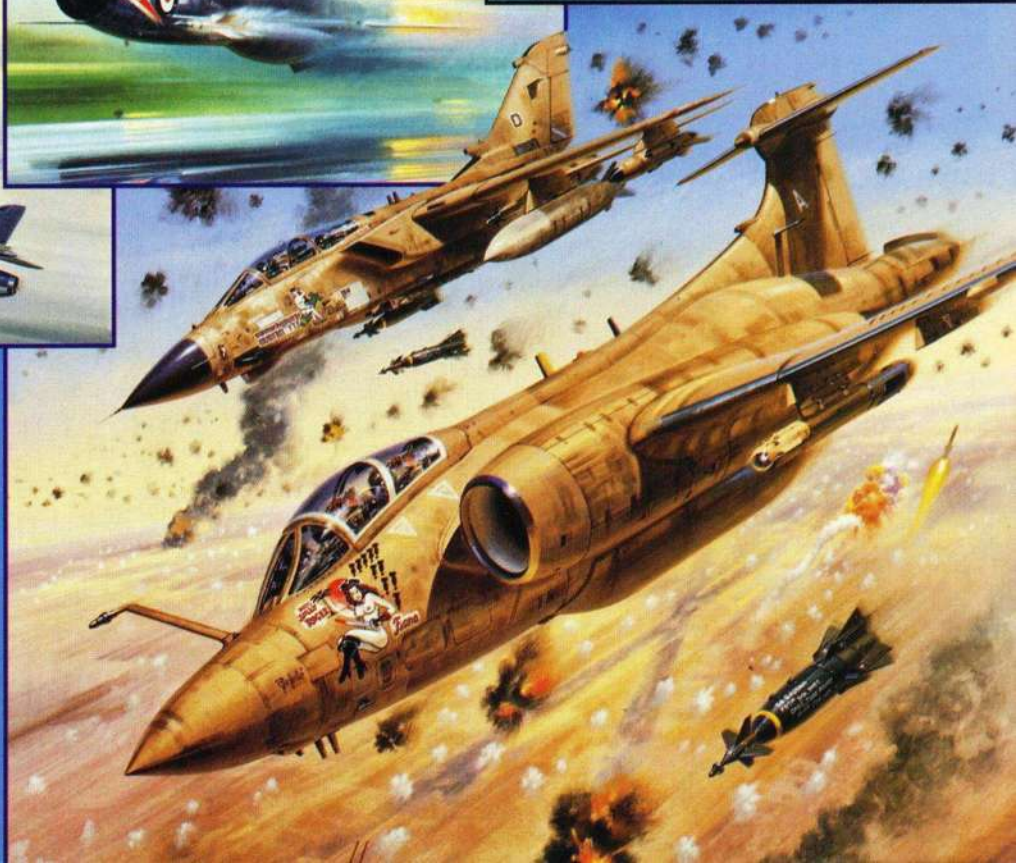
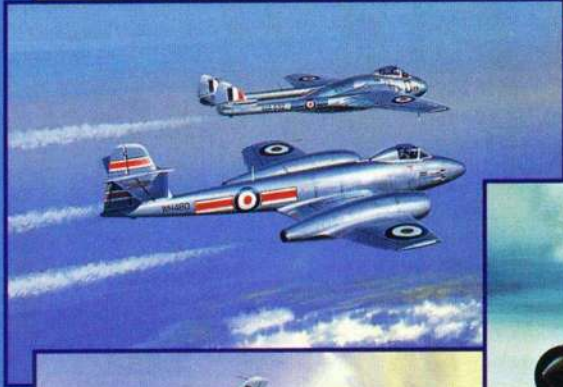


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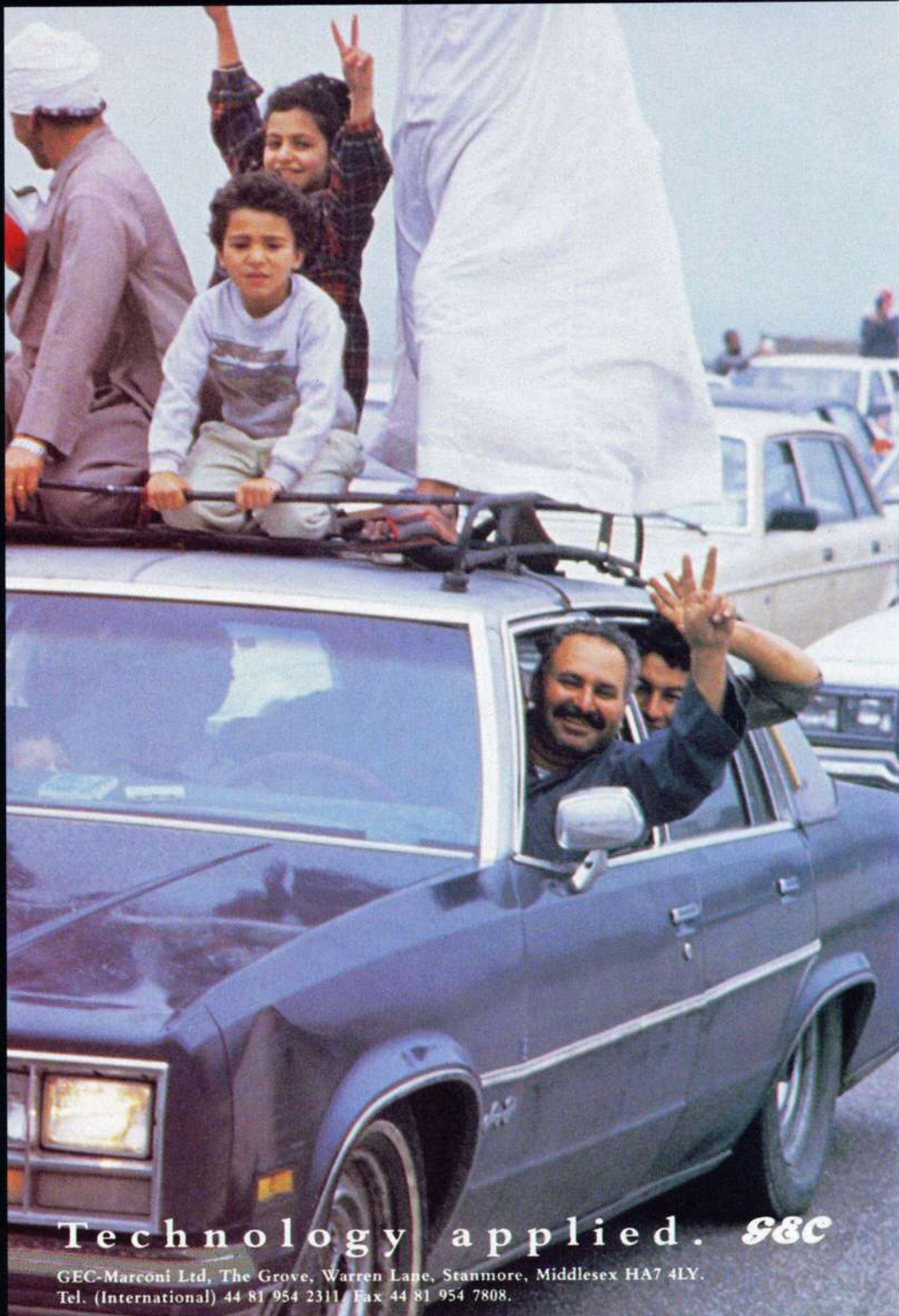
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# Introduction

## Marshal of the Royal Air Force Viscount Trenchard

*There has grown up, in peace as in war, a desire to be of help, of service in the truest sense of the word, and so long as that spirit endures in the Royal Air Force so long will the Force continue to add to its reputation and to constitute a sure shield for the defence of our ideals and of our homes.*

The Royal Air Force was created in April 1918, in the storm and stress of war. This outstanding event in the history of the nation – an event which placed Britain in advance of all other countries in the organisation of her air forces – in effect established the air weapon as a primary instrument of war.

A unified control of the air force had been contemplated since the beginning of organised military aviation. When it was constituted in May 1912, the Royal Flying Corps was made up of two wings – Naval and Military – and the intention was that they should be mutually supporting in war and that there should be a dominant measure of central control.

In those early days of air developments, however, there was a tendency for the two wings to fix their attention on their own special problems and, as may have been expected, with no central authority having powers to ensure cohesion, the wings drew away from one another. One result was that when war came the Naval and Military Air Services began to compete against one another, particularly for the supply of aircraft and equipment.

In an attempt to solve the problem of wasteful competition, the Government set up Committees in 1916, but, although they failed to do what was wanted of them, they nevertheless laid some of the foundations of what was known as the Second Air Board, established under the Chairmanship of Lord Cowdray in January 1917. This Air Board was a jump forward in the direction of a separate Ministry for the air, and with the production of aircraft placed under the control of the Ministry of Munitions a large-scale expansion of air strength was begun.

In 1914 and 1915 the main duty of aircraft was reconnaissance, including observation of the fire of the artillery, and to facilitate this work photography and the art and technique of wireless telegraphy communication from the air developed rapidly. As reconnaissance grew in efficiency and importance, so the struggle for air superiority became more tense, involving successive expansions in the production of aircraft designed and armed solely for combat.

The year 1917 is probably the most important period in the history of the air services. In this year progress in the performance and range of aircraft brought with it a general conception of the independent striking power of the air weapon, a conception which was given impetus by events which occurred in the summer of that year. In June and July, formations of German aeroplanes attacked London in the light of day and after inflicting heavy casualties flew away again unscathed. The public were quick to apprehend the significance of these happenings and to make known their feelings.

The Government, as a first step, after the June raid, decided to double the strength of our flying services and they sanctioned a programme of engine production – at that time the factor which limited expansion – which would eventually reach an output of 4,500 engines each month. The raid on 7 July led to a searching review of the organisation of the air services with the ultimate result that an Air Ministry was established to control and direct the air services, which were combined as the Royal Air Force in April 1918.

Although it was the attacks on London by day which stimulated the



Viscount Trenchard

Government to create an Air Ministry, it was the night raids on the capital in the autumn of the same year which led to the setting up of a force for the conduct of independent bombing operations against German military and industrial targets.

Bombing of this kind had been begun by the Naval Air Service in 1916, but owing to shortage of aircraft at that period the attacks could not be maintained. After the night raids on London in September 1917, a special force was sent to France to undertake the counter-offensive, and this detachment subsequently formed a nucleus of the first independent air command to be established, namely, the Independent Air Force, which came into being under my command in June 1918.

In five months of air warfare the squadrons of the Independent Force dropped 543 tons of bombs on targets in German territory and towards the end of the war the Independent Air Command was being extended to include French, American and Italian bombing squadrons. Had the war continued into 1919 the air counter-offensive would have

played a very different part in the war and it is more than probable that many of the problems whose solution we are now seeking would have been solved in a war that would have made it plain to all that the methods adopted towards the end of the last war were fundamentally right.

The development of the Royal Air Force under war conditions was limited to a few months; nevertheless in that short time Great Britain asserted herself as first among the nations in air power. Production in 1918 reached a total of 32,000 airframes and 22,000 engines, with an output rate, in the final months of the war, of more than 100 complete aeroplanes a day. To produce these aircraft and their accessories the labour of 347,000 men and women was required. In the Royal Air Force itself there were nearly 300,000 officers and men.

When war was done we turned aside from our achievement, as we are wont to do, and by the summer of 1919 our air strength had been reduced to 24 squadrons. The task which confronted me, as Chief of the Air Staff, in 1919, was the building of a permanent force, on a basis of enforced economy, which would be fitted to grow and expand as a living organism. There was, indeed, no permanent Air Force at all: the personnel, with few exceptions, had been enlisted for the duration of the war, material produced in the war had become obsolete, and the available accommodation was of a temporary kind.

The scheme for the creation of a permanent force aimed at the concentration, after the provision of essential overseas squadrons, of every available resource on the perfection of the training of officers and men. With a personnel highly trained not only to fly, but also to direct and control the operations of air warfare, I was confident that if and when expansion came the personnel would be competent to play their part: and so it has proved.

So it comes about that there has grown up, in peace as in war, a desire to be of help, of service in the truest sense of the word, and so long as that spirit endures in the Royal Air Force so long will the Force continue to add to its reputation and to constitute a sure shield for the defence of our ideals and of our homes.

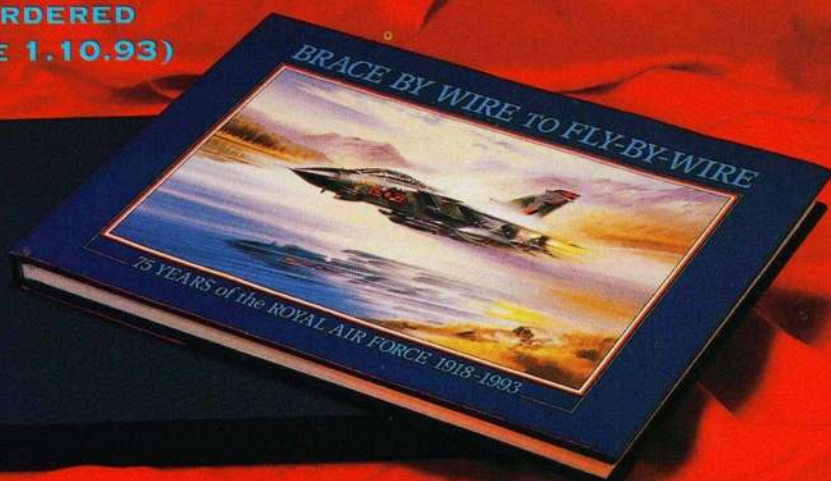
*General Officer Commanding the Royal Flying Corps in France, 1915-17, Commander-in-Chief of the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force, first Chief of the Air Staff, Viscount Trenchard was called, in 1919, to build a permanent Air Force out of the chaos of demobilisation. He was Chief of the Air Staff for a period of ten years until 1929 and was the first Marshal of the Royal Air Force. He was created a peer for his services to the nation in 1930, and became the first Viscount Trenchard of Wolfeton in 1936.*

This introduction was written by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Viscount Trenchard and first published on the 20th anniversary of the RAF in 1938.



