

Reference:-

Officer Commanding "A" Squadron,

LOC/C.600/ 685 214 / P3

No 1 Apprentice Wing,
Royal Air Force,

Tel: Weston-super-Mare 2560

Locking,

Weston-super-Mare,
Somerset.

22 January 1959

Dear Mr Davis

Following the arrival of your boy at No. 1 Radio School, I feel sure it will be of value to acquaint you with certain aspects of our organisation here. This will ensure that you are in the best position to support our efforts to qualify him for a successful career in the Royal Air Force.

I have listed below the salient points, but I would like to stress that if there is anything on which you need further information, either now or in the future, you should not hesitate to write to me. To avoid any delay in reply, please always address your letter to "Officer Commanding "A" Squadron, rather than to me personally.

LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

There are three terms of instruction per year and the three major leave periods occur at the end of each term, i.e. Easter, in the Summer and at Christmas. In addition, there are one week's leave at Whitsun and Mid-term breaks of 4 days in February and October. Attached is a letter giving the dates on which your son may be expected home on leave during the current year and you will be notified at the commencement of each year of the leave periods for that year. A certain number of privilege passes are also granted to apprentices, depending on their seniority and appointment as N.C.O. apprentices.

It is very desirable to limit the number of passes to the above scale, in order that apprentices suffer no interruption in their studies, and can associate with his companions here at Locking to the fullest extent. However, we do consider applications for special passes for important family reasons, for example, serious illness of near relatives, provided they have the written support of the parent or guardian. Urgent cases are considered separately, but naturally we do expect some form of authenticity.

We do insist that apprentices go on leave or pass to their home address, or to an address which has been approved by their parents. To avoid unnecessary correspondence, I would like you to state on the attached form your home address and any other leave addresses acceptable to you. Please return the form to me in the envelope provided. Should you change your address or wish your boy to travel at some future date, to an address not noted on the form, please inform me.

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PAY

To avoid large differences in money available during term to apprentices who are on different rates of pay, the actual weekly cash payment is limited. Part of the balance of pay which is not issued is paid into a Post Office Savings Account and the remainder is held as credit in the boy's Pay Account. Every encouragement is given to the boys to increase the standard allotment to their Post Office Savings Account and to invest in National Savings Certificates, thereby inculcating in them a sense of thrift from the beginning of their careers. The Savings Book is held for safe keeping by the apprentice's Flight Commander and issued to him just prior to proceeding on leave at the end of term. Shown below are the progressive gross weekly rates of pay, etc. The weekly pay held as credit in the apprentice's pay account is paid to him in a lump sum just prior to proceeding on the Mid-term break and the end of term.

	Gross Weekly Pay	Weekly Cash Pay	Weekly P.O. S.B.	Nat. Ins.	Weekly Pay Hold As Credit In Pay Account	Approx. Income Tax Weekly
First year under 17	£1 18s.6d.	£1 6s.0d.	5s.3d.	3s.3d	4s.0d.	—
Second year under 17	£2 9s.0d.	£1 12s.0d.	7s.0d.	3s.3d	6s.9d.	—
On reaching age of 17	£3 10s.0d.	£2 0s.0d.	7s.0d	3s.3d	19s9d.	
On reaching age of 17½	£6 2s.6d.	£2 10s.0d.	28s.0d.	3s.3d	35s.3d.	6s.0d.

DRESS

Royal Air Force dress regulations state apprentices must wear uniform at all times, except when at home on leave. However certain exceptions to this rule have recently been introduced and, apprentices who are in their last six terms of apprenticeship are permitted to wear civilian clothes to the following approved pattern, off the station and on certain specified occasions. The approved pattern is:- Double breasted navy blue blazer, with silver buttons and No. 1 Radio School badge; dark grey flannels; white shirt; Royal Air Force tie and black shoes. Additional to this pattern of dress, apprentices who attain N.C.O. rank are permitted to wear lounge suits of a conservative style and colour at these times.

