 24 (Technical Training) Gp on July the 7th, NO 2 Air Armament School immediately disbanded and No 3 Ground Armament School formed at Stormy Down in its stead.

Later that month Sqdn Ldr Dowse and Fg Off A J Whiting went to a conference at HQ Tech Trg Cmd at which it was decided that future training would be either as Armourer G (Guns) or Armourer B (Bombs). These different trades were to be taught at separate schools with intakes of no more than 13 at a time. No 3 GAS was to instruct Armourer G trainees.

The last Direct Entry class (No 14) passed out on August the 7th. During their training at Stormy Down 89 airmen had qualified as Fitters Armourer on this course of instruction.

The school suffered casualties during the bombing on August the 21st. The classrooms were at the far end of the camp near the station post office and 5 airmen were injured and 2 killed.

At the end of August Sqdn Ldr Dowse was posted to the Central Trade Test Board at West Drayton and Fg Off Whiting was promoted acting Sqdn Ldr to command in his stead.

When 20 Conversion course passed out on January the 2nd 1941 it included Boy Entrants who could not be classified as Fitters or promoted until they were 17½ years of age, many pupils on these courses were NCOs and LACs and to retain their rank or classification they had to pass out with a final marking of 80%. Those failing to reach this were offered the choice of either further training or returning to the trade of Armourer.

The 20 week syllabus included 30 hours basic theory, 352 hours of basic fitting, a further 110 hours of advanced fitting, 80 hours workshop practice and 183 hours of practical armament work. There was also 45 hours of education making a grand total of 800 hours instruction.

On 17th January the nine Fitter Armourer courses (Nos 30 to 38 inclusive a total of 105 trainees) were posted to 8 S of TT, Weeton, to continue training. Intakes to 3 GAS from the 20th were Aircraft Hands u/t Armourer (Gun) (i.e. direct entrants).

The previous September a pilot five day Refresher course had been held on the 20mm cannon and 0.5 inch Browning. A new series started in February and 125 were trained on the ten courses that were held.

By February the alteration of classrooms for training Armourer (G) was almost complete. Two classrooms were converted into workshops, the surplus bomb instruction tools sent to Weston, and a Bessoneau hangar arrived to house instructional aircraft.

The last conversion course (No 29) passed out on March the 14th. A total of 225 of these tradesmen qualified at Stormy Down.

The first two direct entry Armourer (G) courses passed out. Then was a temporary increase in the size of intakes. Accommodation being in short supply they soon reverted to sizes of a dozen or so. As it was, the ratings arriving in May were housed in tents.

Trainee Armourers (RAF and WAAF) arrived on Saturday and the eight weeks of training started on Monday. One trainee was R V Humphryes who arrived in March. A week at a time was spent on one type of gun or turret. It was a crash course that would have taken 18 months in peace time he says.

The intense training schedule of guns, bullets, turrets, flares and other armaments was a strain. ' It was not unknown for trainees to recite in their sleep.

Training was disrupted as personnel went on compassionate leave because their homes had been bombed. After a week in station sick quarters R V was recoured. This may have saved his life because when he arrived at Exeter to join 504 Sqdn. his former classmate who arrived a week earlier was posted to Singapore! Whilst he was at the school there was a shortage of equipment. Some airmen even wore their own civilian overcoats. R V was issued with an exotic garment like a banderlero worn over one shoulder and reaching his waist. It was a garment the like of which he has never seen since!

He remembers inoculations laying out many of the airmen who had to take to their beds, double tiered bunks, in the barrack huts with their highly polished floors. His was a top bunk. So he avoided the other bunker standing on his bedding and dirtying the sheets and pillow cases. Also the air from the open window was fresher upstairs.

Training included foot drill, saluting to the left and right, and slow marching.

In May a comment was made that Royal Naval ratings on the 16 weeks long course had lower passing out marks than the RAF. In August Lt Prince RN arrived as Liaison officer between 3 GAS and the naval training school. There was an improvement in the passing out standard. On No 36 course three ratings were recommended for three months accelerated promotion and similar recommendation was made for a further four on No 37 course.

At the beginning of December Sqdn Ldr Whiting visited RAF Kirkham to arrange for the move of 3 GAS there in January 1942.

After work on January the 1st travel orders were issued. The 41 ratings were to remain at Stormy Down awaiting posting by their drafting office. They were the last of an estimated 356 ratings to have trained at Stormy Down.

All the other school personnel were to move. Next day the advance party which included No 41 course who had passed out, left Pyle railway station on the 8.20am train. Flt Off F M Cairns was officer in charge of the party which took the "unconsumed part of the day's ration" with them. Arriving at Kirkham ten hours they then travelled by road to 8 S of TT.

On the 5th Sqdn Ldr Whiting and the main party left. This included numbers 43 to 49 courses, plus 18 from the training pool and the permanent staff.

When training at Stormy Down stopped, 1267 personnel had qualified as Armourers Gun on 41 courses of instruction and a further 265 transferred to 8 S of TT to complete training..

The rear party under WO Clark was made up of No 50 course and the remaining permanent staff. They did the final packing up and handing over before leaving on January the 9th.

AIRCRAFT

These lists are of aircraft known to have, been at Stormy Down They are shown by type, in order of first arrival, i.e. Henley, Wallace, Harrow, Battle, Whitley Defiant, Lysander, Anson and Martinet. Miscellaneous aircraft are listed at the end Dates of movement are taken from the aircraft. Movement cards and are not/ necessarily the exact day on which they took place.

HAWKER HENLEY

Two seat target tug monoplane, metal airframe with fabric and metal covering. Retractable undercarriage .Fitted with one 1030 horse power Rolls Royce Merlin II or III, Maximum speed 272 mph.

Arrived

Disposal

	From	Date	Date	To
L 3334	New	7.6.39	15.8.39	Overshot
			31.10.39	MU 1AACU
L. 3337	New	7. 6.39	16.8.40	MU 1AACU
L 3338	New	7. 6.39	3. 9.40	MU 1AAS
L 3340	New	7. 6.39	24. 8.39	1AOS :
	1AOS	3. 9.39	5. 9.39	damaged R(b)
			26.10.39	2 Salvage Unit
L 3341	New	7. 6.39	6. 9.40	MU 1AACU
L 3342	New	7. 6.39	29. 8.40	u/c collapsed M(u)
			12. 3.41	MU 1AAS
L 3360	New	21. 8.39	4. 9.40	MU 1AACU
L 3361	New	21. 8.39	31. 8.39	forced landing
			1. 8.40	MU 1AACU
L 3362	1AOS	3. 9.39	27. 7.40	hit fire tender Cat M(u)
			3. 9.40	MU 1AAS
L 3364	1AOS	3. 9.39	13. 1.40	u/c.collapsed R(b)
			31. 1.40	MU 1AACU
L 3365	1AQS	3. 9.39	18. 6.40	u/c collapsed. Cat W
			25. 6.40"	Struck off charge
L 3366	1AOS	3. 9.39	2. 9.40	MU 1AACU
L 3377	New	4. 9.39	5.12.39	forced landing Cat W
			17. 2.40	MU soc
L 3339	New	14. 9.39	11. 2.40	crashed Cat W
			15. 2.40	Struck off charge
L 3363	1AOS	6. 10.39	14.11.40	MU 1AACU

WESTLAND WALLACE.

