WHY AN RAF APPRENTICESHIP?


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Taking an RAF apprenticeship in aircraft engineering or electronics means receiving the finest trade training there is.

And that's not just our opinion. It's the opinion of many of the major civilian employers too.

As an RAF apprentice you'll receive full-time training from experienced instructors in modern fully equipped workshops, laboratories and classrooms.

Each syllabus is well thought out and planned, allowing you to qualify and earn good money in three years instead of the five it normally takes in industry.

And of course, joining our apprenticeship scheme also means you'll come into the RAF and work on today's most sophisticated aircraft or its advanced electronic equipment — some of it highly secret.

If you feel you'd like to join in the life of the Royal Air Force and become an apprentice, have a good look through this booklet and also read the companion booklet called *You in the RAF*. You can get it from the RAF Careers Information Office. It gives a more detailed picture of the basic training, the various other trades and life on a typical operational station.

But first, there are one or two things you ought to know before you apply. These we've outlined below.

Have a look and see if you've got what it takes to become an RAF apprentice.

Qualifications

4 'O' level GCE passes or equivalent at C grade or above, i.e. mathematics, plus a science subject or technical subject and two other subjects. By the way, you can apply and be considered for an apprenticeship before your exam results are known.

Age limits

16 to 18½ years (exceptionally up to 21).

Length of service

Apprentices can choose to enlist for 9 years or 12 years. Both periods count from the age of 18 or date of entry if later, but the Careers Information Office will be able to explain these more fully.

Your pay while training

Full rates of pay and the money you'll receive while training are shown in the enclosed pay leaflet.

Time off

Whilst serving your apprenticeship you'll have 6 weeks' paid holiday every year with 4 free travel warrants. You can also go home most weekends if you wish.

How to apply

Just go along to your local RAF Careers Information Office, the address is shown on the enclosed sheet. Have a chat with one of the staff and he'll tell you all you want to know and help you fill in the necessary application forms, etc.

Also see the back page for more details.

Aircraft Engineering?

If you wish to train in aircraft engineering you can apply to take the Aircraft Technician Apprenticeship specialising in airframes and propulsion.

Aircraft Technician (Airframes/Propulsion). This trade involves you in the maintenance, repair and servicing of a very wide range of airframes, engines and mechanical and hydraulic systems. In fact, at first sight you may well think you'll never be able to cope, or ever be able to learn so much. But you will. You'd be surprised how much you can take in when you're being taught properly.

You'll go to our School of Technical Training at RAF Halton, near Wendover, Bucks, on a course lasting about three years.

Now, although it's called a school don't let that put you off. It's not all sitting behind a desk. You'll spend a far larger part of your time in the workshops and hangars.