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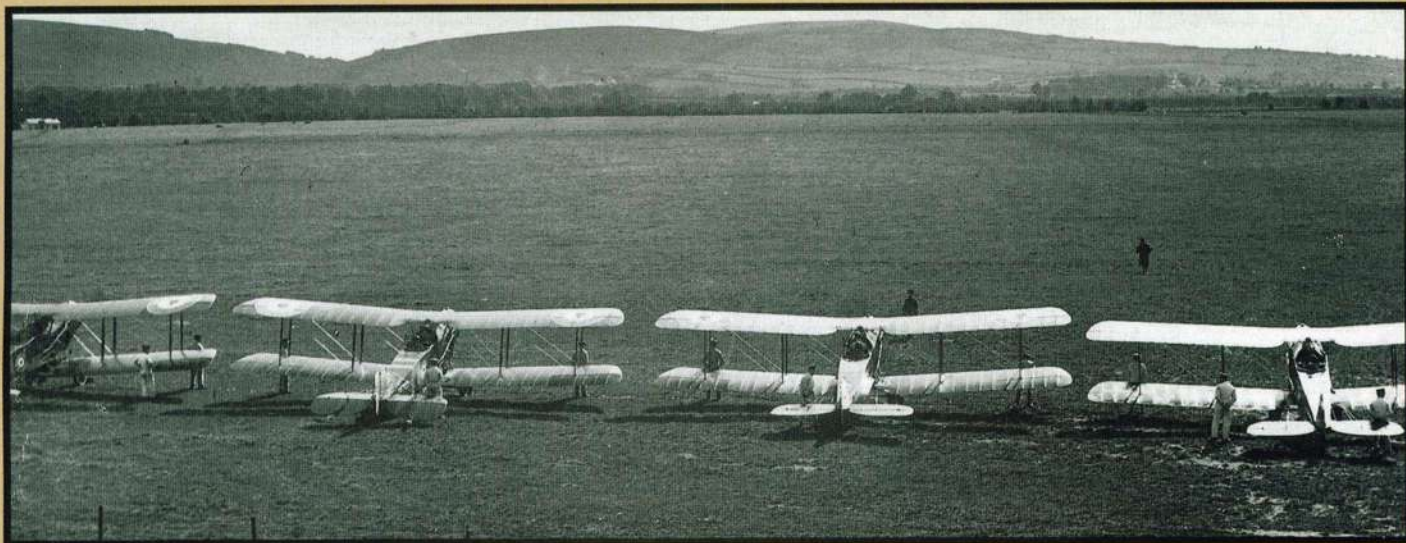
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Taken on the historic 1 April 1918, Bristol Fighters of No 22 Squadron about to set forth on the first offensive patrol to be carried out by the newly formed Royal Air Force. No 22 Sqn was based at Vert Galand, France when the photograph was taken. James D Oughton collection

# Founding Day

## THE ROYAL AIR FORCE ON 1 APRIL 1918

There is a bitter historical irony that the birth of the Royal Air Force stemmed directly from the public and political reactions to the air raids on London carried out by the Gotha heavy bombers of the German Air Service in June and July 1917. Just over two decades later, of course, the whirlwind was to be reaped – in catastrophic measure – as Bomber Command devastated the German cities and homeland.

Following the 1917 air raids, the British Prime Minister – David Lloyd George – asked the great South African soldier-statesman, General (later Field Marshal) Jan Christian Smuts, to prepare two reports – the first on the admittedly poor state of London's defences and how this could best be remedied, and the second on the best way in which the British air services – then comprising the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) – could be organised to meet these and other threats. Less than a month later, Smuts had completed his task.

This remarkable man – who must be regarded as the true 'founder of the Royal Air Force' – had to fend off the contentious claims of many parties in arriving at his solution to both problems – not least among these being the demands for continued autonomy by the War

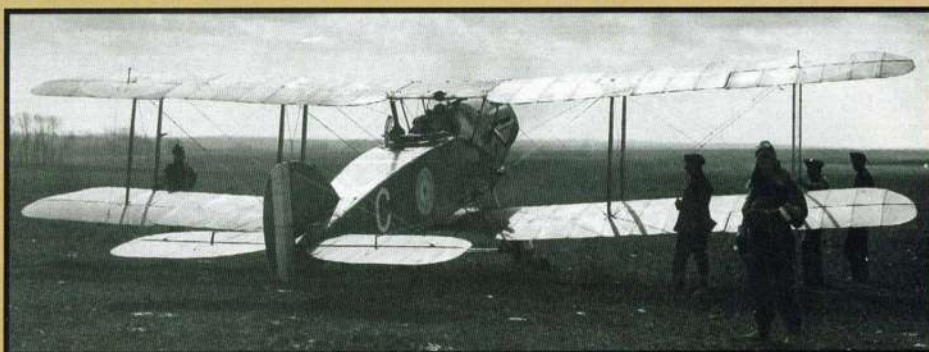
*James D Oughton*

Office on one hand and the Admiralty on the other. Oddly enough, one of the opponents of Smuts' scheme was one Major-General Sir Hugh Trenchard, then commanding the RFC in France and thus only too well aware of the practical problems associated with the projected build-up of air power. He felt that the decision to create a completely new service was inopportune.

But he later came to acknowledge that Smuts had been right – Trenchard's initial disagreement was based on his feeling that anything done at the time might well weaken the morale and build-up of the air services and possibly lead to the loss of the war. He was in agreement with the theme of unification of the RFC and RNAS, but wanted it carried out at a later date. In the event he finally agreed that Smuts, insisting that 'now was the time', had been right, and that the Royal Air Force was '....the child of Smuts'.



Right top: Royal Aircraft Factory FE2B: The last of the single-engined 'pusher' biplanes, the FE2B two-seater had been in service on the Western Front since 1915, using the 120 hp, later the 160 hp, Beardmore engine. In regular use as a night bomber by late 1916, the final version – the FE2D – had its performance uprated by a 250 hp Rolls-Royce engine.



Right: Bristol F2B Fighter: Epitomising for many the fighting aeroplane of the RFC and RAF, the Bristol Fighter in its original F.2A form began operations in April 1917 and fared badly – not until new techniques were developed in which the aircraft was flown as a fighter, with the observer guarding the rear – did the F2B come into its own, and its success may be measured by its longevity in the RAF, for it was not until 1932 that it was finally replaced in the squadrons. All photographs James D Oughton collection unless otherwise credited



Accordingly the political consolidation of the Smuts Report's recommendations went ahead and the Air Force (Constitution) Act, 1917, was submitted for Parliamentary approval, sanctioning a new Air Ministry as a Department of State as part of the executive government. It was duly passed and received Royal Assent on 29 November 1917.

The final authority of the Air Ministry was vested in the new Air Council, a body similar to that of the Army Council in the War Office. It came into being on 3 January 1918 with the following members:

- Secretary of State and President
  - Lord Rothermere
- Additional Member and Vice-President
  - Lt Gen Sir David Henderson
- Chief of the Air Staff
  - Maj Gen Sir Hugh Trenchard
- Deputy Chief of the Air Staff
  - Rear Admiral Mark Kerr
- Master General of Personnel
  - Commodore Geoffrey Paine
- Director General of Aircraft Production
  - Sir William Weir
- Administrator of Works and Buildings
  - Sir John Hunter
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
  - Major J.L. Baird
- Acting Secretary to the Council
  - Mr W.A. Robinson

But the turn of the war and consequent pressures brought about the resignation of Trenchard and his replacement by Sir Frederick Sykes; Lord Rothermere also resigned and was replaced by Sir William Weir, but the fabric of the Royal Air Force had been firmly established and despite many attempts to rescind the decrees it went on from strength to strength.

The Royal Assent and title was issued from Buckingham Palace:



*Avro 504K: One of the greatest training aircraft that has ever been produced, the Avro 504K first appeared at Hendon in September 1913 and, virtually unaltered, remained in production throughout the war. In RFC and RAF service, it eclipsed all other types, remaining on charge until the mid 1930s. The Avro 504K had the engine mounting modified so that any contemporary rotary engine could be installed, e.g. Gnome, Le Rhône, Clerget, etc. PRM*

*GEORGE THE FIFTH, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith: To all to whom these Presents shall come,*

*Greeting!*

*Whereas by the Air Force (Constitution) Act, 1917, it is enacted that it shall be lawful for Us to raise and maintain a Force, to be called the Air Force, consisting of such numbers of officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, as may be from time to time be provided by Parliament:*

*Now know ye that it is Our Will and Pleasure that the Air Force to be established pursuant to the said Act shall be styled the "Royal Air Force".*

*Given at the Court at Saint James, the 7th*

*day of March, 1918, in the Eighth Year of Our Reign. GEORGE, R.I.*

The political and personal problems paled into insignificance when viewed against the background of the war on the Western Front, for after years of trench fighting – virtually siege warfare – the Front suddenly dissolved into a war of movement, unparalleled since 1914.

Eleven days before the official formation of the Royal Air Force, the German armies under the direction of General Erich Ludendorff launched a massive offensive. They broke through the lines of the British Third and Fifth Armies in a fast-moving onslaught, which on its first day alone took more ground than had been gained by the French and British Armies in 140



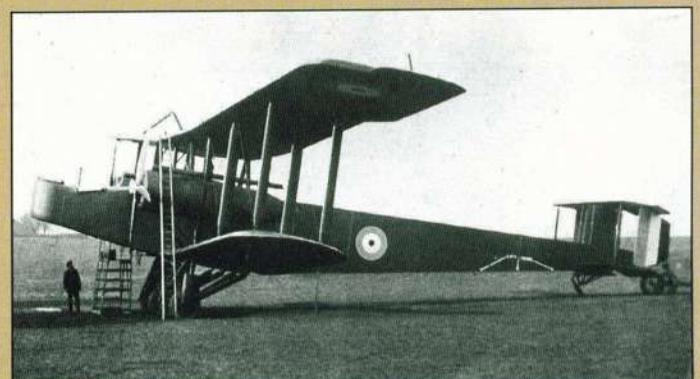
*Royal Aircraft Factory BE.12A: To turn the BE2 series of biplanes into a more potent weapon, the more powerful (140 hp) RAF.4A engine was installed and the aircraft entered production as the BE.12 single-seater, with a gun firing through the airscrew. The improved BE.12A was followed by the BE.12B with a 200 hp Hispano-Suiza engine.*



*Royal Aircraft Factory BE.2C: An old design, the BE.2C had first served in France in January 1915, and received undue criticism during the period in which the Fokker Monoplane was introduced – this was largely due to exaggerated reports of its 'inherent stability' which made it difficult to throw about.*



*Airco DH.4: Sometimes described as the equivalent of the de Havilland Mosquito of WW2, the DH.4 high-performance day bomber was fitted with various engines but achieved the pinnacle of its success with the 275/375 hp Rolls-Royce engines later named Eagle.*



*Handley Page O/400: First of the British heavy bombers, the Handley Page twin-engined biplanes began with the O/100, with two 250 hp Rolls-Royce engines – this version, sponsored by the RNAS, became operational in March 1917. The O/400 had two 375 hp Rolls-Royce Eagle engines and began operations in the spring of 1918.*





*Sopwith Camel: This legendary scout, or fighter, first became operational on the Western Front with the RNAS in July 1917; it soon became notorious as an unforgiving machine, very quick in reaction to control and, thus, highly manoeuvrable in experienced hands. Powered by the 130 hp Clerget, 110 hp Le Rhône, or the Bentley BR.1 of 150 hp. PRM*



*Royal Aircraft Factory SE5A: Without doubt, this was the 'Spitfire' of World War 1. It was fast, manoeuvrable and totally without the vices of the Sopwith Camel. Its success may be measured by the men who chose to fly it – McCudden, Mannock, Bishop, Beauchamp Proctor and their ilk. PRM*

days of bitter fighting in the bloody Somme battles of 1916. Aided by early morning fog, the German storm troops broke through the British defences and headed for Amiens and Paris.

Caught off balance, the Allies threw everything into the ensuing battle, but to little avail. Eventually Sir Douglas Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief, was forced to issue his 'backs to the wall' order of the day and the newly formed Royal Air Force was ordered to attack any target which presented itself. Forced back from their landing grounds, the RAF squadrons fought hard – losing a total of 49 aircraft on their Founding Day. Most 'set piece' actions went by the board as bombers and fighters alike sought to stem the advance of the oncoming German troops, covered by the

German Air Force fighter 'circuses'.

During these harsh battles, which went on through the summer months until the German offensive finally petered out in August, grim lessons were learned and innovations devised. Amongst these was the support of ground troops – later to emerge in the Tactical Air Forces of World War II. The appointment of Trenchard to command the Independent Air Force on 6 June 1918, set the trend for the development of the strategic bombing policy followed by the RAF to its logical conclusion under Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris in 1945.

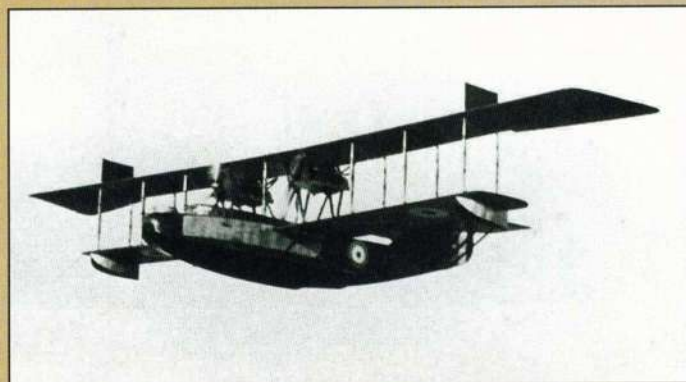
On 1 April 1918 the Royal Air Force already had established some 200 squadrons. With units on all fronts - in Belgium, France and Italy; Salonika, Macedonia and Mesopotamia; Palestine and

Egypt; the Aegean; in Russia, fighting the Bolsheviks with the Slavo-British Aviation Group; and in India, this new, 20th-Century fighting service was the first independent air force in the world and set out the markers of the path that many others would eventually follow.