Two seat biplane with metal airframe fabric covered with fixed undercarriage and machine gun mounting in rear cockpit. Fitted with one 680 horse power Bristol Pegasus IV radial engine.

Maximum speed 158 miles per hour

	Arrival	Disposal		
	From	Date	Date	To
K 3564	1 AOS	3. 9.39	21. 3.40	MU, became 1810M
K 3569	1 AOS	3. 9.39	28.10.39	taxi accident Cat M(u)
			21. 3.40	MU became 1809M
K 3676	1 AOS	3. 9.39	6. 9.40	4 BGS
K 3677	1 AOS	3. 9.39	14.11.39	MU became 2118M
K .3907	1 AOS	3. 9.39	10. 3.40	became 1813M
K 4340 .	1 AOS	3. 9.39	11. 2.40	crashed & SOC
K 5077	1 AOS	3. 9.39	10. 3.40	MU became 1811M
K 5078	1 AOS	3. 9.39	19. 7.40	Cat R(b)
K 6034	1 AOS	3. 9.39	11. 4.40	MU became 1814M
K 8700	1 AOS	3. 9.39	30. 7.40	6 MU SOC
K 6070	Cranwell	27. 2.40	16. 9.40	4 BGS
K 6074	1 EWS	27. 2.40	17.11.46	34 MU, SOC.17.12.40
K 6073	Cranwell	1. 3.40	15.10.40	GDGS Ronaldsway
K 3568	1 EWS	26.4.40	25. 4.41	1 GDGS
K 8689	10 BGS	28. 4.40	25, 2.41	34 MU SOC
K 8693	10 BGS	8. 6.40	7.11.40	34 MU SOC
K 8694	10 BGS	8. 6.40	25. 2.41	1 GDGS

HANDLEY PAGE HARROW

Twin engined high wing monoplane bomber with fabric covered metal airframe with nose, dorsal and tail gun turrets. Fixed undercarriage. Two 925 hp Bristol Pegasus XX radial engines gave a maximum speed 200 mph.

	Arrived		Disposal	
	From .	Date	Date	To
K 7014	215 Sqdn	5. 9.39	19. 1.40	10 BGS
K 6960	37 Sqdn	8. 9.39	2.10.39	19 JKJ SOC
K 6964	115 Sqdn	8. 9.39	20. 5.40	8 BGS
K 7020	215 Sqdn	10. 9.39	6.12.39	Special Duty RAE.
				anti-magnetic mine duties
K 6943	75 Sqdn	11. 9.39	23. 4.40	291 Sqdn
K 6986	214 Sqdn	12. 9.39	19. 1.40	10 BGS
	fitted with	front and rear (power) turrets		
K 7006	9 AOS	12. 9.39	10.11.39	4 MU SOC
K 6963	75 Sqdn	24. 9.39	. 6.12.39	Special duty RAE
				anti-magnetic mine duties
K 7008	37.Sqdn	24. 9.39	27. 6.40	10 BGS
K 6978	75 Sqdn	26. 9.39	2. 4.40	8 BGS
K 6957	37.Sqdn	25. 10.39	9. 4.40	SOC
K 6972	214 Sqdn	5.12.39	9. 4.40	damaged M(u)
			24. 4.40	8 BGS

FAIREY BATTLE

Three seat all-metal light bomber with single 1030 hp Rolls Royce Merlin giving a maximum speed 241. Mph. Used for bomber and air gunner training and later as target tugs

	Arrived From	Date	Disposal Date To	
L 5072	New 8MU	4. 9.39	20.4.41	crashed SOC
L 5053	New 8MU	5. 9.39	6. 6.40	forced landing Cat M(u)
			4. 5.41	forced landing
			19. 9.41	MU RCAF
L 5065	New 8MU	5. 9.39	18. 1.40	crashed Cat W
			24. 1.40	SOC
N 2125	New 8MU	5. 9.39	9. 5.41	forced landing u/c up Cat B
			19. 9.41	47 MU then RCAF
L 5001	New	19.11.39	22. 6.41	crashed at Margam
			30. 6:41	Written Off,
N 2051	New 20 MU	19.11. 39	6. 6.40	u/c collapsed Cat R(b)
			13. 6.40	4 MU then SAAF
L 5002	New	19.12.39	25. 5.40	u/c failure Cat M(u)
			29. 5.40	repair then RCAF
L 5019	New	19.12,39	4. 3.41	dived into the sea
			1. 4.41	Struck off Charge
L 5021	New	19.12.39	18. 1.40	u/c failure Cat R(b)
			25. 1.40	repair then RCAF
L 5025	New.	19.12.39	6. 3.40	u/c failure Cat M(c)
			29. 5.40	226 Sqdn
K 7639	1 FTS	21. 1.40	3. 2.40	tail oleo failed S(u)
			20. 6.41	Overshot
			3. 9.41	4 APC
K 7599	15 FTS	1. 3.40	19. 3.41	hit bowser Cat A
			14. 8.41	16 (P)FTS
K 6704	1 FTS	"1. 3.40	14. 8.41	16 (P)FTS
K 7608	1 FTS	1. 3.40	3. 9.41	MU then RCAF
K 7672	1 FTS	1. 3.40	29. 4.41	u/c collapsed Cat Ac
			29. 9.41	MU then RAAF
L 5293	New	10. 4.40	27. 7.40	ditched and SOC
L 5313	New	10. 4.40	3. 9.41	MU then RAAF

L 5673	New	15. 5.40	13.12.41	MU then SAAF
L 5635	6 BGS	24. 5.40	25.11.40	crashed on landing Cat W
			10.12.40	SOC
L 5637	6 BGS	24. 5.40'	31. 8.41	ditched and SOC
P 6764	6 BGS	25. 5.40	18. 9.40	1 FTS
L 5305	6 BGS	2. 6.40	26. 5.41	MU then RAAF
L 5633	6 BGS	2. 6.40	24. 4.42	MU then SAAF
L 5640	6 BGS	2. 6.40	23.11.41	MU SOC
N 2176	6 BGS	2.' 6.40	25.10.41'	47 MU then RAAF
K 9291	CGS after 11/39	?	19. 9.41	47 MU then RAAF
L 5311	6 BGS	3. 6.40	14. 8.41	16 CP)FTS'
K 9371	RAE	4. 6.40	25,10.41	47 MU then RAAF
L 5069	7 FTS	4. 6.40	31. 8.41	MU then RAAF
V 1213	New 38 MU	8. 6.40	11.12.40	u/c failure M(u)
			6. 2.42	38 MU SAAF
L 5736	New	22. 6.40	4. 2.41	u/c failure Cat B
			31. 3.41	MU then RAAF
L 5737	New	22. 6.40	17. 9.41	u/c failure Cat Ac
			2. 1.42	MU then SAAF'
L 5738	New	22. 6.40	25.11.41	MU then RAAF
L 5739	New	22. 6.40	31. 3.41	MU then SAAF
L 5740	New	22. 6.40	23.11.41	MU then SAAF :