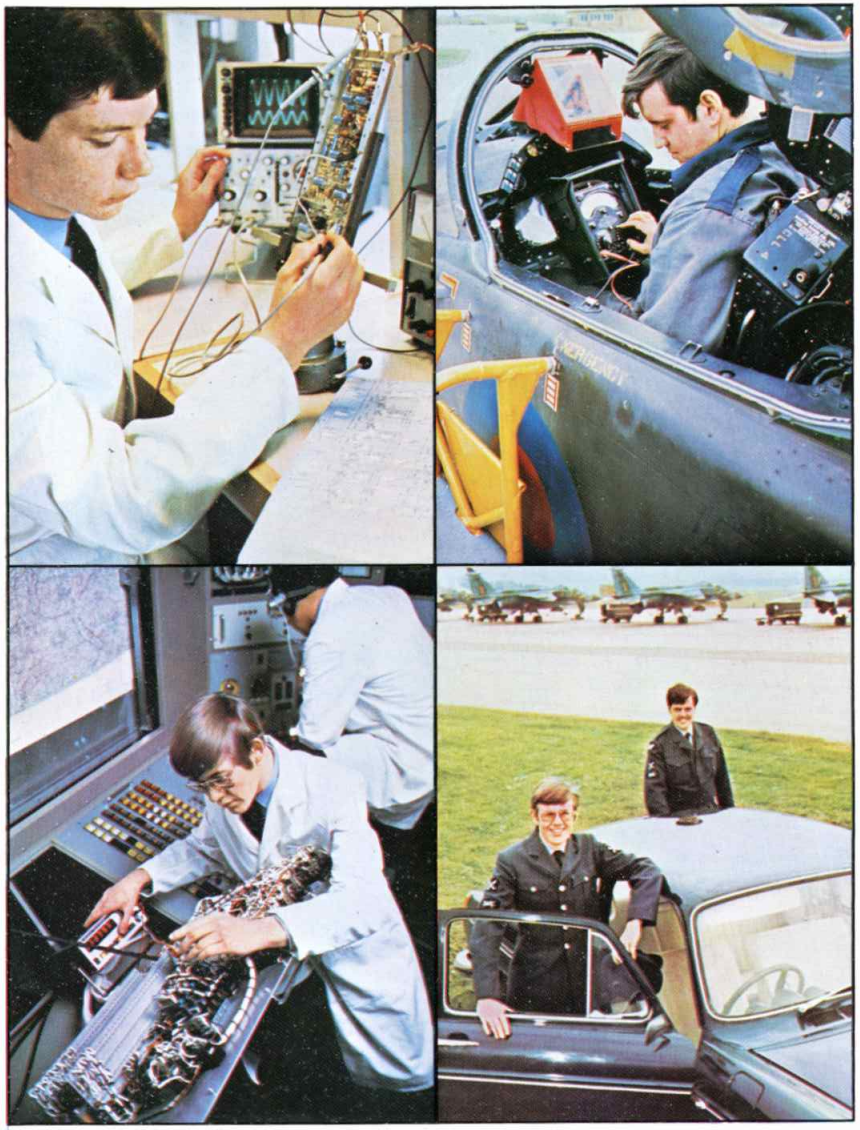
The training, however, we cover in more detail on the next few pages.

When you qualify you'll be capable of working on all types of aircraft, making regular checks on the aircraft structure, inspecting the gas-turbine engines and propulsion systems. You'll have knowledge of all types of flying controls, power-operated controls, landing gear, flaps and dive brakes.

And you'll also know what's right or wrong with the hydraulic systems used for their operation.

That's not all. You'll work on the many mechanical systems such as fuel, oil, de-icing, air-conditioning and cabin pressurisation. Then there's oxygen, engine and propeller control plus helicopter rotors and transmission.

or Electronics?



Perhaps you're more interested in the electronics side of things? If you are you have a choice of apprenticeships. You can apply to become an Electronic Technician specialising in navigational instruments, or an Electronic Technician specialising in air communications and air radar.

Both these apprenticeships are carried out at the School of Technical Training at RAF Cosford, near Wolverhampton. The courses last about three years but as we've already mentioned they'll be covered in more detail further on.

Electronic Technician (Navigational Instruments) For this trade you'll work on all the equipment associated with flight stability and control plus navigation and weapon aiming. This includes auto-stabilising systems, flight directors, military flight systems, auto pilots, inertial navigation systems, combined nav/attack systems and radio navigation aids. This equipment also comprises gyros, servo-mechanisms, analogue and digital computers and various counters.

Electronic Technician (Air Communications/ Air Radar) If you choose this trade you'll learn to maintain all the air communications and air radar equipment used in the RAF. This involves weather radar, distance measuring instruments, radio altimeters, long- and short-range communications equipment, radio compasses, hyperbolic navigation equipment and instrument landing systems.

The Aircraft Technician

1st YEAR

After the six weeks' basic RAF training which every recruit receives you'll arrive at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire. RAF Halton, by the way, has been associated with the RAF since before 1917 when Mr Alfred Rothschild of the famous Rothschild family offered the armed services Halton House and its surrounding area. Of course, in those days we were known as the Royal Flying Corps and boys being trained here were known as boy mechanics.

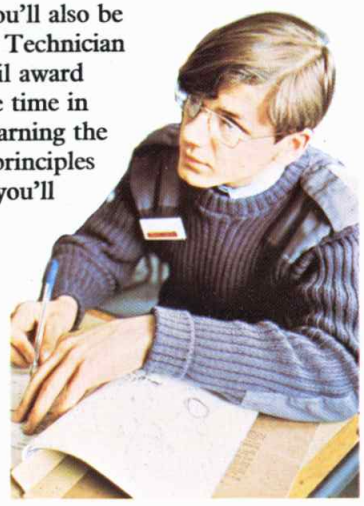
It was in 1920 that Lord Trenchard inaugurated the Aircraft Apprentice scheme, and since that time RAF Halton has continued to train apprentices in new skills and engineering trades to keep in line with advanced aviation technology.