*Listed on the following page are those squadrons known to be in existence on 1 April 1918 – not unnaturally, records are sometimes lacking and at best confusing – but the information is given as the best available to indicate the situation on formation. Note that many of the units with 'various' aircraft types on that one day were in fact working up with training machines so that they could take their places in operations against the enemy, wherever he was to be found.*



*Bristol M1C Monoplane: First flown in July 1916, the Bristol Monoplane was regarded with suspicion from the outset, largely due to the original RFC ban on monoplanes and the poor performance of the Morane monoplanes used by RFC squadrons in the earlier part of the war.*



*The Felixstowe series of flying boats stemmed from the close association of the American Curtiss company with Sqn Cdr John Porte, who became CO of the RNAS Station at Felixstowe in September 1915. Porte designed a new hull for the Curtiss H.12 and, powered by two 345 hp Rolls-Royce Eagles, it went into service as the Felixstowe F.2A.*



*Royal Aircraft Factory RE8: A hard working and unglamorous two-seater, powered by a 140 hp RAF 4A engine, the RE8 equipped more squadrons than any other type on the Western Front at the time of the formation of the Royal Air Force. The RE8 was employed on reconnaissance, artillery observation, photography and bombing work.*



*Armstrong Whitworth FK8: Powered by the 160 hp Beardmore engine, the two-seat FK8 served alongside the RE.8 with RFC and RAF squadrons and gave a good account of itself as a sturdy and reliable machine. At the time of the formation of the Royal Air Force, there were five FK8 squadrons on the Western Front.*



## SQUADRONS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE ON 1 APRIL 1918

No	Base	Country	Equipment	No	Base	Country	Equipment
1	Ste Marie Cappel	France	RAF SE5A	92	Tangmere	England	Sopwith Pup
2	Hesdigneul	France	Armstrong Whitworth FK8	93	Formed 1 September 1917 but not mobilised		
3	Valheureux	France	Sopwith Camel	94	Harling Road	England	Various
4	Chocques	France	RAF RE8	95	Formed 8 October 1917 but not mobilised		
5	Ascq	France	RAF RE8	96	Formed 8 October 1917 but not mobilised		
6	Le Crotoy	France	RAF RE8	97	Netheravon	England	Various
7	Proven	Belgium	RAF RE8	98	St Omer	France	Airco DH9
8	Vert Galand	France	Armstrong Whitworth FK8	99	Ford Farm	England	Airco DH9
9	Proven	Belgium	RAF RE8	100	Ochey	France	RAF FE2B, FE2C
10	Abelle	Belgium	Armstrong Whitworth FK8	101	Haute Vissee	France	RAF FE2B
11	Fienvillers	France	Bristol F2B Fighter	102	Le Hameau	France	RAF FE2B
12	Soncamp	France	RAF RE8	103	Old Sarum	England	Airco DH9
13	Le Hameau	France	RAF RE8	104	Andover	England	Airco DH9
14	Junction Station	Palestine	RAF RE8	105	Andover	England	RAF RE8
15	Fienvillers	France	RAF RE8	106	Andover	England	RAF RE8
16	Camblain L'Abbe	France	RAF RE8	107	Lake Down	England	Various
17	Lahana	Macedonia	RAF BE2C, BE12A, SE5A; AW FK8	108	Lake Down	England	Various
18	Treizennes	France	Airco DH4	109	Lake Down	England	Various
19	Savy	France	Sopwith Dolphin	110	Sedgeford	England	Various
20	Ste Marie Cappel	France	Bristol F2B Fighter	111	Ramleh	Palestine	RAF SE5A; Nieuport 17, 23, 24
21	La Lovie	Belgium	RAF RE8	112	Throwley	England	Sopwith Camel
22	Vert Galand	France	Bristol F2B Fighter	113	Sarona	Palestine	BE2E, RE8; Nieuport 17, 23, 24
23	Bertangles	France	Spad SVII, SXIII	114	Lahore	India	RAF BE2C, BE2E
24	Conteville	France	RAF SE5A	115	Catterick	England	Various
25	Ruisseauville	France	Airco DH4	116	Netheravon	England	Various
26	Cape Town	South Africa	in transit to UK	117	Waddington	England	Various
27	Ruisseauville	France	Airco DH4	118	Catterick	England	Various
28	Grossa	Italy	Sopwith Camel	119	Duxford	England	Various
29	La Lovie	Belgium	Nieuport 27	120	Cramlington	England	Various
30	Qubba	Mesopotamia	RAF BE2C; Spad SVII; Martinsyde G100; RAF RE8	121	Narborough	England	Various
31	Risalpur	India	RAF BE2C, BE2E	122	Sedgeford	England	Various
32	Beauvois	France	RAF SE5A	123	Duxford	England	Various
33	Gainsborough	England	RAF FE2B, FE2D	124	Fowlmere	England	Various
34	Villaveria	Italy	RAF RE8	125	Fowlmere	England	Various
35	Abbeville	France	Armstrong Whitworth FK8, Bristol F2B Fighter	126	Fowlmere	England	Various
36	Newcastle	England	RAF FE2B, FE2D	127	Catterick	England	Various
37	Woodham Mortimer	England	RAF BE2C, BE12A, BE12B	128	Thetford	England	Various
38	Melton Mowbray	England	RAF FE2B, FE2D	129	Duxford	England	Various
39	North Weald	England	Bristol F2B Fighter	130	Hucknall	England	Various
40	Bruay	France	RAF SE5A	131	Shawbury	England	Various
41	Alquines	France	RAF SE5A	132	Terhill	England	Various
42	Chocques	France	RAF RE8	133	Terhill	England	Various
43	Avesnes-Le-Comte	France	Sopwith Camel	134	Terhill	England	Various
44	Hainault Farm	England	Sopwith Camel	135	Hucknall	England	Various (formed 1 April 1918)
45	Grossa	Italy	Sopwith Camel	136	Lake Down	England	Various (formed 1 April 1918)
46	Filescamp	France	Sopwith Camel	137	Shawbury	England	Various (formed 1 April 1918)
47	Yanesh	Macedonia	RAF BE2E, BE12, SE5A; AW FK3, FK8; Vickers FB19; Bristol M1C	138 to 140		Not formed	
48	Conteville	France	Bristol F2B Fighter	141	Biggin Hill	England	Sopwith Dolphin; Bristol F2B Fighter
49	Petite Synthe	France	Airco DH4	142	Julis	Palestine	RAF BE12A; Martinsyde G102
50	Bekesbourne	England	RAF BE12, BE12B	143	Detling	England	RAF SE5A
51	Marham	England	RAF BE12B, FE2B	144	Port Said	Egypt	RAF BE2E
52	Abbeville	France	RAF RE8	145 to 147		Not formed	
53	Boisdinghem	France	RAF RE8	148	Ford Junction	England	RAF FE2B
54	Conteville	France	Sopwith Camel	149	Ford Junction	England	RAF FE2B
55	Tantonville	France	Airco DH4	150	Kirec	Macedonia	Bristol M1C; RAF SE5A (formed 1 April 1918)
56	Valheureux	France	RAF SE5A	151 to 185		Not formed	
57	Le Quesnoy	France	Airco DH4	186	East Retford	England	Avro 504J, 504K (formed 1 April 1918)
58	Auchel	France	RAF FE2B	187	East Retford	England	Avro 504J, 504K (formed 1 April 1918)
59	Fienvillers	France	RAF RE8	188	Throwley	England	Avro 504J, 504K
60	Fienvillers	France	RAF SE5A	189	Suttons Farm	England	Avro 504J, 504K
61	Rochford	England	RAF SE5A	190	Newmarket	England	Various
62	Planques	France	Bristol F2B Fighter	191	Marham	England	Various
63	Samarra	Mesopotamia	RAF BE2E, RE8; Airco DH4; Spad SVII; Martinsyde G100	192	Newmarket	England	Various
64	Le Hameau	France	RAF SE5A	193 to 198		Not formed	
65	Conteville	France	Sopwith Camel	199	Rochford	England	RAF FE2B
66	San Pietro	Italy	Sopwith Camel	200	East Retford	England	RAF FE2B
67	Became No 1 Squadron, Australian		Flying Corps on 6 February 1918	201	Fienvillers	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 1 Sqn RNAS)
68	Became No 2 Squadron, Australian		Flying Corps on 19 January 1918	202	Bergues	France	Airco DH4 (ex No 2 Sqn RNAS)
69	Became No 3 Squadron, Australian		Flying Corps, 19 January 1918	203	Treizennes	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 3 Sqn RNAS)
70	Fienvillers	France	Sopwith Camel	204	Bray Dunes	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 4 Sqn RNAS)
71	Became No 4 Squadron, Australian		Flying Corps on 19 January 1918	205	Bois-de-Roche	France	Airco DH4 (ex No 5 Sqn RNAS)
72	Baghdad	Mesopotamia	Airco DH4; Bristol M1C; RAF SE5A; Spad SVII	206	Ste Marie Cappel	France	Airco DH9 (ex No 6 Sqn RNAS)
73	Beauvois	France	Sopwith Camel	207	Coudekerque	France	Handley Page O/100, O/400 (ex No 7 Sqn RNAS)
74	St Omer	France	RAF SE5A	208	Teteghem	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 8 Sqn RNAS)
75	Elmswell	England	RAF BE2E BE12, BE12B	209	Clairmarais	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 9 Sqn RNAS)
76	Ripon	England	RAF BE2E, BE12, BE12A, BE12B, RE8	210	Teteghem/Treizennes	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 10 Sqn RNAS)
77	Turnhouse	Scotland	RAF BE2C, BE2E, BE12, BE12B, RE8	211	Petite Synthe	France	Airco DH4, DH9 (ex No 11 Sqn RNAS)
78	Suttons Farm	England	Sopwith Camel	212	Not formed		
79	Beauvois	France	Sopwith Dolphin	213	Bergues	France	Sopwith Camel (ex No 13 Sqn RNAS)
80	Belleville Farm	France	Sopwith Camel	214	Coudekerque	France	Handley Page O/100, O/400 (ex No 15 Sqn RNAS)
81	Formed 7 January 1917 but not mobilised			215	Coudekerque	France	Handley Page O/100, O/400 (ex No 16 Sqn RNAS)
82	Agenvillers	France	Armstrong Whitworth FK8	216	Villesneux	France	Handley Page O/400 (ex No 17 Sqn RNAS)
83	Auchel	France	RAF FE2B	217	Bergues	France	Airco DH4 (ex No 18 Sqn RNAS)
84	Conteville	France	RAF SE5A	218 to 219		Not formed	
85	Hounslow	England	Various	220	Imbros	Aegean	Airco DH4 (ex 'C' Sqn RNAS)
86	Formed 1 September 1917 but not mobilised			221	Stavros	Aegean	Airco DH4 (ex 'D' Sqn RNAS)
87	Hounslow	England	Sopwith Dolphin	222	Thasos	Aegean RNAS)	Airco DH4; Sopwith Camel (ex 'A' Sqn RNAS)
88	Harling Road	England	Bristol F2B Fighter	223	Mitylene	Aegean	Sopwith Camel (ex 'B' Sqn RNAS)
89	Formed 1 September 1917 but not mobilised			224	Alimini	Italy	Airco DH4 (ex 496-498 Fts RNAS)
90	Formed 8 October 1917 but not mobilised			225	Alimini	Italy	Sopwith 1 1/2-Strutter (ex 481-483 Fts RNAS)
91	Tangmere	England	Various	226	Pizzone	Italy	Airco DH4 (ex 472-474 Fts RNAS)
				227	Pizzone	Italy	Airco DH4 (ex 499, 550-551 Fts RNAS)





# 75 YEARS OF SERVICE



*David P Richards*

The Royal Air Force was formed on 1 April 1918, by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Services (RNAS). This outstanding event in the history of the nation – an event which placed Britain in advance of other countries – in effect established the air weapon as a primary instrument of war. During the remaining seven months of WW1 the RAF achieved supremacy on the Western Front against fierce enemy opposition. Strategic bombing was intensified by the formation of the Independent Air Force, which dropped 543 tons of bombs on industrial targets in Germany during the final five months. Had the war continued into 1919 the air counter-offensive might have played a very different part in the war. By the Armistice the British air forces had destroyed more than 8,000 enemy aircraft and airships, dropping 8,000 tons of bombs and fired 12 million rounds of ammunition at ground targets.

The development of the RAF under war conditions was limited to a few months. Nevertheless, in that short time Great Britain asserted herself as first amongst the nations in air power. Production in 1918 reached a total of 32,000 airframes and 22,000 engines, with an output rate, in the final months of the war, of more than 100 complete aircraft per day. By the end of WW1 the RAF had nearly 300,000 officers and men together with 22,647 aircraft.

In 1919 the peace-time organisation of the Service was drawn up by the Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard – who later became known as the 'father of the Royal Air

Force'. The aim was quality, with emphasis on a sound framework lending itself readily to expansion. The RAF College, to train cadets for permanent commissions, opened at Cranwell in 1920, and the apprenticeship scheme to supply skilled tradesmen followed in 1922 at Halton. The objective was for the creation of a permanent force which aimed at the concentration, after provision of essential overseas squadrons, of every available resource on the perfection of the training of officers and men.