FAIREY BATTLE continued

	Arrival		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date	To
L 5741	New	22. 6.40	24. 7.40	RAE ,
	RAE	9. 9.40	29.10.40	u/c failure M(c)
			13.12.41	38 MU then.RAAF
L 5687	New	26. 6.40	'2. 1.42	MU then RAAF
V 1211	New 38 MU	8. 8.40	.2. 5.41	crashed & burned
			12. 5.41	SOC
V 1212	New 38 MU	8. 8 40	21. 7.41	crashed taking off Cat A
			7.12.41	38 MU then SRAF
V 1214	New 38 MU	8, ,8.40	5,12.40	damaged u/c Cat M(c)?
			6. 2.42	38 MU then SAAF
L 5688	New	24. 9.40	21.10.40	u/c failure Cat.M(u)?
			'31. 3.41	MU
V 1275	New	10.10.40	'7. 3.41	u/c failure
			.7. 4.41	S "and AS 8BGS
V 1277	New	10/10.40	9. 1.42	Repair in Works, then RAAF
V 1276	New	12.10.40	7.12.41	38 MU then SAAF
V 1278	New	12.10.40	12.11.41	Western Airways
V 1279	New	14.10,40	6. 4.41	18 MU then SRAF
V 1280	New	30.10.40	7.12.41	38 MU then SAAF
L 5782	New 38 MU	1.11.40	6. 2.42	38 MU then SAAF
L 5786	New 38 MU	1.11.40	6. 2.42	38 MU then SAAF
L 5663	New	8. 6,41	12. 9.41	u/c failure Cat B?
			31.12.41	2 AACU

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH WHITLEY

Low wing all metal bomber .with retractable undercarriage and tail and nose turrets, ventral turret also in earlier Marks, Fitted with two 920hp Armstrong Siddeley Tiger IX engines, speed 192 mph.

	Arrival		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date	To
K 7212	10 Sqdn	10.12.39	27.11.40	crashed Cat R(b)
			12.12.40	34 MU SOC
K 7196	166 Sqdn	12.12.39	14. 1.41	Hit by Hind Cat B
Unit Code F	(also W in	1941)	14. 1.41	Repair off unit
	Repair	19,4.41	18. 5.42	General Airwork SOC
K 7204	78 Sqdn	20.12.39	21.10,42	45 MU SOC ..
Unit Code K				
K 7199	78 Sqdn	30.12.39	10. 3.42	27 MU
K 7216	166. Sqdn	2. 1.40	18. 2.41	damaged landing Cat Ac
Unit Code W			19. 2.41	recat Cat A. by unit
	Repair	19. 2. 41	:30.10.41	engine failed' Cat,A
			29. 6.42	Marshalls SOC
K 7187	166 Sqdn	10. 1 . 40	11. 12.40	crashed
			1. 1.41	SOC
K 7188	166 Sqdn	10, 1.40	18,10,40	in accident? _
			17.12.40	Airwork S & A and SOC
K 7193	166 Sqdn	10. 1.40	25. 4.41	Taxi accident Cat Ac
Unit Code 0			25. 4.41	ROS by repair party
	Repair	9. 8.41	20. 4.45	SOC
K 7195	166 Sqdn	10. 1.40	27.11.40	34 MU SOC

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH WHITLEY continued

	Arrived		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date	To :
K 7198	166 Sqdn	10 1 40	10.11.41	Forced landing Cat B
			23.11. 41	Repair. 3083M
K 7191	166 Sqdn	18 1. 40	19.10.40	SOC.
K7189	166 Sqdn	20. 1.40	6.12.40	u/c, damaged,?; Cat B
Unit Code Q			20.12,40	Airwork S & S
	Airworks	31. 7. 41	11. 1.42	tail oleo damage Cat Ac
			14.;1.42	ROS by' repair party. ,
	Repair"	28. 2.42	11. 9.42	Airwork works SOC
K7209	166 Sqdn	24. 2. 40	7. 3.43	SOC
K7206	166 .Sqdn	29. 2,40	17. 4.42	tail oleo damage Cat B
Unit Code V			17.4.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	29 5.42	30.11.42	Shoeburyness
K 7184	166 Sqdn	6. 3.40	27. 3.42	u/c collapsed Cat B
Unit Code A			29. 3.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	25. 9.42	14.12.42	Shoeburyness
K 7194	166 Sqdn	6. 3.40	8.11.40	hit stanchions Cat M(u)
			16. 5.42	u/c collapsed Cat Ac
			16. 5.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	5. 9.42	8.11.42	20 MU SOC
K 7210	166 Sqdn	6. 3.40	12.11.40	Damaged in Gale ?
			27.11.40	Repair?
			15.12.40	SOC
K 7214	78 Sqdn	9. 5.40	9. 5.42	23 MU 3295M
K 7237	10 OTU	20.6.40	21.10.40	10 BGS
K 7258	58 Sqdn	21. 6.40	21.10.40	10 BGS
T 4163	New 23 MU	6. 9.40	15. 6.41	crashed Cat E
K 7234	9 BGS	10. 9.40	31.1.42	Repair on site Cat Ac
	Repair	14. 2.42	16.2.42	8 AGS
T 4162	New 48 MU	11. 9.40	12. 8.41	8 AGS
Unit Code 7	9 (O)AFU	14. 7.42	17. 7.43	38 MU SOC

K 9016	New 2 3 MU	28. 9.40	30.10.40	u/c collapsed Cat M(c) Repair
			12.1.41	Repair
	Repair	18. 8.41	28.10,41	9 AGS
K 8937	51 Sqdn	8.12.40	31, 7.42	Airwork General SOC
Unit Code T				
K 8942	10 OTU	7. 1.41	15.12.41	Mainplane stripped Cat A
Unit Code U			8. 4.42	shooting accident
			21. 6.42	Taxi accident Cat B
			22. 6.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	18. 7. 42	21. 7.43	SOC
K 8976	10 OTU	23. 1.41	13.10.41	lost engine Cat A
Unit Code F			1. 1.43	Marshalls
	Repair	13. 3.43	?	?
Replaced K7196 which		went out	18.5.42	
N 1475	102 Sqdn	31.1.41	16. 9.41	9 AGS
K 8977	10 OTU	10. 2.41	23. 7.43	SOC

Unit Code M

A 10 OTU aircraft it became Cat B at RAF Porthcawl 31.12,40 and was repaired onsite by Servicing and Aircraft Section (Marshalls)

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH WHITLEY continued

	Arrival		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date	To
K 9004	10 OTU	13. 4.41	21. 6.42	Hit by K 8942 Cat Ac
Unit Code L			24. 6.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	12. 8.42	10.12.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	23. 1.43	21. 7.43	SOC
K 8982	19 OTU	14. 4.41	13. 2.43	Hit by W 9787 Cat A
Unit Code I			1. 3.43	SOC
K 8989	19 OTU	1. 5.41	21. 5.42	Hit shelter Cat Ac
Unit Code N			21. 5.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	1. 8.42	1. 3.43	SOC
K 7201	10 OTU	8.5.41	19. 9.41	u/c collapsed Cat Ac
Unit Code H			19. 9.41	ROS by repair party
	Repair.	13 3.42	16. 5.42	lost engine Cat A
			20. 4.45	SOC
	replaced by K 9054 during 1942			
T 4153	9 BGS	26. 6.41	16. 7.41	9 AGS
T 4154	9 BGS	26. 6.41	16. 7.41	9 AGS ,.
	9 (0)AFU	29. 8.42	30.10.42	Lost engine (Cat A
			3.3.43	subsided Cat A
			14. 9.43	MarshallIs SOC
T 4155	9 BGS	26. 6.41	16. 7.41	9AGS
	9 AGS	26. 6.42	30.11.42	Cat B
	Repair	18. 2.43	10. 8.43	38 MU SOC
K 9006	9 BGS	21. 7.41	22. 5.42	Airworks SOC
Unit Code P				
K 7247	10 BGS	23. 7.41	16. 2.42	30 MU 9 AOS
Unit Code 19				
K 7236	9 BGS	6. 8.41	20. 1.42	63 MU working party
	Repair	10. 4.42	10. 4.42	8 AGS
K 9041	19 OTU	10. 9.41	16. 9.41	9 AGS
K 8992	10 OTU	13.12.41	15. 3.42	23 MU
Unit Code X	2 3 MU	11. 7. 42	20.10.42	Fast landing Cat Ac