At Halton you'll live and work in a friendly community where you'll be well looked after and where you'll be able to join in and take part in many of the activities.

Halton has magnificent sporting facilities, 200 acres of playing fields, two gyms, a heated swimming pool, squash courts, golf course, athletics track and all kinds of sporting clubs.

But down to work. In the first year you'll spend a lot of time in the workshops concentrating on basic engineering. Among other things you'll learn about different kinds of metal fastenings, how to handle the tools of your trade, you'll interpret drawings and plans into well-engineered objects and you'll learn to cut and form different metals.

Naturally, as you'll also be studying for your Technician Education Council award you'll spend some time in classrooms too, learning the theories and the principles behind the work you'll carry out.



2nd YEAR

In your second year you'll go on to the more advanced aspects of aircraft engineering. You'll learn about different kinds of engines and propulsion systems. You'll work on actual aircraft, repairing and replacing components. And you'll learn how to operate different instruments and read more complicated drawings.

During this time, of course, you'll also be continuing to learn about the RAF, its history and its role in helping to keep the peace.

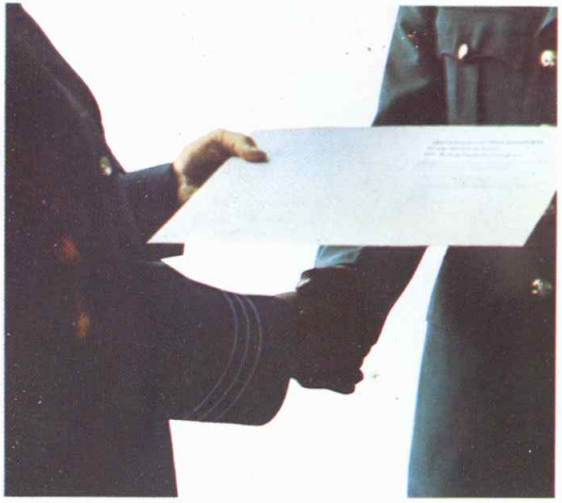
And occasionally you'll break away from work to take part in character-training exercises where

n Course at RAF Halton.

you'll be taught fieldcraft and the use of weapons.

There'll be days, too, when you'll visit different operational stations to show you just how your knowledge will be put to work and how you'll fit in with other trades.

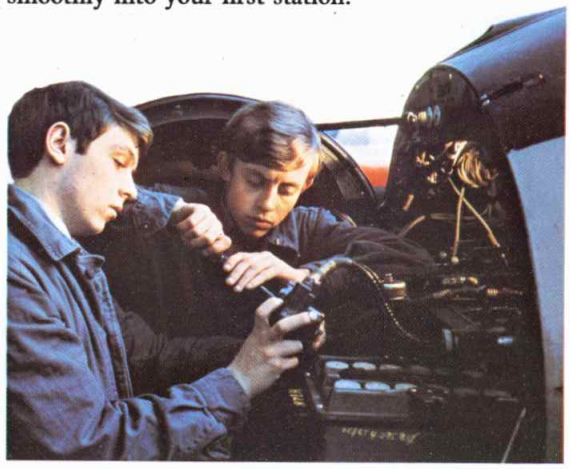
During your course you will sit examinations assessed by the Technician Education Council and if you pass you will receive your certificate at a formal presentation. It's at this point you realise just how much work you've done and how much you know. It's a good feeling and at this time your efforts are rewarded in the form of a heavier wage packet.



3rd YEAR

The last part of your course will tend to be spent more around the Airfield Training Squadron where we've tried to create similar situations as those you'd expect to find on a typical station or maintenance unit. This aspect of the course can best be described as the 'polishing-up' part. You'll spend most of the time developing your new skills and knowledge.

There'll also be more days spent outside Halton, maybe visiting stations or manufacturers, and you'll continue to learn more about the RAF and its procedures so that you can fit smoothly into your first station.



