
Foreword

A Royal Naval Air Service station was established at Cranwell in 1915. Five years later one of Sir Hugh Trenchard's ambitions was realised when the Royal Air Force College for officer cadets was opened.

My family has been associated with developments at Royal Air Force Cranwell since the earliest days and it was at the Royal Air Force College that I received my pilot's wings in 1971.

The history of Cranwell forms a vital part of the history of the Royal Air Force itself and this book gives for the first time an account of developments at Cranwell from 1915 to the present day. As Patron of the Old Cranwellian Association I welcome it and hope it will give pleasure and revive memories both for former flight cadets of the Royal Air Force College and for all those others who served at Royal Air Force Cranwell.

Charles.

Acknowledgements

This book owes much to MRAF Sir Neil Cameron who was the Chief of the Air Staff and to Air Chief Marshal Sir Neville Stack who was the Air Secretary in 1977. They prepared the way for me to be invited officially to write the History of Royal Air Force Cranwell when I retired from the post of Head of the Air Historical Branch in 1978.

I have to acknowledge with thanks the gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen to make use of material from the Royal Archives.

Every assistance has been given to me by the last three Commandants of the RAF College—Air Vice-Marshal W E Colahan, Air Vice-Marshal D Harcourt Smith and Air Vice Marshal B Brownlow.

Mrs Jean King ALA, the Librarian in College Hall, willingly made available papers, photographs and other resources in the College Library.

I was also privileged to study the minutes of meetings of the Old Cranwellian Association from 1926 onwards.

My basic source of information was the series of Operations Record Books (Forms 540) of all the units which had been formed or stationed at Royal Air Force Cranwell from 1915 to the present day. Many of the F540s are now in the Public Record Office at Kew but papers less than 30 years old are stored in the Ministry of Defence Archives at Hayes or held in the Air Historical Branch (RAF).

I am indebted to Air Commodore H A Probert and to his staff in AHB (RAF) for their ever willing support in response to my detailed enquiries. I am particularly grateful to Mr D C Bateman and also to Miss Joan Robinson of the General Staff Map Section, who helped to produce the illustrations and photographs.

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I also had interviews and talks with many civilians who had a knowledge of Cranwell in past years. Among these were: Lady George, Mrs Jill Lidderdale, Mrs Pam Smith, the late Miss Margaret Brackenbury, Miss Pat Halahan, Mrs Pauline Blackie (nee Adlercron), Captain Sir Anthony Thorold, RN (Retd), Mr A H Mather JP of Boston, Mr Stanley Robinson of Leasingham, Mr Cyril Hobbs of Penge, Mr J W Collishaw, Head Steward of College Hall Officers' Mess and Mr Ray Bush of the District Works Office, Cranwell.

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Mr J C Andrews, Chief Librarian, at the Ministry of Defence, assisted my enquiries as did Mr J D Brown of the Naval Historical Branch, Mr H R Milton of the Aadastral Library and the Librarian of the RAF Museum at Hendon.

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Mr David James of Childe Okeford supplied me with photographs of a Cranwell Parade in 1920 and Miss Pat Halahan gave me photographs from her private album. Other photographs were prepared by the very efficient staff of CS (RepS) Pg.

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