K 7213	10 Sqdn	31.12.41	15.3.42	23 MU 3297M
Unit Code Z				
K 9005	10 OTU	25.1. 42	23. 7.42	u/c collapsed Cat B
Unit Code S			24. 7.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	25.10. 42	13. 5.43	SOC
K 8936	2 BAT Flt	27. 5 .42	3.8.43	SOC
Unit Code C				
K 7249	9AGS:	28. 5.42	12.10.42	1 RS Cranwell
F 1345	0(O) AFU	3. 6,42	1.9. 742	-MarshallIs SOC
K 8956	2 BAT Fit	12. 6.42	.21. 3.43	Marshall Is ; °
Unit Code B Marshalls		9. 4.;43	6. 3.43	3 8 MU SOC
H 1428	9 AGS	28."6.42	11.11.42	„Cat B
	Repair	24.12.42	6.4.43	38MU ;42 OTU
P 5024	9 AGS	26. .6.42	4.5 43	Tai1 oleo Cat Ac
Unit Code 11			4. 5.43	.Repair 19 OTU
K 9014	10 OTU	6. 7'.42	?	no record ,
K 8966	2 BAT Fit	11. 7.42	30. 4.43.	Cat B
			1.5.43	SOC
K 8972	10 OTU	21. 7.42	25.10.42	Lost engine Cat A
			29.12.42	Shoeburyness

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH WHITLEY continued

	Arrival		Disposal		j. ^c
	From	Date	Date	To	
K 9012	8 AGS	23. 7.42	30. 6. 43	SOC	
Unit Code Y					
K 9054	19 OTU	17. 8.42	13. 2.43	landed	u/c up Cat B
Unit Code H	replaced K72012		13. 2.43	ROS by	repair party
	Repair -	30. 4. 43	21.4.43	SOC	

BOULTON AND PAUL DEFIANT

f

Two seater all metal low wing fighter fitted with a turret, retractable undercarriage Rolls Royce Merlin engine giving 303 mph maximum speed.

	Arrived From	Date	Date	Disposal
AA 288	9 AOS	13. 9.41	29. 3.43	u/c collapsed Cat Ac
			6. 6.43	44 MU 691 Sqdn
N 1546	141 Sqdn	6.10.41	11. 3.43	2 AGS
N 1648	256 Sqdn	6.10.41	21. 2.42	damaged Cat A
			20. 3.42	damaged leading edge Cat A.
			8. 4.42	struck airmen Cat A
			16. 5.43	u/c collapsed Cat B
			18. 5.43	ROS by 10 MU party
				Admiralty'
T 3990	307 Sqdn	6. 10.41	8. 6.42	heavy landing Cat B
				ROS by Reid & Sigrist
	Repair	14. 6.42	14.10.42	to R&S 667 Sqdn
T 3991	307 Sqdn	6.10.41	28. 4.43	46 MU SOC
T 4010	307 Sqdn	6.10.41	30. 1.42	hit N 1788 Cat A
			14. 5.43	Cat B
			17. 5.43	to R&S SOC
T 4058	307 Sqdn	6.10.41	4. 1.43	2 AGS
V 1130	New 10 MU	6.10.41	25. 6.42	Cat B to R&S
	R&S	29. 8.42	29. 5.43	46 MU SOC
AA 292	New 10 MU	6.10.41	27. 3.42	u/c fail Cat B
			28. 3.42	to R&S
	R&S	30. 5.42	30. 4.43	46 MU 667 Sqdn
AA 294	New 10 MU	6.10.41	1. 5.43	to R&S Admiralty
N 1544	141 Sqdn	10.10.41	6, 9.43	10 MU SOC
N 1788	307 Sqdn	10.10.41	30. 1.42	hit by T 4010 Cat A
			1. 6.43	46 MU SOC

N 3479	151 Sqdn	10.10.41	23. 2.42	u/c failed Cat B
			3.42	3000M
T 3980	307 Sqdn	10.10.41	27. 2.42	u/c failed
			28. 2.42	Cat B
			5. 3.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	8. 4.42	2. 5.42	u/c fail Cat AC
			4. 5.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	19. 6.42	26. 3.43	Cat Ac
			20. 5.43	taken away
			11. 11.43	SOC
N 1683	141 Sqdn	12.10.41	1.12.41	u/c fail Cat B
			7.12.41	to R&S 10 AGS
N 1761	1 SAC	13.10.41	8. 2.42	wrecked
			13. 2.42	SOC
N 1577	55 OTU	14.10.41	15. 4.43	10 AGS
N 1676	New 46 MU	14.10.41	4. 1.43	2 AGS
N 1678	New 46 MU	14.10.41	5. 4.43	Written off
N 1772	307 Sqdn	14.10.41	4. 9.42	to R&S 691 Sqdn
N 3322	New 46 MU	14.10.41	31. 3.43	Cat B 667 Sqdn after repair
N 3340	9 AOS	4. 12.41	14. 2.43	2 AGS
T 4034	9 AOS	4.12.41	30. 4.42	u/c fail Cat B
			4. 5.42	to R&S 10 AGS
T 4075	9 AOS	4.12.41	15. 3.42	tailwheel damaged Cat Ac
			18. 3.42	to R&S
	Repair	23. 3.42	22. 9.42	ditched and lost
N 1567	9 AOS	31. 1.42	6. 1.43	MU SOC
N 1732	9 AOS	31, 1.42	5. 4.43	10 AGS
T 3952	Controller of	Research	and Development Royal Aircraft	
	Estab'ment	31. 1.42	15. 4.43	reduced to spares
T 3959	9 AOS	31. 1.42	25. 8.42	u/c fail Cat B
			27. 8.42	ROS by repair party
	Repair	27.11.42	3. 6.43	46 MU SOC
N 3429	256 Sqdn	28. 2.42	22. 5.43	10 MU SOC