It's worth remembering at this point that you'll spend some time on a 'Junior Management' course. After all, as an incentive for all your hard work you will be eligible to be promoted to Corporal 12 months after completing your apprenticeship providing that you have passed the appropriate promotion examination. This is the first step up the ladder and you will have men under you to supervise and control. This management course gives you a great deal of useful knowledge in coping with your new position.

The three-year course won't be easy and no doubt there'll be moments when you think, is it all worth it? But it is. When you leave RAF Halton you'll have a trade no one can ever take away from you. You'll be a fully qualified Aircraft Technician.

The Electronic Technician

1st YEAR

Directly after your basic RAF training you'll come to RAF Cosford, near Wolverhampton. Like RAF Halton, Cosford is also a friendly community where you'll be well looked after and where you'll be able to take part in the many leisure and sports facilities.

In fact, Cosford boasts the largest indoor athletics arena in the country—which is often featured on television. Aside from sport there are all kinds of clubs, discos and dances. There's also Radio Cosford where you can try your hand at being a disc jockey.

When you see all the activities you can take up you'll wonder how any one ever manages to do any work.

They do, however, and the syllabus is set out like this.

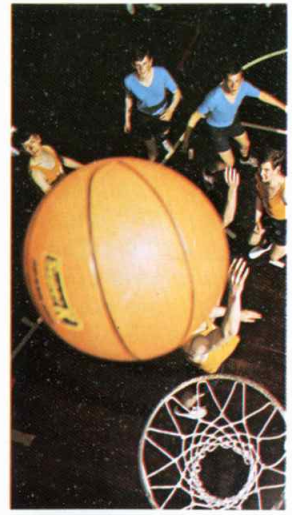
The first stage of the electronics course is common to both apprenticeships.
1. The technician studying navigation instrumentation, and
2. The technician specialising in air communications and radar.

It consists of practical work in basic electronics, learning about different valves, fuses, circuitry, etc. You'll work with simple radio set-ups and have your first introduction to computers.

As on the engineering course you'll take time off from work to familiarise yourself with the role of the RAF today and your part in it. This involves physical training, fieldcraft and weaponry and a visit to the RAF Museum at Hendon.

You'll also begin work on your Technician Education Council studies and the theories and principles of your chosen trade.

2nd YEAR



Here you'll move on to advanced electronics theory and practice. You'll begin to specialise more in your own trade, working on equipment you'll service and repair. You'll learn the factors determining the electronics used in modern operational aircraft. You'll learn to use more specialised tools and instrumentation. And you'll spend one week visiting an operational station finding out about

Course at RAF Cosford.

different operations and the day-to-day normal electronic servicing of aircraft. Here you'll visit the air traffic control section plus the radar and telecommunication areas. During your course you will sit examinations assessed by the Technician Education Council. You'll have come a long way in two years and you'll no doubt look back to the time when you thought you'd never be able to take it all in. On obtaining your Technician Education Council award you'll receive your certificate at a formal presentation and will have earned quite a substantial increase in your pay.

3rd YEAR

The third year of your training is spent continuing to specialise in your own particular trade. You'll spend most of the time doing advanced 'workshop practice' and servicing aircraft. You'll also learn more about the RAF and its role today.

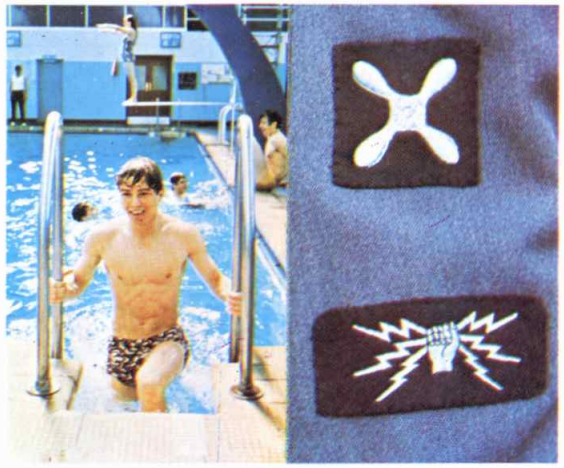
Some of the time will be spent on a station gaining air experience. This really is useful because you'll be able to sit with the pilot and see all the instrumentation, working for real and not in some simulated situation.

In your third year you'll also have a short course in Junior Management. As we've already mentioned, this course prepares you for your first step up the ladder and for eventually taking on the responsibility of men under your control.