Arising out of this plan, the service squadrons for the most part were stationed overseas in Malta, Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq and India, with two to four squadrons maintained in the UK as a 'striking force'. One flight was provided for each Army Division for army co-operation duties and two more squadrons for artillery observation. Three aeroplane and two seaplane squadrons were allotted for naval co-operation. The general policy was to keep the establishment at a minimum, and to devote the annual revenue to training and research, thus allowing rapid expansion if, and when, the need arose.

The RAF units serving with the Navy were placed under a new command, known as the 'Coastal Area', also having control of all naval airships. The RAF at home was divided into Northern and Southern Commands, but later these were amalgamated to form the 'Inland Area'.

By 1920 there were 33 squadrons, eight of

which were in process of formation. Of these, 21 were serving overseas (one was on the Rhine), and twelve at home. The establishment was 3,250 officers and 25,000 other ranks. The Air Estimates for 1920 were £15 million, and this figure remained for the next five years.

A committee, sitting under the chairmanship of the Marquis of Salisbury, recommended in March 1923 for the 'provision of a Home Defence Air Force of sufficient strength adequately to protect us against air attack by the strongest air force within striking distance of this country'. As a result the Air Defence of Great Britain Command was formed in 1925. This new command incorporated all air defence units, including fighting and bombing squadrons, anti-aircraft guns and searchlights.

In the post-war years there were vast tracts of newly-mandated territory to be patrolled, and there were many small wars and raids in progress, calling for RAF action. As a result, there were air operations in the North West Frontier of India, in Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Sudan, Somaliland, Iraq, Palestine, Trans-jordan and in Asia Minor. The RAF, working in co-operation with ground forces, enabled these incidents to be dealt with adequately by the employment of reasonably small numbers of troops. The RAF was responsible also for the first long-distance flights from England to Egypt and India, pioneering the route that later would be followed by the airliners of Imperial Airways.

In 1925 the Air Ministry instituted a research programme into high-speed flying, and two years

*Contrasting eras: Aircraft at the RAF Air Pageant on 24 June 1922 (bottom) and a pair of Phantom FGR2s from Nos 19 and 92 Sqns (below) – retired from air defence duties in Germany in 1991. James D Oughton collection & PRM*





later an RAF team won the international Schneider Trophy contest. The RAF won again in 1929, and gained the Trophy outright in 1931 with the Supermarine S6B. During this period speeds of racing seaplanes increased from 226 to 407 mph. Similar effort was devoted to long-distance and high-level flying. In 1933 two RAF officers flew a Fairey Long-Range Monoplane from Cranwell to South-West Africa to establish a World's distance record of 5,309 miles, and in 1938 two RAF Vickers Wellesleys increased the figure to 7,162 miles with a flight from Ismailia in Egypt to Darwin. In high-level flying, world height records of 49,967 feet and 53,937 feet were established by the RAF in 1936 and 1937 respectively in a Bristol Type 138. The inter-war years saw a desperate battle for the survival of the newly independent Royal Air Force. From 280 squadrons in 1918 it was soon reduced to about 10% of its wartime strength.

In 1934 the first steps were taken in a rearmament programme, which steadily gained momentum. As the political situation in Europe deteriorated throughout the 1930s, pressure mounted for an expansion of the RAF. Civil flying schools were formed to train aircrew. In July 1936, the administration of the RAF was put onto a war footing and the home air force was divided into four commands – Bomber, Fighter, Coastal and Training; these were later followed with the addition of Maintenance, Balloon and Reserve Commands. In September 1938, after the Munich crisis, the government agreed to a large expansion of the fighter and heavy bomber construction programme. The seed-corn which Trenchard had so carefully nurtured was able to provide the rapid expansion the country so urgently needed. The Women's Auxiliary Air Force re-formed in 1939 from the RAF Companies of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and after the War became a permanent part of the Service under its WW1 name – the Women's Royal Air Force.

Amongst the new fighters delivered during the later stages of the expansion were the Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire; bombers included the Vickers Wellington, Handley Page Hampden, Armstrong Whitworth Whitley and Bristol Blenheim. The Short Sunderland four-engined flying-boat entered service with Coastal Command.

When war came the RAF was still smaller than the German Air Force, with only 1,911 combat-ready aircraft (against the Luftwaffe's 3,609), but it was expanding rapidly. Helping its growth was the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, centred in Canada, where 360 schools produced 137,740 aircrew, assisted by Australia, Rhodesia, South Africa and New Zealand. Early in 1940 the War Cabinet decided to create a separate command for the RAF, known as the British Air Forces in France, to make possible better co-operation with the Army. After the British Expeditionary Force had been cut off at Dunkirk the RAF was able to exert a decisive influence, preventing the



Top: A Vickers Virginia heavy bomber of No 500 Sqn. Above: Boulton Paul Sidestrands of No 101 Sqn at Bicester. Both James D Oughton collection

Luftwaffe from wrecking the evacuation. The Germans then turned their attention to Britain itself. Fortunately the air defences were ready – Fighter and Balloon Commands, the radar chain, the Army's Anti-Aircraft Command and the Observer Corps.

The events of mid-1940 necessitated the extension and strengthening of the air defence at the greatest danger point, South East England. There was little time to make changes, as intense enemy activity, marking the prelude to the Battle of Britain, started on 10 July 1940. What happened between August and October in the British skies is now recognised as one of the great turning points in our history. The German invasion was planned for September, but the Luftwaffe failed to gain the required domination over the RAF – particularly Fighter Command – and the project was abandoned. The enemy suffered crippling aircraft losses in combat, while shipping assembled in the invasion ports suffered heavily from the attentions of Bomber Command. The RAF Fighter Command force of just over 1,000 aircraft opposed 3,500 German bombers and fighters. Of the 1,495 RAF aircrew casualties, 414 were fighter pilots.

When Italy entered WW2 action moved to the Middle East. There, after fighting in East Africa, Greece and Crete, the RAF played a major part in the fluctuating desert struggles, culminating in the victory at El Alamein and the drive to Tunisia. Malta became a base for attacks which helped to starve the enemy of fuel and assisted the landings in Sicily and Italy.

In the Atlantic, Coastal Command was engaged in helping to keep the sea-lanes free. Of 866 enemy submarines destroyed, 243 were credited to RAF aircraft, and 29 more were shared with Allied naval forces. In addition, 1,518 surface vessels, totalling 1,750,000 tons, were sunk by the RAF.

At the end of 1941 the war spread to the Far East. After the loss of Malaya, Singapore and Burma, the Allies struck back from India in 1944 to drive the Japanese from Burma in a few months of intensive operations. RAF and American transport aircraft largely maintained the army of more than 350,000 men by air, and vigorous close support came from fighter-bombers.

But the primary role of the RAF was still that envisaged in 1918 – strategic bombing. Four-engined bombers such as the Short Stirling, Handley Page Halifax and Avro Lancaster had gone into service, while twin-engined types such as the Beaufighter and Mosquito were put to a variety of tasks. In the first three years, 121,298 tons of bombs were dropped. In 1943 Bomber Command tonnage was nearly 157,500, and in 1944, it had trebled to more than 525,000. Altogether, in 392,137 Bomber Command sorties to drop just under a million tons of bombs, 47,000 aircrew were killed (67% of the total RAF casualties in WW2) and 18,000 were wounded, taken prisoner or declared missing. Defensive tactics had been developed to such a point that enemy bombers appearing over Britain were heavily punished and, with the exception of sneak-raiders, almost driven from the skies.

Preparations for the liberation of mainland Europe started early in 1944 with systematic bombing of the French railway system, and by D-Day (6 June 1944) the beach-head in Normandy was virtually isolated from enemy supplies and reinforcements. The Luftwaffe had been reduced to such straits that the vast umbrella of protective fighters of the RAF had little work to do. The tactical air forces rapidly obtained such a hold on enemy communications that movement was strangled and accurate close support, aided at times by the 'heavies' of Bomber Command, speeded the advance. Rocket-firing Typhoons were notably active against ground targets.

After supporting the establishment of the Allied bridgeheads in Normandy, the RAF was engaged in the battles in France and the Low Countries in pursuit of the retreating enemy, using to the full the advantages of air superiority. Notable air support operations were the Rhine Crossing and Arnhem. The 2nd Tactical Air Force was engaged in operations until the end of hostilities in Europe in May. By V-E Day the RAF had 55,469 aircraft of which 9,200 were front-line fighters or bombers.

The Supermarine Southampton served with the RAF for a decade, these aircraft belonging to No 201 Sqn at Calshot. James D Oughton collection





Meanwhile, hard and often bitter fighting continued in South-East Asia, with the Allied air forces discharging their vital role in dislodging the Japanese from their war-time gains. The Avro Lincoln, a development of the Lancaster bomber, was being developed as part of the *Tiger Force*, which was intended to carry the air war to the enemy homeland. However by dropping the first atomic bombs, the USAAF brought about Japan's capitulation and the long-range *Tiger Force* was not called upon.

In both Europe and the Far East, RAF aircraft were rapidly adapted as transports to repatriate many thousands of liberated prisoners of war, and in flying aid to the areas newly freed from the Germans.

In WW1 the air casualties were 6,166 killed and 7,245 wounded or injured. In WW2, the RAF lost 70,253 killed in action and 22,924 wounded. There were 13,115 RAF prisoners of war, and about 2,000 of those shot down escaped or evaded capture.

Pioneering by the Royal Air Force continued after WW2. Within two days of VE-Day, the Lancaster 'Aries I' made the first British flight over the North Pole. On 7 November 1945, a Gloster Meteor set a new world speed record of 606 mph which was raised in 1946 to 616 mph. The following year a De Havilland Mosquito established a London-Cape Town record, and the first Atlantic crossing by jet aircraft was made by De Havilland Vampires of No 54 Squadron in 1948.

Two manifestations of the uneasiness of peace came in 1948. In June the RAF started Operation *Plainfare*, the Berlin Air Lift, and in the same month the first operations against the Communist terrorists in Malaya commenced. The air lift went on for over a year in which time the RAF made 49,333 flights taking 281,727 short tons of freight to Berlin, flew 29,532 tons out and carried 373 passengers. The Malayan operations, however, dragged on until July 1960, and involved a total of 375,849 RAF sorties.

The Korean War in 1950 saw Transport Command flying British troop reinforcements to Japan, and Sunderland flying-boats playing an active part in maritime operations. Vampires were flown to Singapore to re-equip the Far East fighter squadrons. The war speeded up Britain's re-armament programme and reservists were called up, as were the 20 fighter squadrons of the RAuxAF which were embodied for a period in the RAF. In 1952 the RAF was flying a post-war peak figure of 6,338 aircraft and had more than 270,000 personnel. By mid-1952 there were 11 Commands – Bomber, Fighter, Coastal, Transport, Flying Training, Home and Maintenance in the UK, and Germany, Middle East and Far East Commands abroad, with a total of 122 active squadrons.

The re-equipment with jet aircraft in the immediate post-war years marked a revolutionary change in the Service. Meteors and Vampires took over from the piston-engined aircraft in fighter squadrons, while development was taking place of Britain's first jet bomber, the twin-engined English Electric Canberra. Initial deliveries were made to No 101 Squadron at Binbrook on 25 May 1951 where they replaced Lincolns.

In 1953, with 277,125 men and women serving, the RAF was at its strongest since the war, and it was able to mount for the Coronation Review at RAF Odiham in July, some 640 aircraft (440 of them jets) in a fly-past for the Queen, and array more than 300 on the airfield. An RAF Canberra PR3 won the speed section of the London-New Zealand Air Race, and in 1954 Hawker Hunters joined Fighter Command as day fighters, to be followed by Gloster Javelins in 1956 as all-weather/night fighters. By 1956, with the retirement of Lincolns from the main bomber force, there was an all-jet front line, except in the maritime role, where the Avro Shackleton was not destined to be replaced by the HS Nimrod until 1969. Reflecting the change, 'all through jet training' was introduced in 1959 with Jet Provosts and Vampire trainers.

The RAF, still with many Commonwealth responsibilities, was called upon to assist in the campaign against the Mau Mau in Kenya in

1954. With the advent of the Comet 2, it became the first air force to operate a jet transport squadron. The first operational use of one of the new trio of V-bombers, the Vickers Valiant which had become operational in January 1955, was in October 1956 when they took part in the Suez Campaign and put out of action the airfields in the Canal Zone and so denied their use to the Egyptian Air Force.

Britain's decision to produce nuclear weapons and the four-engined V-bombers paved the way for the RAF to assume the task of providing the British strategic nuclear deterrent. The RAF participated in the first British atomic test in the Monte Bello islands in October 1952, and a Valiant dropped the first British atomic bomb at Maralinga, South Australia in October 1956 and the first British hydrogen bomb at Christmas Island, in the Pacific, in May 1957.

The Avro Vulcan and Handley Page Victor followed the Valiant into service in 1956 and 1957 respectively. The V-Force grew steadily in strength and maintained a high state of alert and readiness. The RAF was considerably shaken by the Defence White Paper of 1957 which was judged to mean that missiles would replace manned aircraft. Believers in manned aircraft were encouraged by news in December 1958 of a new strike/reconnaissance aircraft, the ill-fated TSR2 (which was scrapped in April 1965 while still at an early stage in its development flying). The American IRBM Thor was deployed in Bomber Command from 1958 to 1963 to supplement the V-bombers. In 1960 it was announced that a Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station would be constructed at Fylingdales in Yorkshire, capable

of providing at least a four minute warning of a ballistic missile attack on the UK. Techniques were developed – and regularly practised – for 'scrambling' detachments of four V-bombers well within this warning time.

It was planned to prolong the effective life of the V-Force by the acquisition of the American air launched ballistic missile Skybolt, to succeed the British stand-off nuclear weapon Blue Steel. The decision by the US Government not to proceed with development of Skybolt for the USAF led to the Nassau Agreement in which the US was to help to provide Polaris missiles for RN nuclear submarines. Vulcans and Victors, some equipped with Blue Steel, continued to provide the British contribution to the Western strategic nuclear deterrent until the Polaris force became operational in 1969. At this time the UK based V-bombers transferred to the tactical role, remaining assigned to NATO.