N 1752	141 Sqdn	7. 3.42	30. 3.43	10 AGS
L 7017	60 OTU	9. 3.42	10. 4.43	10 AGS
AA 293	New	11. 3.42	28. 1.42	u/c fail Cat A
			1. 4.42	wrecked
N 1650	256 Sqdn	24. 3.42	5. 4.43	reduced to spares
L 7034	CGS	28. 3.42	28. 5.43	10 MU SOC
L 7208	CGS	29. 3,42	8. 1.43	2 AGS
N 1633	GCS	29. 3.42	27. 5.43	10 MU Admiralty
N 1800	141 Sqdn	11. 4.42	14. 6.43	10 MU SOC
L 6992	60 OTU	24. 4.42	3. 6.43	46 MU SOC
T 4073	125 Sqdn	26. 5.42	30. 3.43	10 AGS
N 1540	9 OAS	3. 6.42	30. 3.43	10 AGS
N 1642	9 AOS	3. 6.42	16.12.42	20 AFU
N 1646	9 AOS	3. 6.42	2. 2.43	damaged Dishley Cat B
			MU	repair Admiralty
N 3487	9 AOS	3. 6.42	30.12.42	Dalcross
N 3519	9 AOS	3. 6.42	10. 4.43	10 AGS
AA 289	9 AOS	3. 6.42	30, 3.43	10 AGS
N 3488	RAE	14.6.42	11. 9.42	Makers RAE
N 3502	10 AGS	15, 6.42	20, 6.42	R&S 2 AGS
N 3493	288 Sqdn	16, 6.42	16.10.42	R&S 2 AGS
N 1652	277 Sqdn	19. 6.42	21. 6.42	R&S 19 OTU
T 4120	277 Sqdn	19. 6.42	21. 6.42	R&S 1484 Flt.
V 1141	277 Sqdn	20. 6.42	21. 6.42	R&S 2 AGS
N 3438	285 Sqdn	21, 6.42	2. 7.42	R&S Admiralty i
T 3982	9 AOS	9. 7,42	6. 3.43	u/c fail Cat B
			26. 3.43	ROS by repair party
	Repair	24. 4.43	20. 5.43	46 MU 691 Sqdn
N 1548	9 AOS	28. 7.42	27. 5.43	10 MU Admiralty

WESTLAND LYSASANDER

Two seat parasol wing single engine aircraft with fabric covered metal airframe and fixed undercarriage. Powered by one. 890hp Bristol Mercury XII. Maximum speed 219 mph.

	Arrival From	Date	Disposal Date	To -
T 1522	309 Sqdn	20. 9.41	28.11.41	Cat B
R 9005	10 RCAF Sqdn	27. 9.41	30. 5.43	Destroyed in crash
			31. 5.43	SOC
R 9065	225 Sqdn	27. 9.41	14. 9 44 ^s	SOC "
T 1423"	309' Sqdn	27. 9.41	5, 8.42	Cat B
	Repair	13. 8.42	23. 1.44	Written off
T 1523	309 Sqdn	27. 9.41	12. 3.43	Crashed
	repair party	23. 4.43	6. 6.43	SOC
T 1645	Westland	27. 9.41	8. 1.44	SOC
T 1735	Westland	27. 9.41	28.11.43	5 MU SOC
V 9790	New 5 MU	27. 9.41	3.12.43	5 MU SOC
V 9793	New 5 MU	27. '9.41	15. 4.42	Crashed SOC
V 9791	New 5 MU	27. 9.41	28.11.43	5 MU SOC
T 1643	Westland	10.41	8. 3.42	Fairfield Cat Ac
	Fairfield	11. 3.42	22. 4.42	Crash Cat E, then Cat B
V 9784	New 29 MU	1.10.41	24. 5.43	5 MU SOC
V 9788	New 29 MU	1. 10.41	27. 2.42	hit tannoy Cat A
			6. 10.43	Cat B
	Repair	5.11.43	30.12.43	5 MU SOC
V 9807	New 29 MU	1.10.41	31. 5.43	9 MU SOC
V 9783	New 29 MU	2.10.41	?12.42	MU 1483 Flt
V 9785	New 29 MU	2.10.41	21. 9.43	SOC
V 9787	New 29 MU	2.10.41	27. 4.42	Blown over Cat A
			6. 5.42	Cat B ROS by repair party
	Repair	9. 5.42	13. 2.43	hit by K 8992 Cat A
			21. 9.43	SOC
P 1719	New MU	6. 10.41	12. 2.42	Crashed
			19. 2.42	SOC
V 6954	New MU	12. 10'. 41	10. 6.43	5 MU SOC
V 9850	New 39 MU	10.12.41	31.12.42	CGS

R 9071	1 AOS	12.12.41	9. 3.42	Westland
	Westland	?. 4.42	23. 1.44	. SOC
R 9111	1 AOS	13.12.41	9. 3.42	Westland
	Westland	11. 4.42	27. 5.42	tail oleo Cat B
			9. 6.42	ROS by repair party
	repair party	10. 6.42	30. 5.43	Cat B
			31. 5.43	SOC
T 1456	1 AOS	13.12.41	9. 3.42	Westland
	Westland	22. 5.42	29. 5.43	5 MU 148 Sqdn
R 9113	1 AOS	16.12.41	6. 5 42	crash Cat Ac
	repair party ?		13. 5.42	Fairfield 1488 Flt
V 9851	New	4. 1.42	25. 4.43	5 MU SOC
T 1449	2 AOS	21. 2.42	16.11.43	SOC
T 1587	4 AOS	24. 2.42	8. 1.44	SOC
T 1588	4 AOS	25. 2.42	4. 1.43	u/c damaged Cat A
			21. 9.43	hit LT888 SOC
T 1686	4 Sqdn	7. 3.42	3. 6.43	5 MU SOC
R 9003	2 AGS	27. 3.42	6. 1.44	SOC
T 1631	289 Sqdn	2. 8.42	2. 7.43	5 MU SOC
T 1705	16 Sqdn	13. 8.42	2. 7.43	5 MU soc:
V 9786	MU	2.10.42	9. 3.42	Ditched
			31. 3.42	SOC
V 9810	44 MU	6.10.42	6. 6.43	SOC
R 2621	4 AGS	14.12.42	14. 9.43	SOC
R 2626	4 AGS	22.12.42	25. 5.43	5 MU 3940M
R 2632	4 AGS ,	22.12.42	31. 5.43	Westland- Weston Zoyland
T 1679	27 OTU	28.. 1.43	2. 7.43	5 MU 148 Sqdn
T 1581	1 AGS	20. 3.43	2. 7.43	5 MU SOC
Unit	Code. 6			
T 1458	5 AOS	19.10.43	24. 1.44	SOC ■

AVRO ANSON

A low wing cabin monoplane with a metal airframe covered with fabric. Fitted with a gun turret and retractable undercarriage. Used for airgunner training. Powered with two 350 hp Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah IX radial engines. Maximum speed 188 mph.