The time at Cosford goes pretty quickly and as you'll have discovered we haven't tried to cram a 5-year course into 3 years.

We've worked out a full-time apprenticeship with every facility to enable you to qualify and start doing a proper job as soon as possible.

You'll be a highly skilled Electronic Technician before you know it.



A brief look into the future.

You've completed your apprenticeship. You're a Junior Technician with a Technician Education Council qualification. You're on your way to becoming a Corporal. Now what?

Well, from now on it's a question of gaining one very important asset.

Practical experience.

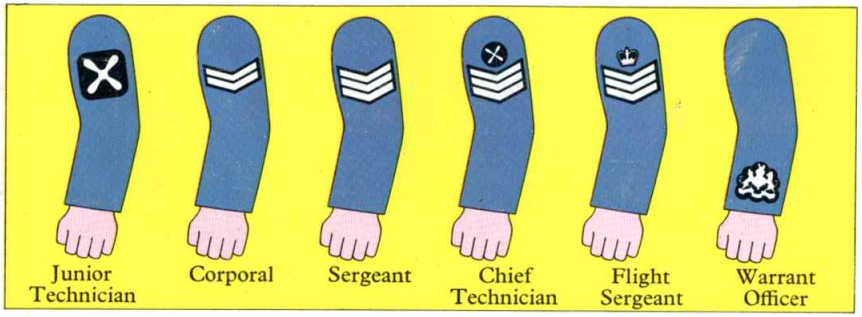
The kind of practical experience that only comes from working on all kinds of problems, in all kinds of conditions, in all kinds of places.

Could be you have to work flat-out through the night to get an aircraft or its equipment serviceable. Could be you're called to another station where an aircraft had to land suddenly, leaving you to get it fit to fly again.

How well you cope with situations like these sets you up for future promotion.

To guide you on how far you can set your sights, we've set out the various ranks below.

The Promotion ladder



Develop further skills

There are special courses of instruction for experienced technicians.

Aircraft Technicians (Airframes/Propulsion) of senior NCO rank can be selected for additional training as diagnosticians or aircraft servicing chiefs on multi-engined aircraft.

Electronic Technicians (Navigational Instruments) on reaching senior NCO rank will be eligible for training as a diagnostician or aircraft servicing chief on aircraft with complex avionics.

Electronic Technicians (Air Communications/Air Radar) can work on additional equipment after further training courses. Equipment specific to the role of an individual aircraft, including search and attack radar, reconnaissance radar, data processing and display systems and terrain-following radar. On reaching senior NCO rank the technician can also become a diagnostician or aircraft servicing chief on aircraft with complex avionics.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The ONC and the new Technician Education Council (TEC)

From 1977 the ONC was phased out and a new system of TEC certificates introduced. The TEC qualification, the Ordinary Technician Certificate (OTC) is broadly comparable with ONC. The OTC is the first series of certificates which includes the Higher Technician Certificate and Diploma (HTC and HTD) and those entrants with ONC will be able to take courses leading to these examinations. The OTC is the first step in a system of study whereby a student can start as a craftsman and finish with a degree.

Your life on an RAF station

Most RAF stations are like towns within towns. Away from the flight-line and hangars there are cinemas, shops, banks, hospitals and sports fields, gyms, swimming pools, etc. Everything you could possibly want.

You'll soon get used to the way we live and we think you'll enjoy it.

You'll make a lot of friends. Friends you'll have for many years. And you'll meet new people all the time, because every few years you'll travel on to another station, where your skills are needed. Maybe in this country. Maybe abroad.

An RAF apprenticeship really is worth looking into. So why not start things happening for you? Now!

It's your life so you think about it.

I want to take up an RAF Apprenticeship.

The first step is to go along to your local RAF Careers Information Office (address on enclosed sheet), and have a chat with one of our recruiters who'll ask you about the things you like, your hobbies, your qualifications, etc. Then, if you're still interested, you'll be invited to spend a whole day at the office taking a medical and an aptitude test. Later, if all the formalities are in order and you satisfy certain requirements, you could be offered a place in the RAF.

By the way, even at this stage you're still free to change your mind.

Nobody's going to pressurise you or sign you up the minute you walk through the door.

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