The Victor was taken off bombing from the mid-1960s and transferred progressively to the tanker role. Throughout the 1970s, the Vulcan continued as a bomber, with one squadron specialising in maritime radar reconnaissance duties. The V-Force had formed a major feature of RAF activity for nearly 15 years. In terms of bombers, weapons, airfields, personnel, logistics support, training and engineering it represented the RAF's biggest single undertaking since the growth and deployment of Bomber Command in WW2. At its peak strength in 1961, the force had 164 V-bombers in 17 squadrons. Rapid dispersal to 36 airfields for protection from surprise attack, was an integral part of the quick reaction alert (QRA) procedures practised by the V-bombers.

Below top: *The Woodcock* was the first single-seat fighter to be produced by Hawkers. Middle: *Avro Tutors* replaced the *Avro 504* in the RAF's *Flying Training Schools* in 1932. Bottom: *Bristol Type 142 'Britain First'* was developed into the *Blenheim I*.  
All James D Oughton collection







Above top: These Hurricanes flew with No 1 Sqn at Acklington in September 1942.

Above: Lancasters of No 50 Sqn at Swinderby in August 1942. Both James D Oughton collection

The Bloodhound Mk 1 surface-to-air missile entered service in Fighter Command in 1958. In June 1960 the RAF made a major step forward in air defence when the first Mach 2 English Electric Lightning was delivered to No 74 Sqn at Coltishall. It was armed with the Firestreak – and subsequently the Red Top – air-to-air missile. In 1961 the air defence squadrons of Fighter Command were assigned to NATO. The development of in-flight refuelling techniques and the creation, within Bomber Command, of a tanker force – first with Valiants and subsequently with Victor aircraft – greatly enhanced the ability of fighters, and other combat aircraft, rapidly to reinforce overseas theatres.

In the early 1960s, military planners

concentrated on maximising the mobility conferred by the air. This involved holding units of a Strategic Reserve at home to be flown rapidly to potential trouble-spots overseas by Transport Command, which had been re-equipped with Britannias, Comets and Argosies. Impetus was given to this concept by the preventive success of the Kuwait operations of July 1961. Transport Command flew 7,000 men and 720 tons of warlike stores to the Persian Gulf in six days and supported the move of strike aircraft. This 'fire brigade' role was subsequently practised in large-scale exercises in the Mediterranean area, in which a large part was played by No 38 Group, re-formed in 1960 as a specialised tactical force working closely with the Army.

Four Gloster Meteor NF11s from No 85 Sqn, West Malling in early 1953. James D Oughton collection



RAF fighters and transports were speedily alerted to help to quell the Brunei Revolt in December 1962, but a year later Borneo became the scene of more protracted operations when 'Confrontation' with Indonesia started. From then until mid-1966 the RAF was called upon for large-scale effort in giving support, logistic and offensive, to the ground forces, and maintaining the deterrent presence of strike aircraft, which were reinforced by regular detachments of Bomber Command Victors and Vulcans to the Far East.

Coincidentally there was trouble in South Arabia and the RAF from Aden operated extensively in the Radfan with strike, reconnaissance and transport support. This went on until well into 1967, earning high praise from

the Army units involved, particularly for the very close and accurate support given by the ground-attack Hunters of Nos 8 and 208 Squadrons.

Following Rhodesian UDI, a Javelin squadron, a mobile air defence radar and an RAF Regiment Squadron were deployed to Zambia in December 1965. The air transport force played a major part in the withdrawal of all British Forces from Aden, completed in November 1967. RAF Shackletons were sent to Malagasy to help in enforcing United Nations oil sanctions by identifying and intercepting tankers. Transport Command Britannias provided an airlift to Zambia, carrying 3,375,500 gal of oil and 1,000 tons of cargo.

With the establishment of the unified Ministry of Defence on 1 April 1964, the Air Ministry ceased to exist as such and became the Air Force Department of the new Ministry. The Air Council became the Air Force Board.

A number of projects for the re-equipment of the RAF were cancelled during the later 1960s – the TSR2, the Anglo-French Variable Geometry aircraft, and proposed purchases of the F-111 strike aircraft, the P1154 fighter/ground attack aircraft and the HS681 transport aircraft project. Instead, it was decided to adopt the HS Buccaneer S2 as an immediate replacement for the Canberras, and to undertake, in collaboration with the Germans and the Italians, the development of a Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) as the successor strike aircraft, to be introduced in the late 1970s. It was decided to replace the Hunter in the offensive support role. This was to be with a combination of Phantoms, purchased from the United States but equipped with Rolls-Royce Spey engines and some British avionics, and by the development and production of the V/STOL Hawker Harrier – derived from the P1127 (Kestrel) aircraft of which limited quantities had been produced for evaluation in 1964. A total of 66 Lockheed Hercules was purchased from the United States as a replacement medium range tactical transport aircraft. In the long-range role, the first of 14 VC10s, together with ten turbo-prop Belfasts, was delivered to Transport Command in 1966, and contributed to the substantial increase in the RAF's airlift capability. The HS Nimrod, the first pure jet maritime reconnaissance aircraft, was developed from the DH Comet and produced to replace the Shackleton MR2/3. Arrangements with the French for the joint development and production of the Jaguar for use both in operational squadrons and in flying training, also went ahead. Joint arrangements were also made with the French for the development and production of three types of helicopters (the SA330 Puma, SA340 Gazelle and WG13 Lynx).

Subsequently in 1970, it was decided to alter the composition of the proposed purchase of Jaguars so as to increase the proportion of the operational version of the aircraft and to form four additional front-line squadrons. A new jet trainer, the Hawk, less expensive than the Jaguar, was provided to replace the Hunter and the Gnat in the advanced flying training role.

In 1968, the Government decided to withdraw forces from the Far East (Singapore) and the Persian Gulf (Bahrain) by the end of 1971 and to concentrate British Defence efforts mainly in Europe and the North Atlantic area. The ground attack and short range transport squadrons of No 38 Group were earmarked for NATO. The decision to phase out the Royal Navy's carrier force after withdrawal from East of Suez accelerated plans

Left: Vampire T11s from No 5FTS at Oakington. James D Oughton collection Below: Comet C4 landing at Lyneham in 1973. Peter R March





for the formation of maritime air defence and strike squadrons in the RAF and the transfer of Phantom and Buccaneer aircraft from the Royal Navy for that purpose.

Following a change of government it was announced that the UK intended to contribute to Five-Power Commonwealth defence arrangements in the Far East, including a continuing military presence in the area to which the RAF would contribute Nimrods, on a rotational basis, and a detachment of Whirlwind helicopters. As a result of the decision to keep HMS *Ark Royal* in service until the late 1970s, the transfer of some Phantoms and Buccaneers from the RN to the RAF was deferred, though without prejudice to the progressive assumption by the RAF of responsibility for providing shore-based air support for HM ships. Nevertheless its maritime responsibilities were greatly increased. With the 1966 decision not to build any more fixed-wing aircraft carriers the RAF took over the strike, reconnaissance and AEW roles formerly fulfilled by Royal Navy squadrons.

In 1968, Flying and Technical Training Commands were merged to form Training Command. At the same time Bomber and Fighter Commands, which had become household names during WW2 (and subsequently Signals and Coastal Commands) merged to form Strike Command. Transport Command was renamed Air Support Command. From June 1969 the QRA duties for which the V-Force of Bomber Command had been responsible since 1962 were handed over to the Royal Navy's Polaris force of nuclear-powered submarines. On 1 September 1972, Air Support Command merged with Strike Command to create a single multi-role operational command. RAF Strike Command had now subsumed all of the former operational commands.

By 1977 the RAF had reduced, with the merger of Training and Maintenance Commands, to only three Commands (Strike and Support Commands in the UK and RAF Germany) with 69 squadrons, operating Buccaneers, Vulcans, Victors, Canberras, Nimrods, Shackletons, Jaguars, Harriers, Lightnings, Phantoms, Hercules, Hastings, VC10s, Argosies, Puma, Wessex and Whirlwind helicopters, and Bloodhound, Rapier and Tigercat missiles. The greatest changes had been the reduction in size and simplification of Command structure, which reflected economies and altered defence requirements. Other remaining overseas tasks, such as those in Cyprus, Gibraltar, Hong Kong and Belize all came under Strike Command control.

During the 1970s the Phantom was gradually phased out of the ground attack and reconnaissance roles and transferred to air defence. By the end of the decade, it had become the RAF's main air defence fighter, supplemented by the shorter-range Lightnings. From 1984 the Hawks of the Tactical Weapons Units (TWUs) also took on a secondary role earmarked for point air defence duties in times of hostilities. In 1987 the Tornado Air Defence Variant (ADV), the F3, entered squadron service to become the mainstay of the RAF's Air Defence force.

Since WW2 the UK Air Defence Ground Environment (UKADGE) comprised a mixture of radar, display and data link systems. With the introduction of Improved UKADGE the air defence of UK will be very significantly enhanced. The new system combines modern mobile radars, integrated computerised displays and the latest data link systems to give the UK one of the most advanced command and control systems in the world. The RAF Regiment provides Rapier surface-to-air missile defence of key installations.

Bloodhound was phased out in July 1991, and a requirement for a replacement long-range SAM was announced for introduction in 1995. The Phantom has been phased out and air defence forces of the UK are provided solely by the Tornado F3 supplemented by armed Hawks. Together with the Sentry (Boeing E-3D) Airborne Early Warning aircraft, which became operational in 1992, and the support of in-flight refuelling



No 74 Sqn was the first squadron to receive the Lightning. Peter R March

tanker aircraft and IUKADGE, the advanced F3s will be able to detect and intercept intruders far from our shores. Development of the new European Fighter Aircraft (EFA), which is due to enter RAF service by the end of the decade, will further enhance the RAF's air defence capability.

Throughout the post-war era, the RAF retained the ability to deliver offensive firepower over the battlefield and also deep into enemy territory. This has been provided by forces based both in the UK and in Germany. The Canberra bombers of the 1950s and 1960s gave way to the Phantoms and Buccaneers. The Phantom's tasks were then taken over by SEPECAT Jaguars in the mid-1970s to release the Phantoms for the air defence role. The Buccaneers were reallocated to an anti-shipping task, with the Panavia Tornado IDS taking over their overland offensive role from 1982, when No 9 Squadron was the first operational unit to receive the Tornado GR1. Through the 1980s, the Tornado replaced the Jaguars in Germany to provide an extremely potent modern offensive firepower force.

For close air support of army operations, the ground attack Hunters were replaced by the unique capabilities of the HS Harrier GR1, commencing with No 1 Squadron in July 1969. The Harrier was the world's first fixed-wing vertical/short take-off and landing close support aircraft. Subsequent improvements produced the Harrier GR3 and the redesigned GR5 with considerably greater range and weapon capability. In 1992 the night-attack GR7 became operational with Nos 1, 3 and 4 Squadrons.

Flying boats gave way to the Shackleton from 1951 onwards for maritime reconnaissance duties. In turn, Nimrod MR aircraft were introduced into service in 1969, progressively replacing the Shackletons through the 1970s. The maritime offensive capability continues to be provided by Buccaneer squadrons, which from 1994 will be superseded by Tornado GR1Bs equipped with the Sea Eagle air to surface missile.

The size of the air transport force has varied over the years in response to the perceived security interests of the British Government. In the early 1960s, military planners concentrated on maximising mobility available through air transport. The transport capability of the RAF has

been modernised through the introduction of the Hercules, VC10 and Tristar aircraft. All of these are also operated in an air-to-air refuelling tanker role. For tactical transport, helicopters have had an increasingly important role to play in the post-war years. The Westland Wessex has been supplemented by the Puma in the support helicopter role, and the introduction of the Boeing-Vertol Chinook has brought a significant increase to the tactical mobility of British forces in the field. The RAF's Chinooks are currently undergoing an up-grade to CH-47D standard.

In 1982 the RAF provided offensive, defensive and support forces for the Falklands Conflict. Harrier GR3s contributed offensive firepower operating both from ships and temporary bases on the island, and a Chinook, the only aircraft to survive the Exocet attack on the *Atlantic Conveyor*, contributed significantly to the logistic support of the land force. Vulcans were able to carry out strategic bombing from the Ascension Island base and Nimrods acted as maritime reconnaissance for the Task Force, both assisted by air-to-air refuelling from Victor tankers. A major factor in the successful conclusion of this operation was the ability to sustain an 8,000 mile logistic chain. This depended on the air bridge forced by RAF transport aircraft operating from the UK to Ascension Island and then forward to the South Atlantic again supported by a massive air-to-air refuelling effort.

When the Iraqis invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the Saudi Arabian Government requested assistance, air power was the only instrument at the disposal of the British Government which could get to the Gulf in time, and with sufficient force, to deter the threatened invasion of Saudi Arabia. Because of that, the RAF was from the outset at the forefront of the British effort, and remained there for the duration of Operations *Granby* and *Desert Storm*. Moreover, the RAF's contribution to Allied air power in the Gulf, both in crisis and conflict, was second only in importance to that of the United States.

Within 48 hours of the Government decision to send large scale forces to the Gulf, a squadron of Tornado F3s arrived in Saudi Arabia, and two hours later they flew their first operational sortie. Within a further two days, a squadron of Jaguars

Far East Air Force formation over Singapore in 1967: Hunter FGA9 (20 Sqn), Canberra B15 (45 Sqn) and Javelin FAW9 (64 Sqn).







The Armstrong Whitworth Argosy, the 'Whistling Wheelbarrow' (above left), was replaced by the C-130 Hercules, of which 66 were ordered (above right).

arrived, together with half a squadron of VC10 tanker aircraft, and soon after that they were joined by half a squadron of Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft.