	Arrival From	Date	Disposal	To
DJ 525	SPTU	18.11.42	12. 2.44	14 (P)ATU
DJ 529	SPTU	18.11.42	3.12.43	Damaged Cat Ac
	Repair	3. 2.44	4. 9.44	Cat El
N 9908	3(O)AFU	18. 1.43	29. 6.43	2 (O)AFU
Unit Code D				
R 3410	3 PAFU	18. 1 43	26. 3.43	3 (O)AFU
LT 827	New	11. 4.43	3. 7.43	Damaged by JN 511
Unit Code 11			4. 7.43	Cat Ac
	Repair	25. 8.43	31. 8.44	85 CGS
LT 829	New	11. 4.43	25.10.43	4 AGS
Unit Code 26				
LT 830	New	11. 4.43	31. 8.44	MU French AF
Unit Code 3				
LT 831	New	11. 4.43	19. 9.43	Overshot Cat B
Unit Code 2			19. 9.43	To CRO
	Repair	20.11.43	1. 9.44	MU French Navy
LT 832	New	12. 4.43	2. 9.44	MU R Neth AF
Unit Code 5				
LT 879	New	15. 3.43	22. 7.43	prop struck fitter Cat A
Unit Code 14			2. 9.44	MU SOC
LT 847	New	2. 5.43	31. 8.44	MU 10 RS i
Unit Code 6				
LT 417	New	6. 5.43	19. 7.44	Forced landing Cat A .
Unit Code 7			31. 8.44	MU Ronaldsway
LT 434	New	6. 5.43	31. 8.44	8 MU SOC
Unit Code 1				
LT 364	New	7. 5.43	24. 8.44	Cat E
Unit code 9				
LT 826	New	8. 5.43	4. 9.44	Cat E
Unit code 4				

	Arrival		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date-	To
LT 828-	New	8.5.43	31. 8.44	MU Rhodesia Training Group
Unit Code 8				
LT 840	New	13.5.43.	2. 9.44	8 MU 19 MU
Unit Code 5 then 15				
LT 872	New	14.5.43	31. 8. 44	MU 48 Sqdn
Unit Code 10		CO-.		
LT 878	New	15.5.43	1. 9.44	
Unit Code,12				
LT 880	New	17. 5 . 43.	2. 9. 44	MU French Navy
Unit Code 17				
LT 882	New	17. 5.43	25. 3.44	Cat Ac
Unit Code 18	Repair	29. 4. 44	1. 9.44	45 MU 9 (O)AFU
LT 881	New	18. 5.43	4. 9.44	Cat EI,
Unit Code 16			14. 9.44	SOC
LT 883	New	18. 5.43	10.10.43	Damaged on landing Cat Ac
Unit Code 19			22.10.43	ROS. by CRO
	Repair	1. 1.44	2. 9.44	45 MU SOC
LT 884	New	18. 5.43	. 2. 9.44	45 MU ATA
Unit Code 23				
LT 886	New	18. 5.43	17. 3.44	Damaged Cat Ac
Unit Code 20	Repair- .		2. 9.44	45 MU 1 (O)AFU
LT 888	New	18. 5.43	21. 9.43	Collided with Lysander T1588
			10.10.43	Cat E2
LT 889	New	19. 5.43	22. 7.43	Forced landing Cat A
Unit Code 22			1. 9.44r	48 MU 84 GSU
LT 887	New.	21. 5.43	2. 9.44	45 MU 10 RS
Unit Code 24				
LV 201	New	17. 6.43	31. 8 44	8 MU Sold
Unit Code 26				
LV 153		19. 6.43	6. 7.43	1 (O)AFU
LV 159	New	19. 6.43	6. 7.43	1 (O)AFU

LV 200	New	19. 6. 43	1. 9.44	48 MU 10 RS
Unit Code 30				
LV 202	New	19. 6.43	6. 7.43	1 (O)AFU
Unit Code 30				
LV 326	New	13. 7.43	2. 9.44	MU (1) OAFU
Unit Code 31				
MG 113	New	15. 7.43	11.12.43	Damaged Cat A
Unit Code 32			18. 3.44	Damage by bowser Cat A
			6. 5.44	48 MU 48 Sqdn
MG 112	New	16. 7.43	11.12.43	Ditched. Cat B
MG 121	New	27. 2.43	1. 9.44	48 MU French AF
Unit Code 34				
MG 126	New	22. 7.43	19. 1.44	Damaged Cat Ac
Unit Code 37 Repair		8. 2.44	2. 9.44	45 MU French AF
MG 127	New	22. 7.43	3. 9.44	45 MU Admiralty
Unit Code 35				
MG 131	New	22. 7.43	8. 5.44	Collided with LV 300 Cat E
Unit Code 36				
MG 132	New	22. 7.43	6. 2. 44	Damaged in forced landing
Unit Code 38			26. 2.44	Cat Ac
	Repair	21. 4.44	28. 4.44 23. 5.44	Engines cut, damaged, Cat B Cat E
MG 133	New	22. 7.43	24. 8.44	Cat E
Unit Code 33	later 39		28. 8.44	SOC
MG 134	New	26. 7.43	13. 4.44	U/c fail; Cat Ac
Unit Code 40	Repair	15. 5.44	2. 9.44	48 MU Sigs Flying Unit
AX 138	CRO	18. 9.43	13.11.43	12 CP)ATU
LV 315	12 AGS	22.10.43	31. 8.44	MU French AF
Unit Code 25				
R 3443	9 (O)AFU	31.12.43	23. 2.44	22MU 6 (O)AFU
DC- 721	CNS	1. 2.44	4. 9.44	Cat E and SOC
Unit Code 90				
MG 687	New	24. 4.44	2. 9.44	45 MU French AF

MG 668	New	25. 4. 44	1. 9.44	48 MU 11 (P)AFU
LV 319	9 (O)AFU	27. 4.44	2. 9.44	MU Kinloss?
LV 165	9 (O)AFU	30. 4.44	2. 9.44	45 MU Admiralty
LV 300	9 (0)AFU	30. 4.44	8. 5.44	Mid air collision Cat E
LT 360	9 (0)AFU	3. 5.44	4. 9.44	Cat E
LT 485	9 (O)AFU	3. 5.44	1. 9.44	48 MU scrap
LT 745	9(0) AFU	3. 5.44	31. 8.44	MU 4 (0)AFU
Unit Code 38				

MILES MARTINET

Two seat target tug with retractable undercarriage, wooden airframe covered in plywood. Fitted with one 870 horse power Bristol Mercury XX or XXX. Maximum speed 237 mph.

	Arrival		Disposal	
	From	Date	Date	To
HP 428	Thame	24. 4.43	30. 8.44	48 MU Scrap
JN 420	New	2. 5.43	4. 5.44	Cat B
			16. 5.44	Miles Aircraft CRO
JN 302	New	3, 5.43	23. 8.44	A&AEE
JN 303	New	3. 5.43	23. 8.44	A&AEE
JN 304	New	3. 5.43	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 419	New	3. 5.43	1. 6.44	hit bowser Cat Ac
	Repair	7.7.44	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 421	New	3. 5.43	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 509	New -	31. 5.43	23. 8.44	A&AEE
JN 510	New	31. 5.43	4. 7.44	Cat Ac
			7. 7.44	ROS by repair party
	Repair	2. 8.44	28. 8.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 511	New	31.5.43	3. 7. 43	collided LT 827 Cat A
			28. 8.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 538	New	3.	18. 7.43	u/c collapsed Cat A
			2. 12.43	lighting strike
			28. 8.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 585	New	8. 6.43	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 586	New	10. 6.43	28. 8.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 634	New	15. 6.43	28. 8.44	27 MU Scrap
JN 635	New	16. 6.43	25. 8.44	39 MU Scrap
J N 636	New	16. 6.43	25. 8.44.	39 MU Scrap .
JN 637	New	16. 6.43	25. 8.44:	39 MU Scrap
MS 525	New	13. 7 43	2.12.43	lightning .strike. Cat .A
			31.11.44	Flew into mountain. Cat E
			26. 2,44.	SOC