As your boy will not qualify for these concessions for the first three terms of his training here, I would ask for your support in ensuring that he does not return from leave with civilian clothes in his possession. Should he do so, there is always the temptation that he will wear these clothes and thereby contravene the regulations.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Apart from all the normal sports facilities at the school, there are also a number of Clubs which provide recreational facilities for apprentices – they cover such varied subjects as Model Aircraft, Classical Music, Sailing, Amateur Radio, Printing, Amateur Dramatics, Photography, Scouts, Angling, etc.

These clubs are linked together in the Locking Apprentices Society. The Society is run by a committee with representation from both the permanent staff and officers in charge of clubs. The funds for the Society come mainly from the Apprentices Endowment Fund, which is an allocation of prize money awarded to the Royal Air Force after the war.

We do, however, make a nominal charge of one shilling per term for membership of the Society, because we feel that interest will be maintained if apprentices have to make a small contribution themselves; this charge covers membership for all the clubs. Apprentice membership is voluntary, but we do our utmost to persuade boys to join because we feel that this aspect of the school life provides valuable training in citizenship and in the art of working together for a common purpose.

SPIRITUAL WELFARE

There are Church of England, Roman Catholic and Other Denominations Chaplains on the Station. The "Padres Hour" forms part of the normal instruction and in addition, the chaplains are available outside working hours to any apprentice who wishes to talk over any personal problems.

MORAL AND PHYSICAL WELFARE

Under no circumstances do we allow apprentices to drink alcoholic liquor when they are in our charge.

Should the boys not feel well, a medical and dental staff, with a very well equipped Sick Quarters, is available. If a boy is sent to bed in Station Sick Quarters for any minor complaint, the parent or guardian is notified of his progress after he has been in seven days; but should a boy be transferred to a R.A.F. Hospital away from the Station, the parent or guardian is sent the address of the hospital immediately so that further information may be obtained.

Apprentices are prohibited from driving any form of motor vehicle, including motor cycles, whilst they are in our charge, and from riding pillion on a motor cycle. You will appreciate that this prohibition cannot apply when they are on leave or pass, since they are then in your charge. A number of cases have occurred in the past where apprentices have brought motor cycles from home on return from leave and garaged them outside the Station, without our knowledge. There is a very dangerous stretch of road in front of this Station and unfortunately one of our apprentices was fatally injured whilst riding a motor cycle which he had brought back from leave without our knowledge or permission. We would therefore, ask for your support in enforcing this prohibition on driving motor vehicles and motor cycles, by ensuring that your boy does not bring one back from leave. I would emphasise that a serious view is taken of any contravention of this order.

TRAINING PROGRESS

The work of your boy at the school is under continuous review and, so that you will know how he is progressing and will be able to encourage and advise him in his studies, progress reports will be sent to you at the following intervals. The first report will be sent mid-way through the second term, as we have found from experience that the new entry has not been with us long enough for an accurate assessment to be made at the end of the first term. Subsequent reports will follow at the end of the third and fifth terms and a final report will be sent to you mid-way through the seventh term. Additional reports are made if necessitated through lack of progress. The report will cover: -

Education: Mathematics, Engineering Science, Basic Radio Principles, Technical Drawing, General Studies.

Technical: Workshops and, for the second half of the course, Applied Radio Principles and Radio Equipments.

General Service Training: Discipline (i.e. Conduct), Drill, (i.e. Dress and Department standard), Physical Training, Organised Games.

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All the Educational and Technical subjects will be assessed as a percentage, and the school's aim and the Royal Air Force trade requirements, is minimum standard of 60% in all subjects. However, there are certain key subjects, namely Basic Radio (Theory) and Technical Radio (i.e. practical application), and outstanding reports in other subjects do not offset a standard below the minimum in key subjects. If an apprentice fails to obtain the minimum in key subjects, and continues to fail to make this standard, he may be reclassified to a junior entry. Major progress tests are of the upmost importance, since they cover the whole of the work of the previous terms and enable us to assess how well the apprentice is assimilating the course. If by any chance your boys progress is inadequate, we shall write to you explaining his case and advise you of further action.

CAREERS

Successful apprentices pass out from the Radio School, after three years training, as Junior Technicians in the Advanced Trade of the Radio Engineering Trade Group. They are thus at a great advantage, compared with normal airmen, who must first serve his time in a skilled trade before he is accepted for transfer to an advanced trade. Further, the very wide range of theoretical and cultural training given by this school well fits the keen ex-apprentice for subsequent promotion; I enclose a diagram which illustrates the avenues of promotion.