Meanwhile, the build-up of British and other coalition forces continued. The RAF deployed in total 18 Tornado F3s, 45 Tornado GR1s, six Tornado GR1As, 12 Jaguar GR1s, 17 Chinooks and 19 Pumas, and a detachment of four Nimrod MR2s for maritime patrol. Tanker support was provided by a total of 17 VC10, Victor and Tristar aircraft, and in-theatre transport by seven Hercules and communications by one HS125. Later in the campaign the attack force was supplemented by 12 Buccaneers for laser designation. Other aircraft such as the Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft from No 51 Sqn and air defence Phantoms were detached to Cyprus. Also deployed were eight RAF Regiment air and ground defence squadrons, field medical and aeromedical evacuation teams, together with other supporting units. At the peak of hostilities some 5,500 RAF regular and reserve personnel were deployed in the Gulf in support of RAF operations.

When the air campaign against Iraq started on 17 January 1991, Tornado GR1s were among the first aircraft in action. Equipped with JP233 airfield denial weapons, 1,000 lb bombs and ALARM anti-radar missiles, the Tornados attacked a number of the Iraqi Air Force's huge airfields. Most of the Tornado GR1 sorties during the first week of operations were flown at low level and at night, an environment in which few other aircraft could operate. By day Jaguar GR1s attacked a variety of targets including the Iraqi's lines of supply, SAM sites and artillery, naval vessels and Silkworm anti-ship missile sites. In addition to 1,000 lb bombs, the Jaguars used the Canadian CRV-7 rocket to great effect. Also invaluable in this and other tasks were the recently introduced Tornado GR1A reconnaissance aircraft which had a unique day/night low level reconnaissance capability. The deployment of a squadron of Buccaneer aircraft equipped with Pavespike laser designators enabled the Tornados to use Laser Guided Bombs (LGBs) with great precision during daylight raids on interdiction and airfield targets. The Tornado's capability was further enhanced with the deployment of a small number of aircraft fitted with the new Thermal Imaging Airborne Laser Designator (TIALD) which gave the Tornado a precision night attack capability.

Operation Granby was the UK's largest

operation since the end of WW2 and the RAF played a major part in the planning and execution of the coalition air offensive, which stands as one of the most successful air campaigns in history.

In July 1991 the Shackleton AEW2 was finally retired, being replaced by the Sentry AEW1. 1991 also saw RAF helicopters engaged in the Gulf area, this time to help Kurdish refugees on the Turkey-Iraq border. The first of the RAF's Tornado squadrons, No 16, was disbanded at RAF Laarbruch, thus ending a contribution to RAF history that dated back to 1915. In October the Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) by RAF Germany was discontinued. The last ex-operational Bloodhound Mk2 surface-to-air missiles went to the scrapyard, some 300 missiles being disposed of. A detachment of Jaguar GR1s from RAF Coltishall, continued sorties from Incirlik in Turkey to give reassurance and protection to the Kurds in Northern Iraq.

The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, starting with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and progressing to the reunification of Germany and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact as a military alliance, all fuelled international efforts to achieve arms reductions. The former Soviet Union was committed to a programme of withdrawal of its remaining troops from Germany and Poland, and undertook to withdraw nearly 100,000 major weapons systems under CFE. The Western response was to encourage the changes but at the same time to preserve the insurance of a strong collective defence. Under a wide ranging 'Options for Change' programme the UK government decided that a smaller and more mobile force is required and new force and command structures were needed to meet this new posture, whilst also considering and applying the military lessons of recent years. RAF manpower is consequently being reduced from the 1992 total of 88,000 to about 75,000 by 1995 and RAF Germany is to reduce by about a half.

As a result of these reductions 1991/92 saw the end of an era for RAF Germany when Phantoms were withdrawn from the air defence role with Nos 19 and 92 Squadrons and not replaced. No 60 Squadron, the last squadron at RAF Wildenrath, was disbanded which marked the end of fixed-wing flying at the base. This was the first RAF Germany airfield to cease flying after 40 years of front-line service. This was followed by the transfer of No 2 Squadron with Tornado GR1As from Laarbruch to the UK. The two Harrier GR7 squadrons relocated to Laarbruch at the end

of 1992, being joined by the Chinooks and Pumas of No 18 Sqn early in 1993, thus clearing Gutersloh for closure. On 1 April 1993 RAF Germany transfers to the control of Strike Command, becoming No 2 Group.

The Jaguar detachment at Incirlik continued throughout 1992, and six Tornado GR1/1As returned to the Gulf to assist with the enforcement of the 'no-fly' area over southern Iraq. In October 1992 RAF Hercules deployments were made to Bosnia-Herzegovina to help with the UN relief operations. At the close of the year a further overseas deployment arose when two Hercules were despatched to Mombassa, Kenya in support of a UN force delivering aid to Somalia. These European and Middle East commitments continue in 1993. In another structural change, this time within Strike Command, newly constituted No 38 Group assumed responsibility for the tanker and transport elements of No 1 Group on 1 November 1992.

When the 20th century opened the only man-carrying 'aircraft' used for military purposes were kites and balloons. Just 90 years ago, on 17 December 1903, the Wright brothers achieved the world's first sustained, powered, manned and controlled flight. On 13 May 1912 the Royal Flying Corps was formed and was soon, along with the RNAS, taking its flimsy craft into war. Britain came out of WW1 with the newly created Royal Air Force and first experience of the importance of air power. After each subsequent major conflict it has learnt, sometimes painfully, the increasing significance of having control of the skies for the employment of all types of aircraft for defence, strike/attack, supply and support, evacuation, fire control, reconnaissance, electronic eavesdropping, maritime patrol, air refuelling and transport.

In spite of all the hard won lessons the RAF periodically suffers a reduction in its effectiveness by cuts in the essential ingredients - the best equipment, well trained personnel and the organisation to use it effectively. The Royal Air Force is today in the midst of considerable changes yet is maintaining its determination to do a good job, whatever the task, whatever the circumstances, and whatever the equipment it has to hand. It will call heavily on that spirit, identified by the 'father of the Royal Air Force' Viscount Trenchard, to cope effectively with whatever operations it faces today and those that might lie ahead during the final years of the 20th century.

Below: Jaguar GR1s were deployed to the Gulf following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August 1990. Mike Rondot

Below: A No 101 Sqn VC10 K3 refuels a pair of Tornado GR1s armed with JP233 airfield denial weapons. Mike Lumb





# THE RAF IN 1993

**No 1 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 13 May 1912 (RFC) at Farnborough with balloons, airships and man-carrying kites. First (training) aircraft 1 May 1914.  
 April 1918: Fighter squadron on Western Front at Ste Marie Cappel, France with SE5a.  
 April 1993: Fighter/ground attack/reconnaissance squadron at **Wittering**, Cambs operating 13 **BAe Harrier GR7** and one **HS Harrier T4A**. Uses style No 1(F) Squadron.

**No 2 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 13 May 1912 (RFC) at Farnborough with various types including BE1, Farman and Bleriot.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron at Corps HQ, Hesdigneul, France with FK8s.  
 April 1993: Reconnaissance - strike squadron at **Marham**, Norfolk with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1A**. Uses style No II(AC) Squadron.

**No 3 Squadron** – 2 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 13 May 1912 (RFC) at Larkhill with various training types including Bleriot, Farman and Deperdussin.  
 April 1918: Fighter/ground attack squadron on Western Front at Valheureux, France with Sopwith Camels.  
 April 1993: Fighter/ground attack/reconnaissance squadron at **Laarbruch**, Germany operating 12 **BAe Harrier GR7** and one **HS Harrier T4A**.



**No 4 Squadron** – 2 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 16 September 1912 (RFC) at Farnborough with various training types including BE2a, Voisin and Bristol Scout.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front at Chocques, France with RE8.  
 April 1993: Fighter/ground attack squadron at **Laarbruch**, Germany operating 12 **BAe Harrier GR7** and one **HS Harrier T4A**. Uses style No IV Squadron.

**No 5 Squadron** – 11 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 26 July 1913 (RFC) at Farnborough with various training types including Avro 504, Vickers FB5 and DH2.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front at Ascq, France with RE8.  
 April 1993: Air defence squadron based at **Coningsby**, Lincs with 13 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

## Squadrons, flights and other units of RAF Strike Command and RAF Support Command on 1 April 1993.

Sue J Bushell

**No 6 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 31 January 1914 (RFC) at Farnborough with types including BE2 series and BE8.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Le Crotoy, France with RE8.  
 April 1993: Ground attack squadron at **Coltishall**, Norfolk with 14 **SEPECAT Jaguar GR1A/T2A**

**No 7 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 1 May 1914 (RFC) at Farnborough with various types including Farman, BE8 and Bristol Scout.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Proven East, Belgium with RE8.  
 April 1993: Medium- and heavy-lift helicopter squadron at **Odiham**, Hants with 18 **Boeing-Vertol Chinook HC1** and one **Westland Gazelle HT2**.

**No 8 Squadron** – 11 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 1 January 1915 (RFC) at Brooklands with BE2c.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Vert Galand, France with Armstrong-Whitworth FK8.  
 April 1993: Airborne early warning squadron at **Waddington**, Lincs with seven **Boeing Sentry AEW1**.

**No 9 Squadron** – 2 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 8 December 1914 (RFC) at St Omer, France with BE2a, Bleriot and Farman.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Proven, Belgium with RE8.  
 April 1993: Ground attack/bombing squadron at **Brüggen**, Germany with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**. Uses style No IX Squadron.

Below: *Sentry AEW1* – No 8 Sqn, Waddington. Aviation Photographs International



**No 10 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 1 January 1915 (RFC) at Farnborough with Bleriot, Farman etc.  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Abeele, Belgium with FK8.  
 April 1993: Strategic transport (and supplementary tanker) squadron at **Brize Norton**, Oxon with ten **BAC VC10 C1/C1K**.

Left: *Tornado GR1A* – No 2 Sqn, Marham. Andrew March  
 Below: *Tornado F3* – No 23 Sqn, Leeming & *Harrier GR7* – No 3 Sqn, Laarbruch. Sgt Rick Brewell, RAF





**No 11 Squadron – 11 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 14 February 1915 (RFC) at Netheravon with Vickers Gun Carrier and Farman.

*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Fienvillers, France with Bristol F2B Fighter.

*April 1993:* Air defence squadron based at **Leeming**, Yorks with 13 **Panavia Tornado F3**. Uses style No XI Squadron.

**No 12 Squadron – 18 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 14 February 1915 (RFC) at Netheravon with Avro 504.

*April 1918:* Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Soncamp, France with RE8.

*April 1993:* Maritime strike/attack squadron at **Lossiemouth**, Moray with 12 **HS Buccaneer S2B** and two **Hawker Hunter T8**. Due to receive **Panavia Tornado GR1B** in 1994.

**No 13 Squadron – 1 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 10 January 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with BE2 series.

*April 1918:* Photographic reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Le Hameau, France with RE8.

*April 1993:* Tactical reconnaissance/strike squadron at **Honington**, Suffolk with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1A**.

**No 14 Squadron – 2 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 3 February 1915 (RFC) at Shoreham with Maurice Farman

*April 1918:* Reconnaissance, bombing and army co-operation squadron in the Middle East, based at Junction Station, Palestine with RE8.

*April 1993:* Strike/attack squadron at **Brüggen**, Germany with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**.

#### **No 15 (Reserve) Squadron**

– 1 Group/Strike Command

*Formed:* 1 March 1915 (RFC) at Farnborough with BE2c.

*April 1918:* Photographic reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Fienvillers, France with Farman.

*April 1993:* Squadron designation for the Tornado Weapons Conversion Unit at **Honington**, Suffolk with 25 **Panavia Tornado GR1**. Uses the style No XV Squadron. Moving to RAF Lossiemouth in June 1993.

Below: *Buccaneer S2Bs – No 12 Sqn, Lossiemouth.* Andrew March Bottom: *Chinook HC1 – No 7 Sqn, Odiham.* Daniel March



Above: *Tornado GR1 – No 9 Sqn, Brüggen* with ALARM missiles. Geoff Lee, BAe  
Right: *Tornado F3 – No 11 Sqn, Leeming* firing AIM-9L Sidewinder. BAe

#### **No 16 (Reserve) Squadron**

– 1 Group/Strike Command

*Formed:* 10 February 1915 (RFC) at St Omer, France with various types including Bleriot, Vickers Gunbus and Bristol Scout.

*April 1918:* Reconnaissance squadron on Western Front at Camplain l'Abbé, France with RE8.

*April 1993:* Squadron designation for the Jaguar Operational Conversion Unit at **Lossiemouth**, Moray with 10 **SEPECAT Jaguar GR1A/T2A**.

#### **No 17 Squadron – 2 Group/Strike Command**

*Formed:* 1 February 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with BE2 series.

*April 1918:* Reconnaissance and scout squadron based at Le Hana, Macedonia with BE12, SE5A and FK8.

*April 1993:* Strike/attack squadron at **Brüggen**, Germany with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**.

#### **No 18 Squadron – 2 Group/Strike Command**

*Formed:* 11 May 1915 (RFC) at Northolt with Martinsyde, Farman and Bristol Scout.

*April 1918:* Day bombing squadron on Western Front based at Treizennes, France with DH4.

*April 1993:* Medium- and heavy-lift helicopter squadron at **Laarbruch**, Germany with five **Boeing-Vertol Chinook HC1** and five **Westland Puma HC1**.

#### **No 19 (Reserve) Squadron – Support Command**

*Formed:* 1 September 1915 (RFC) at Castle Bromwich with training types including Farman, Avro 504 and Caudron G.III.

*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Savy, France with Sopwith Dolphin.

*April 1993:* A squadron of No 7 Flying Training School at **Chivenor**, Devon with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**.

#### **No 20 (Reserve) Squadron**

– 1 Group/Strike Command

*Formed:* 1 September 1915 (RFC) at Netheravon with various types.