MS 520	New	15. 7.43	25. 8.44	39 MU Scrap
MS 521	New	15. 7.43 .	1. 9.44	27. MU Scrap
MS 674	New	22. 8.43	30. 8.44	HQFTC Comms Flight _
MS 675	New	24.8.43	21. 2.44	hit lorry .Cat A
			18. 6.44	u/c collapse Cat B
			4. 7.44	Miles Aircraft
MS 676	New	24. 8.43	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
MS 677	New	25. 8.43	22. 8.44	Miles Aircraft
MS 686	New	24. 8.43	25. 8.44	39 MU SOC
MS 687	New	25. 8.43	26. 8.44	48 MU Scrap
EM 455	New	14.11.43	4. 3.44	Cat Ac
		?	23. 5.44	u/c failed Cat B
			2. 6.44	Miles Aircraft- CFE
EM 457	New	14.11.43	22. 8.44	Miles Aircraft
MS 846	4(O)AFU	15.11.43	26. 8.44	48 MU SOC
MS 848	4(O)AFU	15.11.43	1. 9.44	27 MU, Scrap
EM 456	New	16.11.43	27. 3.44	into sea
EM 458	New	16.11.43	1. 5.44	4 AGS
EM 460	New	16.11.43	1. 9.44	27 MU Scrap
EM 461	New	16.11.43	26. 8.44	48 MU Scrap
EM 459	New	28.11.43	1. 5.44	4 AGS
MS 874	567 Sqdn	8. 7.44	26. 8.44	48 MU SOC

MISCELLANEOUS AIRCRAFT

Generally used for communications and conversion flying

Type		Arrived From	Date	Date	Disposal To
Miles Magister					
L 8210		CFS	12. 7.39	5. 8.41	5 EFTS .
?			4.40	?	
			8.10.41	?	
For pilot	Conver-	sion	to Defiant,	no other	details.
N 7874		9 FTS	31.12.41	5. 5.42	29 MU*
Hawker Hector					
K 9714	2 S	of Photo	7. 3.41	6. 4.41	Duxford a/c gun mounting
					establishment ~
Bristol Blenheim					
V 5658	New	19 MU	28. 3.41	25. 7.41	5 BGS
V 5893	New	19 MU	28. 3.41	25. 7.41	5 BGS
Gypsy Moth					
AV 991		32 MU	6. 6.41	9. 5.43	Reduced to Spares
Moth Minor					
X 9297		20 MU	14. 4.42	20. 3.43	1 AAS
BK 839		5 MU	22. 6.44	2. 9.44	5 MU
Tiger Moth					
BB 700	6 EFTS		3. 8. 42	24. 8.44	Reduced to Spares
SM 148	2 0 MU		30.8.44	1. 9.44	Fairwood Common
probably never arrived at Stormy Down					
Hornet Moth					
V 7974	5 MU _		24 3.43	22. 7.44	Write Off Cat E2 by 78MU
Avro Anson					
K 8822	Repair		2. 9.43	5.12.43	Station Flight
deHavill and Dominie					
R 5924	Croydon		17.8.42	17, 8.42	Croydon.
probably never arrived at Stormy Down					

Abbreviations, _

Airworks and General.Trading,	a Civilian Repair Organization
ACU	Anti Aircraft Co-operation Unit
A&AE	Aircraft and Arnament Establishment ' 4
AFU	Advanced Flying Unit (O) Observer, (P) Pilot
AOS	Air .Observer School
AGS	Air Gunnery School
BAT	Blind or BeamApproach Training
BGS	Bombing and Gunnery School,
Cat	Repair category
Repair Categories:	M(u) or A repairable on site by the unit
	M(c) or Ac repair beyond unit capacity
	R(b) or B beyond repair on site
	W or E destroyed or written off
	E1 reduced to spares
	E2 wreck reduced to spares
	SOC struck off charge.
CGS	Central Gunnery JSchool
CRO	Civilian Repair Orgstnisation
EFTS	Elementary Flying Training School
EWS	Electrical and Wireless School
Fairfield	Westland Aircraft Company factory,
M	after a serial number indicates Instructional Airframe
Miles	Aircraft manufacturers factory
MU	Maintenance Unit
New	indicates aircraft is new. Almost all aircraft were issued via a Maintenance Unit, In most cases they were also passed through a MU before issue to another unit or overseas
OTU	Operational Training Unit
RAE	Royal Aircraft Establishment
R & S	Reid and Sigrist .factory
ROS	Repairable on site by a working party either civilian from the manufacturer or Civilian Repair Organisation or RAF from a MU.
RS	Radio School
SPTU	Staff Pilot Training Unit
Sqdn	Squadron

u/c
Westland

undercarriage.
Westland Aircraft factory.

IMPORTANT DATES

1939 -----	
June 1	No 9 ATS, RAF Porthcawl opened OC Wg Cdr James Conrad Peter Wood
June 12	OC Wg Cdr Tom Oswald Cloughston
July	Becomes RAF Newton Down but still referred to as RAF Porthcawl
September 1	Becomes 7 Air Observer School
October 8	OC Gp Cpt the Hon. Laurence John Evelyn Twistleton- Wykeham-Fiennes
November 20	Becomes 7 Bombing and Gunnery School
1940 -----	
June 20	2 AAS arrived ;
July 7	2 AAS became 3 GAS
August 27	Bombed
September 27	OC Wg Cdr H G Wisher
October 3	OC Gp Cpt A V Franklyn MC; Becomes RAF Stormy Down
1941 -----	
June 9	Becomes 7 Air Gunners School
September 1	OC Wg Cdr P Haynes
November 4	OC Wg Cdr, later Gp Cpt G C Stemp
November 9	46 ASRU formed at Porthcawl
1942 -----	
January 3	3 GAS left for Kirkham
July 7	5 Bomb Disposal Squad known to be accommodated
1943 -----	

January 5	OC Gp Cpt W E G Bryant MBE, later Air Commodore
1944 -----	
February 8	Flying training moved to Rhoose
July 4	OC Gp Cpt D M T MacDonald
August 2	All aircraft returned from Rhoose
August 21	7 AGS disbanded ;
September 1	Becomes 40 Initial Training Wing OC Wg Cdr F W Moxham AFC
November 23	Becomes. No 4 (French) Aircrew Reception Centre
November 27	40 ITV disbands OC Gp Cpt G Y Tyre11 MC
December 13	Becomes French Air Force Depot consisting of 23 (French) ITW; 4 (French) Aircrew Reception Centre. 32 (French) Personnel Reception Centre
1945 -----	
January 31	OC Group Captain R G Shaw DFC
July 19	OC Group Captain B A Healey
1946 -----	
February	558 French personnel posted to France
April 4	23 (French) ITV moved to RAF Bridgnorth
April 21	RAF Stormy Down closed down. Flt Lt Potter ic C and M

ABBREVIATIONS

ACHGD = Aircraft hand General Duties

AC2 = Aircraftman 2nd Class

AC1 = Aircraftman 1st Class -

LAC = Leading Aircraftman

Woman's Royal Air Force indicated by W

Non Commissioned Ranks

Cpl = Corporal, Sgt = Sergeant, FSgt = Flight Sergeant, WO = Warrant Officer.