Towards the end of the training, we recommend exceptional apprentices for cadetship – that is, for training to become officers. Those recommended go through the same selection system as all other applicants. If they pass the selection board, they are transferred on completion of their apprenticeship, to Royal Air Force College, Cranwell for flying cadetships, or Royal Air Force Technical College, Henlow, for technical cadetships.

Also, when an apprentice completes his training, he can volunteer for flying duty – this can be done before he leaves the School, if he so desires – and if he is accepted and can pass the Aircrew Initial Training School, he would be granted a probationary commission as a Royal Air Force Officer.

Finally, the Commanding Officer of a unit to which an apprentice is posted on completion of his training here, is fully entitled to recommend him for a commission in the Technical Branch, should he show the qualities demanded of a Royal Air Force Officer.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that our task is to pass out your boy as a good technician, a good companion and a good airman. We cannot achieve this alone and we fully appreciate that your cooperation and encouragement are also required. We feel confident that they will be freely given.

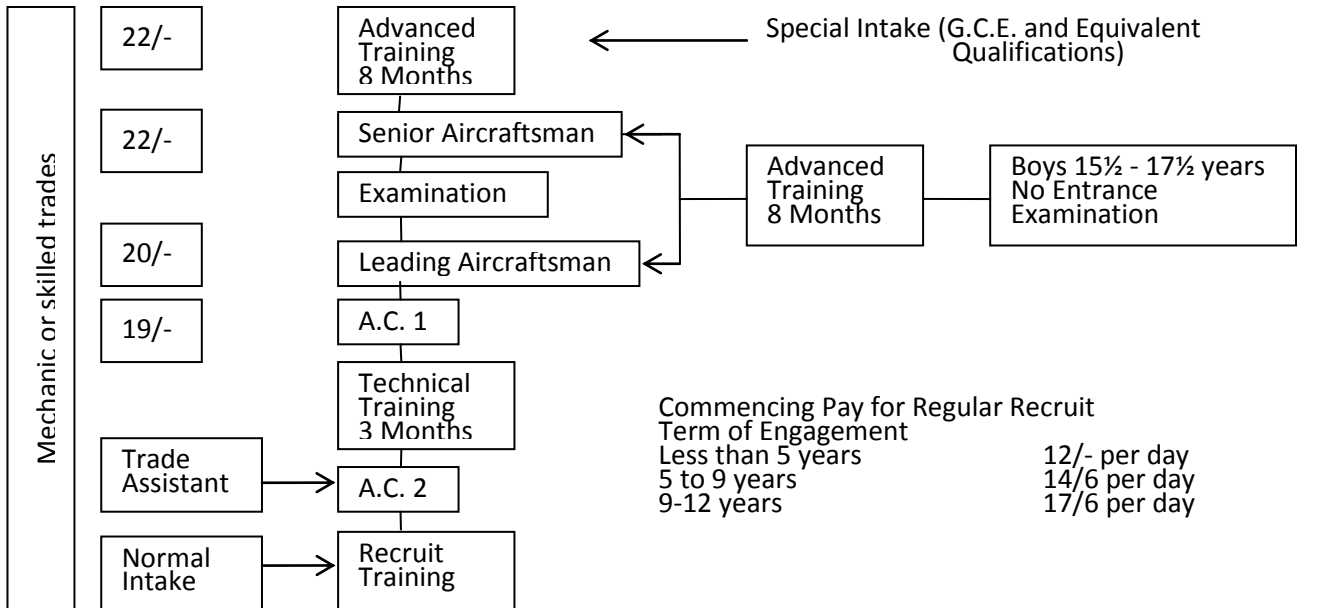
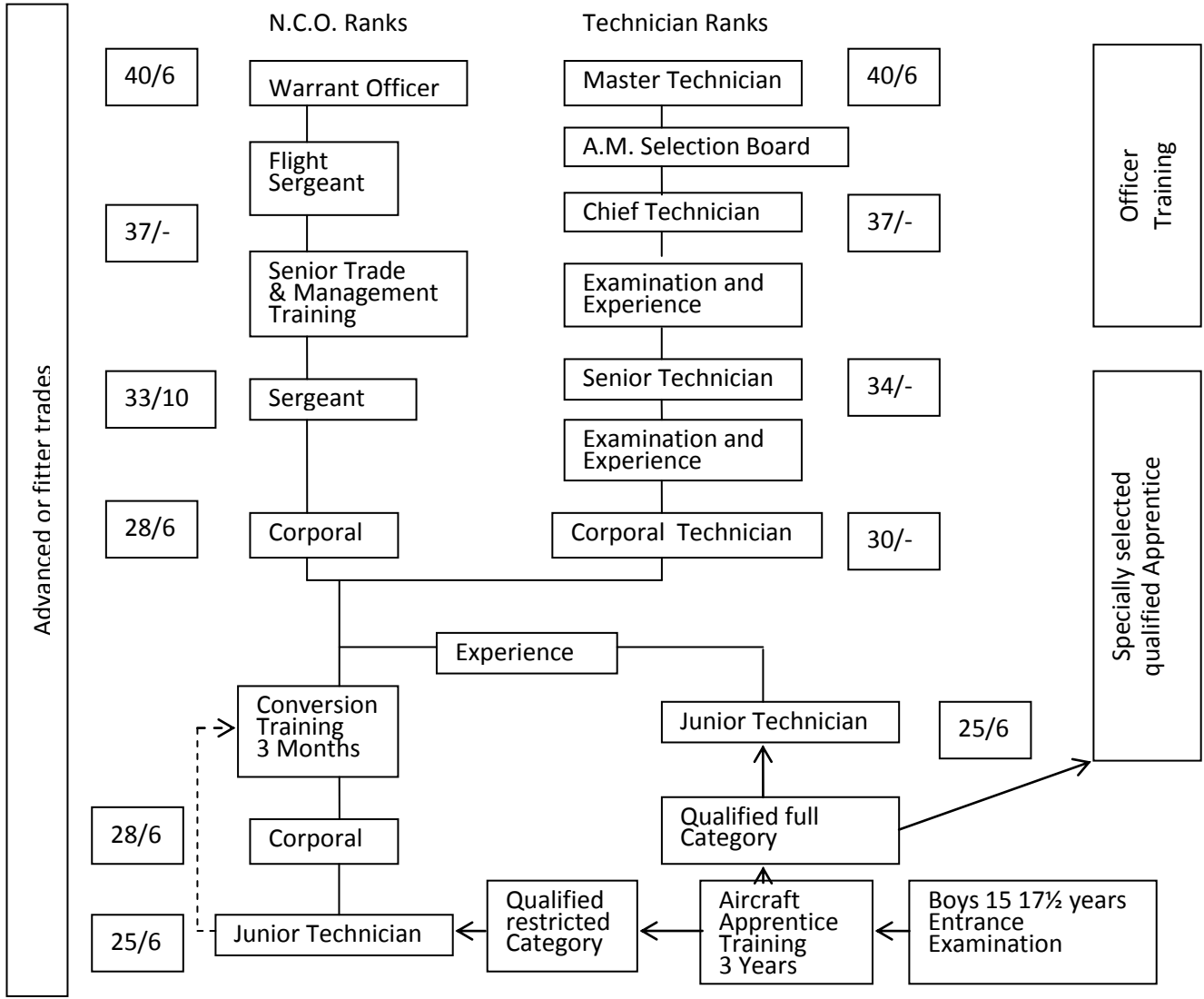
Yours Sincerely

P J Deakin

(P J Deakin)
FLT. LT.

for ~~Squadron Leader~~
Officer Commanding "A" Squadron.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
RADIO business TRADE STRUCTURE



- Note.1. Special facilities for exceptional men and boys to get accelerated promotion with shorter experience.
- Note.2. Very exceptional N.C.O's and Technicians may be selected for training as Officers at any age below 25 years
- Note.3. A few exceptional Warrant Officers, Master and Chief Technicians may be granted commissions after attaining 30 years of age.

transcribed from
original letter to my
father by Ian M Davis
91st Entry (20 Jan 2012)