*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Ste Marie Cappel, France with Bristol F2B Fighter.

*April 1993:* Squadron designation for Harrier Operational Conversion Unit at **Wittering**, Cambs with 20 **BAe Harrier GR3/GR5/GR7/T4/T4A**.

#### **No 22 Squadron – 18 Group/Strike Command**

*Formed:* 1 September 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with various types.

*April 1918:* Reconnaissance and fighter squadron at Vert Galand, France with Bristol F2B Fighters.

*April 1993:* Search and rescue squadron with headquarters at **St Mawgan**, Cornwall with eleven **Westland Wessex HC2**. Detached flights at **Chivenor**, Devon (A Flt); **Valley**, Anglesey (C Flt) and **Coltishall**, Norfolk (E Flt).

#### **No 23 Squadron – 11 Group/Strike Command**

*Formed:* 1 September 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with Avro 504A, Bleriot, Caudron and Farman aircraft.

*April 1918:* Ground attack squadron on Western Front based at Bertangles, France with Spad S.VII, S.XIII.

*April 1993:* Air defence squadron at **Leeming**, Yorks with 13 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

#### **No 24 Squadron – 38 Group/Strike Command**

*Formed:* 1 September 1915 (RFC) at Hounslow Heath with various types including Curtiss JN4, Avro 504A and BE2c.

*April 1918:* Fighter and ground attack squadron on Western Front based at Conteville, France with SE5A.

*April 1993:* Tactical transport squadron at **Lyneham**, Wilts with 13 **Lockheed Hercules C1P/C3P**. Squadron also provides crews for No 1312 Flight in the Falklands.







**No 33 Squadron** - 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 12 January 1916 (RFC) at Filton with BE2c/d.  
 April 1918: Home defence squadron based at Gainsborough (HQ only) and Bramham Moor, Beverley with FE2b/d.  
 April 1993: Helicopter support squadron at **Odiham**, Hants with 12 **Westland Puma HC1**.

**No 39 (1 PRU) Squadron**  
 - 18 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 15 April 1916 (RFC) at Hounslow with BE2 and BE12.  
 April 1918: Home defence squadron based at North Weald with Bristol F2B Fighters.  
 April 1993: Squadron designation for No 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit at **Wyton**, Cambs with five **EE Canberra PR9**.

Below: BAe 125 CC3 - No 32 Sqn, Northolt.  
 Andrew March



**No 25 Squadron** - 11 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 25 September 1915 (RFC) at Montrose with various types including Farman, BE2c and Curtiss JN4.  
 April 1918: Day bombing and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Ruisseauville, France with DH4.  
 April 1993: Air defence squadron at **Leeming**, Yorks with 13 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**No 27 Squadron** - 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 5 November 1915 (RFC) at Hounslow Heath with Martinsyde G100.  
 April 1918: Bombing and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Ruisseauville, France with DH4.  
 April 1993: Strike/attack squadron at **Marham**, Norfolk with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**.

**No 28 Squadron** - Strike Command  
 Formed: 7 November 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with BE2a, Avro 504.  
 April 1918: Fighter squadron over Austro-Hungarian Border based at Grossa, Italy with Sopwith Camels.  
 April 1993: Army support squadron at **Sek Kong**, Hong Kong with **Westland Wessex HC2**.

**No 29 Squadron** - 11 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 7 November 1915 (RFC) at Gosport with Farman, Avro 504A and Caudron GIII.  
 April 1918: Fighter and ground attack squadron on Western Front based at La Lovie, Belgium with Nieuport 27s.  
 April 1993: Air defence squadron at **Coningsby**, Lincs with 13 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**No 30 Squadron** - 38 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 24 March 1915 (RFC) at Moascar, Egypt with Farman and BE2 aircraft (but did not adopt number until 31 July 1915).  
 April 1918: Reconnaissance and bomber squadron in Middle East based at Qubba, Mesopotamia with Spad VII, RE8, BE2e and Martinsyde G100.  
 April 1993: Tactical transport squadron at **Lyneham**, Wilts with 13 **Lockheed Hercules C1P/C3P**. Squadron also provides crews for No 1312 Flight in the Falklands.

Right top: Canberra PR9 - No 39 Sqn (1 PRU), Wyton. Daniel March

Right: Nimrod MR2P - Nos 42(R), 120, 201 & 206 Sqn, Kinloss. Andrew March

**No 31 Squadron** - 2 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 11 October 1915 (RFC) at Farnborough with BE2 series.  
 April 1918: Army co-operation squadron based at Risalpur, India with BE2c/BE2e.  
 April 1993: Strike/attack squadron at **Brüggen**, Germany with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**.

**No 32 Squadron** - 38 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 12 January 1916 (RFC) at Netheravon with Henry Farman and Vickers FB5 Gunbus.  
 April 1918: Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Beauvois, France with SE5As.  
 April 1993: Communications squadron at **Northolt**, Middx with eight **HS Andover C1/CC2/E3A**, 12 **BAe 125 C1/C2/C3** and four **Westland Gazelle HT3**.

**No 41 Squadron** - 1 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 14 July 1916 (RFC) at Gosport with Vickers FB5 Gunbus and DH2.  
 April 1918: Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Alquines, France with SE5As.  
 April 1993: Tactical reconnaissance/strike squadron at **Coltishall**, Norfolk with 14 **SEPECAT Jaguar GR1A/T2A**.

**No 42 (Reserve) Squadron**  
 - 18 Group/Strike Command  
 Formed: 26 February 1916 (RFC) at Netheravon with BE2d/e.  
 April 1918: Tactical reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Chocques, France with RE8.  
 April 1993: Squadron designation for Nimrod Operational Conversion Unit at **Kinloss**, Moray with **HS Nimrod MR2P**.





**No 43 Squadron** – 11 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 15 April 1916 (RFC) at Montrose with various types including BE2e and Avro 504K.  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Avesnes-le-Comte, France with Sopwith Camels.  
*April 1993:* Air defence squadron at **Leuchars**, Fife with 16 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**No 45 (Reserve) Squadron** – Support Command  
*Formed:* 1 March 1916 (RFC) at Gosport with Avro 504, BE2c, Martinsyde S1  
*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Italian Front based at Grossa, Italy with Sopwith Camels.  
*April 1993:* Squadron designation for Multi-Engine Training Squadron of No 6 FTS at **Finningley**, Yorks with **BAe Jetstream T1**.

**No 47 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 March 1916 (RFC) at Beverley with FK3 and BE2c.  
*April 1918:* Reconnaissance and fighter squadron in Balkans based at Yanesh, Macedonia, with various aircraft including BE12, SE5A, Bristol M1C and FK8.  
*April 1993:* Tactical transport squadron at **Lyneham**, Wilts with eleven **Lockheed Hercules C1P/C3P**.

**No 51 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 15 May 1916 (RFC) at Thetford with BE2 and BE12 aircraft.  
*April 1918:* Home defence squadron based at Marham with FE2B and BE12B.  
*April 1993:* Electronic reconnaissance squadron at **Wyton**, Cambs with three **HS Nimrod R1P**.

**No 54 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 15 May 1916 (RFC) at Castle Bromwich with BE2c.  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Conteville, France with Sopwith Camels.  
*April 1993:* Ground-attack squadron at **Coltishall**, Norfolk with 15 **SEPECAT Jaguar GR1A/T2A**.

**No 55 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 8 June 1916 (RFC) at Castle Bromwich with various trainers including BE2 and Avro 504.  
*April 1918:* Bombing and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Tantonville, France with DH4.  
*April 1993:* Aerial refuelling squadron at **Marham**, Norfolk with six **Handley Page Victor K2**. On retirement of Victor (early 1994) No 55 Squadron becomes squadron designation for No 241 Operational Conversion Unit.

**No 56 (Reserve) Squadron**  
 – 11 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 9 June 1916 (RFC) at Gosport with various training types.  
*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Valheureux, France with SE5A.  
*April 1993:* Squadron designation for Tornado F3 Operational Conversion Unit at **Coningsby**, Lincs with 24 **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**No 57 (Reserve) Squadron**  
 – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 8 June 1916 (RFC) at Copmanthorpe with Avro 504A and BE2.  
*April 1918:* Bomber and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Le Quesnoy, France with DH4.  
*April 1993:* Squadron designation for Hercules Operational Conversion Unit at **Lyneham**, Wilts with **Lockheed Hercules C1P/C3P**.

**No 60 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 15 May 1916 (RFC) at Gosport with Morane Parasols.  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Fienvillers, France with SE5A.  
*April 1993:* Helicopter support squadron at **Benson**, Oxon with nine **Westland Wessex HC2**.

**No 70 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 22 April 1916 (RFC) at Farnborough with Sopwith 1½-Strutter.  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Fienvillers, France with Sopwith Camel.  
*April 1993:* Tactical transport squadron at **Lyneham**, Wilts with 12 **Lockheed Hercules C1P/C3P**.

**No 72 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 28 June 1917 (RFC) at Upavon with various types supplied by the Central Flying School.  
*April 1918:* Army co-operation squadron in Middle East based at Baghdad, Mesopotamia with Spad VII, Bristol M1C, DH4 and SE5A.  
*April 1993:* Helicopter support squadron at **Aldergrove**, Northern Ireland with 15 **Westland Wessex HC2**.

**No 74 (Reserve) Squadron** – Support Command  
*Formed:* 1 July 1917 (RFC) at Northolt with Avro 504K.  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at St Omer/Teteghem, France with SE5A.  
*April 1993:* A squadron of No 4 Flying Training School at **Valley**, Anglesey with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**. Uses style No 74 (Tiger) Squadron.

**No 78 Squadron** – Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 November 1916 (RFC) at Newhaven with BE2c/e.  
*April 1918:* Home defence squadron based at Suttons Farm with Sopwith Camels.  
*April 1993:* Helicopter support and search and rescue squadron at **Mount Pleasant**, Falkland Islands with **Boeing-Vertol Chinook HC1** and **Westland Sea King HAR3**.



**No 84 Squadron** – Strike Command  
*Formed:* 7 January 1917 (RFC) at Beaulieu with training types including BE2c and BE12/12a  
*April 1918:* Fighter and ground-attack squadron on Western Front based at Conteville, France with SE5A.  
*April 1993:* Search and rescue and support helicopter squadron at **Akrotiri**, Cyprus with **Westland Wessex HC5C**.

**No 92 (Reserve) Squadron** – Support Command  
*Formed:* 1 September 1917 (RFC) at London Colney with Spad VII, Sopwith Pup and Avro 504K aircraft.  
*April 1918:* At Tangmere with Sopwith Pups but awaiting transfer to Western Front with SE5As.  
*April 1993:* A squadron of No 7 Flying Training School at **Chivenor**, Devon with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**.

Below: *Andover E3A* – No 115 Sqn, Benson. Daniel March







**No 100 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 11 February 1917 (RFC) at Hingham with BE2c.

*April 1918:* Night bomber squadron on Western Front based at Villeseneux, France with FE2b, BE2d.

*April 1993:* Target facilities squadron at **Wyton**, Cambs with 12 **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**.

**No 101 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 12 July 1917 (RFC) at Farnborough with FE2b and BE12/12a.

*April 1918:* Night bomber squadron on Western Front based at Haute Vissée, France with FE2b.

*April 1993:* Aerial refuelling squadron at **Brize Norton**, Oxon with nine **BAC VC10 K2/K3**.

**No 111 Squadron** – 11 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 August 1917 (RFC) at Deir-el-Belah, Palestine with Bristol Scout, Bristol M1B, DH2 and Vickers FB9.

*April 1918:* Fighter squadron in Middle East based at Ramleh, Palestine with SE5A and Nieuport Scouts.

*April 1993:* Air defence squadron at **Leuchars**, Fife with 16 **Panavia Tornado F3**. Uses style No 111(F) Squadron.

**No 115 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 December 1917 (RFC) at Catterick with various training types.

*April 1918:* Training as night bomber squadron at Catterick with various types (awaiting HP O/400).

*April 1993:* Navigation aids calibration/airborne radio relay squadron at **Benson**, Oxon with four **HS Andover E3**.

Below: *Jaguar GR1A* – No 54 Sqn, Coltishall. Andrew March  
 Below right: *Sea King HAR3* – No 202 Sqn, Boulmer. Peter R March



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**No 120 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 January 1918 (RFC) at Cramlington with various types including DH9.

*April 1918:* Day bomber unit based at Cramlington with various types awaiting transfer to Western Front.

*April 1993:* Maritime patrol squadron at **Kinloss**, Morayshire with **HS Nimrod MR2P**. Uses style CXX Squadron.

**No 201 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 17 October 1914 (as 1 Sqn RNAS) at Gosport with various types including Vickers Gunbus.

*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Fienvillers, France with Sopwith Camel.

*April 1993:* Maritime patrol squadron at **Kinloss**, Morayshire with **HS Nimrod MR2P**.

**No 202 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 17 October 1914 (as 2 Sqn RNAS) at Eastchurch with various types including Vickers Gunbus and Short 28.

*April 1918:* Bombing and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Bergues, France with DH4.

*April 1993:* Search and rescue squadron with headquarters at **Boulmer**, Northumberland with 15 **Westland Sea King HAR3**. Flights operate from **Boulmer** (A Ft); **Brawdy**, Dyfed (B Ft); **Manston**, Kent (C Ft); **Lossiemouth**, Morayshire (D Ft) and **Leconfield**, Yorks (E Ft).

**No 206 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 November 1916 (as 6 Sqn RNAS) at Dover with Nieuport Scouts.

*April 1918:* Bombing and reconnaissance squadron on Western Front based at Ste Marie Cappel, France with DH9.

*April 1993:* Maritime patrol squadron at **Kinloss**, Morayshire with **HS Nimrod MR2P**.