Commissioned Ranks

Plt Off = Pilot Officer

Fg Off = Flying Officer

Flt Lt = Flight Lieutenant

Sqdn Ldr = Squadron Leader

Wg Cdr = Wing Commander

Gp Cpt = Group Captain

Air Cdr = Air Commodore

AVM = Air Vice Marshal

AM = Air Marshal

ACM = Air Chief Marshal

AOC-in-C = Air Officer Commanding in Chief

i/c = Officer in charge i.e. i/c stores

CO = Commanding Officer

OC = Officer Commanding

S Ad O = Senior Administration Officer

SASO = Senior Administrative Staff Officer

SOURCES

Public Record Office, Kew.

Class Air 10: 1669, 3926, 3927, 3928, 3929 (SD155); 1931, AP 1388 War Syllabus for Pilots, Observers and Air Gunners; 4035, Restricted Area Map GB 1943; 4038, SD 310 RAF Airfields 1943; 2318, AP 1388D Air Gunners Syllabus.

Class Air 25: 545 (HQ 25 Gp F540), 547 (Appendices), 548 (HQ 25 Gp (Oct 1942-April 1945)

Class Air 27: 98 (7 Sqdn), 338 (217 Sqdn), 361 (32 Sqdn), 741 (91 Sqdn), 1139 (185 Sqdn), 1827 (421 Sqdn), 2055 (587, Sqdn).

Class Air 28: 263 (Fairwood Common), 589 (IAOS forth Coates Fittes), 724 (Stormy Down September 1944- February 1946)

Class Air 29: 42 (1 FTS), .448.(46 ASRMCU), 477,.(4 ACJU), 544 (3 AOS), 550 (2 FTS), 547 (1 AGS), 553 .(3FTS) 556 (5 FTS), 559 (9 FTS), 563(1 FTS), 566 (7 FTS), 588 (2 AAS later 3 GAS), 589 (Horth Coates), 591(9 ATS, 7 AOS Newton Down, 7 BGS to July 1942), 592 (7 AGS), 593 (Station Standing Orders and Daily Routine Orders 9ATS and 7BGS), 604 (Central Flying School), 605 (Central Gunnery School), 635(23[FITW]), 648 (13 OTU), 652 (14 OTU), .655 (16 .OTU), 724 (RAF StormyDown 1944 on), 681 (53 OTU), 736 and 737 (4 S of TT), 751 No 3 RAF Regt School), 871 (1492 Flt), 2055 (587 Sqdn), 2345.

Air Historical Branch M o D, Forms 78 Aircraft Movements and Aircraft Accident Card Form 1180.

Royal Air Force Museum: Handling Notes - Harrow -Pilots Notes foR Anson Battle, Defiant, Henley, Lysander, Martinet, Whitley.

Owen Thetford (9e 2000) *Aircraft of the Royal Air Force Since 1918* London, Brassey's: Putnam Aeronautical; (Putnam's British aircraft) ISBN 0 85177 810 0

Serial Numbers Air Britain

Western Mail, South Wales: Echo, Glamorgan: Gazette

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Interviews and correspondence

Geoff Almond, Stanmore, 8 Air Gunner course, only knows of one other survivor.

R W E Humphryes, Hastings, trained at 3 GAS on armourer's course. Severely wounded and burned in accident, treated at East Grinstead, left RAF June 1946.

Cresswell "Joe" Viney, Wotton-under Edge, RAFVR pilot, served South Africa and Far East,

Benjamin Dodd, Ferndown, Dorset, posted to Stormy Down as AC2 FME from Cosford.

Jessie Barnett (nee Atkins) Dursley, Carpenter II, was at in Stormy 1944, worked on Gliders, posted to Pembrey.

C H Rogers, Chipping Norton, born and brought up in the Rhondda. Posted to 7 AGS after training at Brize Norton, flew tow lines and was officer i/c air sea rescue training. Posted to 1AGS as supernumerary.

Harry Nickson, Wallasey. Assessed at Padgate and was at Stormy at outbreak waiting training as Flight Mechanic (Engines).

Haydn Lewis, Cefn Cribwr, clerk special duties in air traffic control.

Arthur Grey, Porthcawl, fitter, ex Halton apprentice posted to Stormy Down early in the war.

Malcolm Jones, Porthcawl, Boy Entrant wireless operator posted to Stormy Down early in the war.

Jim Kirby, Tamworth, posted to Stormy Down as a ground defence gunner, became a batman in the officers mess, then a tow operator.

Len Hayton, Teignmouth, on Ho 14 Air Gunner. Flew '20 operations over Europe and another 20 in the Middle East before becoming a gunnery instructor. Went into Air Traffic Control and left the RAF in 1970 after 31 years service,

D W King Orpington, a rigger who often flew to operate flaps and landing gear,

Wally Punnett, Berwick, Australia, Air Gunner who flew with 4 Sqdn in Lysanders. Was in 3 flying accidents then found medically unfit to fly. Discharged he volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm. Survived to work with the Malayan Police and then worked in almost every country around the world.

Angela Capel, Shoreham by Sea, born in Nottage, WAAF Flight Mech Air Frame.

Harold Richards, Pontypool, LAC Airframe Fitter looking after Station Flight at Stormy Down.

D V MacGiles, Fakenham, did a gunnery refresher course at Stormy Down in 1942.

Vernon M Smith, RCAF, did a refresher course at Stormy Down but was withdrawn from training.

Geoff Worley, Peterborough, trainee airgunner on 117 course

Andre Larvor, Saint Pol de Leon, France, served as Free French cadet air gunner at Stormy Down.

Margery Juliffe, was a WAAF driver at Stormy Down, worked as sick-bay attendant,

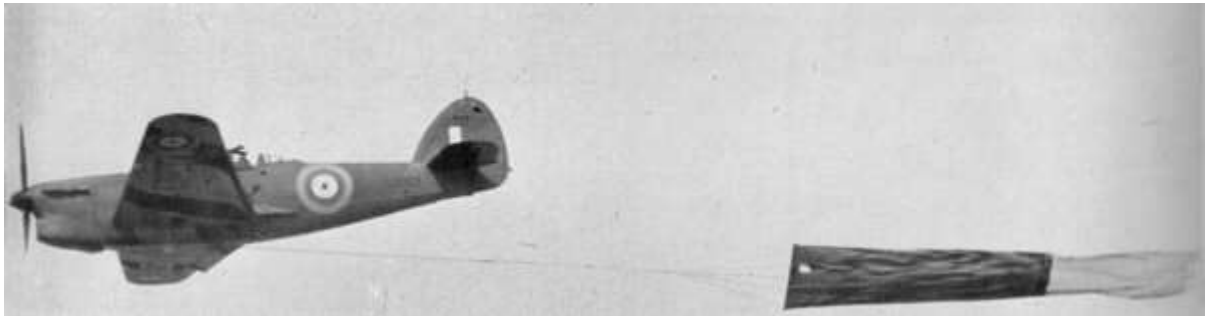
Phil Davies, Bridgend, an enthusiast on Stormy Down, who has provided a host of information,

Ogwr Borough Council Leisure Services Department.

Ex Flt Sgt Reg Bradley, 3 Ground Armament School

Pictures of the aeroplanes from Wikipedia:

Hawker Henley deploying drogue target (wiki)



Westland Wallace (wiki)



Handley Page Harrow (wiki)