Above left: *Wessex HC5C* – No 84 Sqn, Akrotiri, Cyprus. PRM  
 Above: *Hercules C1P* – Nos 24, 30, 47, 57(R) & 70 Sqns, Lyneham. Adrian Balch

**No 208 Squadron** – 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 25 October 1916 (as 8 Sqn RNAS) at St Pol, France with Sopwith 1½-Strutters.

*April 1918:* Fighter squadron on Western Front based at Teteghem, France with Sopwith Camel.

*April 1993:* Maritime strike/attack squadron at **Lossiemouth**, Morayshire with 15 **HS Buccaneer S2B** and five **Hawker Hunter T7/8**.

**No 216 Squadron** – 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 8 January 1918 (as 16 Sqn RNAS) from 'A' Squadron (RNAS) at Ochey, France with Handley Page O/400.

*April 1918:* Night bomber squadron on Western Front based at Villesneux, France with Handley Page O/400.

*April 1993:* Aerial refuelling and strategic transport squadron at **Brize Norton**, Oxon with eight **Lockheed Tristar K1/KC1/C2**.

**No 230 Squadron** – 1 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 20 August 1918 at Felixstowe from Nos 327, 328 and 487 Flights) with Felixstowe F2A and Curtiss H16.

*April 1993:* Helicopter support squadron at **Aldergrove**, Northern Ireland with 15 **Westland Puma HC1**.

**No 234 (Reserve) Squadron**  
 – Support Command

*Formed:* August 1918 at Tresco, Isles of Scilly (from Nos 350 - 353 Flights) with Felixstowe F3 and Curtiss H12.

*April 1993:* A squadron of No 4 Flying Training School at **Valley**, Anglesey with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**.





**No 360 Squadron – 18 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 1 April 1966 at Watton with Canberra T4 (number not confirmed until 23 September 1966, when Canberra B2 and B6 added).  
*April 1993:* Target facilities and ECM training squadron at **Wyton** with ten **English Electric Canberra T17/T17A** and two **Canberra PR7**

**No 617 Squadron – 1 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 21 March 1943 at Scampton with Lancaster I and III.  
*April 1993:* Strike/attack squadron at **Marham**, Norfolk with 13 **Panavia Tornado GR1**.

**No 1312 Flight – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* April 1944 with Miles Masters.  
*April 1993:* Aerial refuelling and maritime surveillance flight at **Mount Pleasant**, Falkland Islands with two **Lockheed Hercules C1K** and crews from Nos 24/30 Sqns.

**No 1417 Flight – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 20 July 1940 at St Athan. Current formation in January 1989 at Belize with Harrier GR3.  
*April 1993:* Close air support/strike flight at **Belize City Airport**, Belize with **BAe Harrier GR3**.

**The Queen's Flight**  
– 38 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 April 1936 (as the King's Flight) at Hendon with DH89A Dragon Rapide.  
*April 1993:* Royal Family and VIP transport flight at **Benson**, Oxon with three **BAe 146 CC2** and two **Westland Wessex HCC4**.

**Northolt Station Flight**  
– 38 Group/Strike Command  
*April 1993:* Operates **PBN Islander CC2** from Northolt, Middx

**SAR Training Unit (SARTU)**  
– 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1979 at Valley with Wessex HC2.  
*April 1993:* Search and rescue helicopter training unit at **Valley**, Anglesey with **Westland Wessex HC2** from No 22 Squadron.

**Sea King Training Unit (SKTU)**  
– 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* February 1978 at RNAS Culdrose with Westland Sea King HAR3.  
*April 1993:* Search and rescue helicopter training flight at **St Mawgan**, Cornwall with **Westland Sea King HAR3** from No 202 Sqn.

Below: *Buccaneer S2B – No 208 Sqn, Lossiemouth. Andrew March* Bottom: *Tristar K1 – No 216 Sqn, Brize Norton. Andrew March*



**No 1435 Flight – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 1 November 1988 at Mount Pleasant with McDonnell Douglas Phantom FGR2.  
*April 1993:* Air defence flight at **Mount Pleasant**, Falkland Islands with **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**No 1563 Flight – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 1984 at Belize with Westland Puma HC1.  
*April 1993:* Helicopter support flight at **Belize City Airport**, Belize with **Westland Puma HC1**.

**No 231 Operational Conversion Unit**  
– 18 Group/Strike Command  
*April 1993:* Training unit at **Wyton**, Cambs with two **EE Canberra T4** and one **EE Canberra B2**. Unit disbands on 23 April 1993.

**Sentry Training Squadron (STS)**  
– 11 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 June 1990 at Waddington with Sentry AEW1.  
*April 1993:* Airborne early warning training squadron at **Waddington**, Lincs with **Boeing Sentry AEW1** from No 8 Squadron.

**Trinational Tornado Training Establishment (TTTE) – 1 Group/Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 29 January 1981 at Cottesmore with Panavia Tornado (first aircraft arrived 1 July 1980).  
*April 1993:* Strike/attack training unit at **Cottesmore**, Leics with 17 **Panavia Tornado GR1** and additional **Tornado IDS** from the German and Italian Air Forces.



**Berlin Station Flight – 2 Group/Strike Command**  
*April 1993:* Liaison/communications flight at **Gatow**, Germany with **DHC Chipmunk T10**.

**Electronic Warfare & Avionic Unit (EW&AU)**  
– 18 Group/Strike Command  
*Formed:* 1 June 1976 at Wyton.  
*April 1993:* Training and research unit at **Wyton**, Cambs using aircraft from other units as required.

**Strike/Attack Operational Evaluation Unit (SAOEU) – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 1 September 1983 (as Tornado Operational Evaluation Unit) at Boscombe Down with Panavia Tornado GR1.  
*April 1993:* Evaluation unit forming part of Central Tactics and Trials Organisation at **Boscombe Down**, Wilts with **Panavia Tornado GR1**, **BAe Harrier GR7**, **Harrier T4** and **SEPECAT Jaguar T2A**.

**Tornado F3 Operational Evaluation Unit (F3 OEU) – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 1 April 1987 at Coningsby with Panavia Tornado F3.  
*April 1993:* Evaluation unit forming part of Central Tactics and Trials Organisation at **Coningsby**, Lincs with **Panavia Tornado F3**.

**Institute of Aviation Medicine – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 11 September 1950 at Farnborough  
*April 1993:* At **Farnborough**, Hants with **Hawker Hunter T7**, **SEPECAT Jaguar T2A** and **HS Hawk T1**.

**Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) – Strike Command**  
*Formed:* 11 July 1957 (as the Historic Aircraft Flight) at Biggin Hill with Spitfires and a Hurricane.





Left: Tornado GR1s – No 9 Sqn, Brüggen (top), No 617 Sqn, Marham (middle) and No 27 Sqn, Marham (bottom). A Gibson Above: Canberra T17 – No 360 Sqn, Wyton. Peter R March



Instructors. Headquarters at Scampton with **Short Tucano T1**, **SAL Bulldog T1**, **DHC Chipmunk T10** and eleven **BAe Hawk T1/T1A** (Red Arrows Aerobatic Team). Detachments at **Shawbury**, Salop with **Westland Gazelle HT3**, **Valley**, Anglesey with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A** and **Syerston** with **Vigilant T1**, **Valiant T1** and **Viking T1**.

**Elementary Flying Training Squadron**

– Support Command  
 Formed: 9 July 1979 at Swinderby with DHC Chipmunk T10.  
 April 1993: Ab initio flying training squadron at **Swinderby**, Lincs with **DHC Chipmunk T10**. Moving to Topcliffe June 1993 to form the **Joint Elementary Flying Training Squadron** with the RNEFTS.

**No 1 Flying Training School**

– Support Command  
 Formed: 23 December 1919 at Upavon with Avro 504K, Bristol Fighter, DH9A and Sopwith Snipe.  
 April 1993: Flying training school at **Linton-on-Ouse**, Yorks with **Shorts Tucano T1** (and **BAC Jet Provost** until May 1993). Also **Bulldog T1** with RNEFTS at Topcliffe; to become JEFTS (RAF/RN) from mid-1993.

**No 2 Flying Training School**

– Support Command  
 Formed: 26 April 1920 from No 31 Training Squadron at Duxford with Avro 504K, Bristol Fighter, DH9A and Sopwith Snipe.  
 April 1993: Helicopter flying training unit at **Shawbury**, Salop with **Westland Gazelle HT2**, **HT3** and **Westland Wessex HC2**.

**No 3 Flying Training School**

– Support Command  
 Formed: 26 April 1920 at Scopwick (Digby) from No 59 Training Squadron with Avro 504K, Bristol Fighter, DH9A and Sopwith Snipe.  
 April 1993: Basic flying training unit at **RAF College Cranwell**, Lincs with **Shorts Tucano T1**.

**No 4 Flying Training School**

– Support Command  
 Formed: 1 April 1921 at Abu Sueir, Egypt with Avro 504K, Bristol Fighter, DH9A and Sopwith Snipe.  
 April 1993: Advanced flying and tactical weapons training school at **Valley**, Anglesey with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**. Component units are No 74 (Reserve) Squadron and No 234 (Reserve) Squadron.

April 1993: At **Coningsby**, Lincs with **Avro Lancaster**, **Hawker Hurricane**, **Supermarine Spitfire**, **DHC Chipmunk T10**, and **DH Devon C2**.

**Central Flying School – Support Command**

Formed: 19 June 1912 (RFC) at Upavon with training types including Avro Type E, Bristol Boxkite and Farman Longhorn.  
 April 1918: In the flying training role at Upavon with various types.  
 April 1993: Training unit for Qualified Flying

RAF Support Command training aircraft. Left to right (front): **Jet Provost T5A**, **Chipmunk T10**, **Hawk T1**, **Bulldog T1** 7 **Tucano T1**. Left to right (back): **Dominie T1**, **Gazelle HT3** and **Jetstream T1**. RAF Finningley







Above: Grob Vigilant T1 – No 633 VGS, Cosford. Peter R March

### No 6 Flying Training School

– Support Command

Formed: 26 April 1920 at Spittlegate from No 30 Training Squadron with Avro 504K, Bristol Fighter, DH9A, Sopwith Snipe and Vickers Vimy. April 1993: Navigator training unit at **Finningley**, S. Yorks with **SAL Bulldog**, **Shorts Tucano T1**, **HS Dominie T1**, **BAC Jet Provost T5B** (until June 1993) and **HS Hawk T1**. Also the **Multi-Engine Training Squadron** with **SAL Jetstream T1**, which also has the shadow designation No 45 (Reserve) Squadron.

### No 7 Flying Training School

– Support Command

Formed: end of 1935 at Peterborough with Hawker Hart and Avro Tutor.

April 1993: Fast-jet training unit at **Chivenor**, Devon with **BAe Hawk T1/T1A**, comprising No 19 (Reserve) Squadron and No 92 (Reserve) Squadron.

### University Air Squadrons – Support Command

Formed: From October 1925 onwards with Avro 504.

April 1993: At the following bases, with (82)

#### SAL Bulldog T1:

**Aberdeen, Dundee**

**& St Andrews UAS** Leuchars, Fife

**Birmingham UAS** Cosford, Salop

**Bristol UAS** Colerne, Wilts

**Cambridge UAS** Cambridge, Cambs

**East Lowlands UAS** Edinburgh, Lothian

**East Midlands UAS** Newton, Notts

**Glasgow**

**& Strathclyde UAS** Glasgow, Strathclyde

**Liverpool UAS** Woodvale, Lancs

**London UAS** Benson, Oxon

**Manchester UAS** Woodvale, Lancs

**Northumbrian UAS** Leeming, N. Yorks

**Oxford UAS** Benson, Oxon

**Queens UAS** Sydenham, Belfast

**Southampton UAS** Lee-on-Solent, Hants

**University**

**of Wales AS** St Athan, S Glamorgan

**Yorkshire UAS** Finningley, S. Yorks

### Volunteer Gliding Schools – Support Command

Formed: From August 1942 onwards

April 1993: Bases and equipment as follows:

**ACCGS** Syerston, Notts – Vigilant T1/  
Viking T1/Valliant T1/Janus C

**No 611 VGS** Swanton Morley, Norfolk – Viking T1

**No 612 VGS** Halton, Bucks – Vigilant T1

**No 613 VGS** Halton, Bucks – Vigilant T1

**No 614 VGS** Wethersfield, Essex – Viking T1

**No 615 VGS** Kenley, Surrey – Viking T1

**No 616 VGS** Henlow, Beds – Vigilant T1

**No 617 VGS** Manston, Kent – Viking T1

Below: RAF St Athan – No 10 Sqn, Tornado maintenance. RAF St Athan Bottom: RAF Regiment – BAe Rapier, No 37 Sqn, Brüggen. Sue Bushell



- No 618 VGS** West Malling, Kent – Viking T1
- No 621 VGS** Weston-s-Mare, Avon – Viking T1
- No 622 VGS** Upavon, Wilts – Viking T1
- No 624 VGS** Chivenor, Devon – Vigilant T1
- No 625 VGS** Hullavington, Wilts – Viking T1
- No 626 VGS** Predanack, Cornwall – Viking T1
- No 631 VGS** Sealand, Clwyd – Viking T1
- No 632 VGS** Ternhill, Salop – Vigilant T1
- No 633 VGS** Cosford, Salop – Vigilant T1
- No 634 VGS** St Athan, S Glamorgan – Viking T1
- No 635 VGS** Samlesbury, Lancs – Vigilant T1
- No 636 VGS** Swansea, W Glamorgan – Viking T1
- No 637 VGS** Little Rissington, Glos – Vigilant T1
- No 642 VGS** Linton-on-Ouse, N. Yorks – Vigilant T1
- No 643 VGS** Syerston, Notts – Vigilant T1
- No 644 VGS** Syerston, Notts – Vigilant T1
- No 645 VGS** Catterick, North Yorks – Viking T1
- No 661 VGS** Kirknewton, Lothian – Viking T1
- No 662 VGS** Arbroath, Tayside – Viking T1
- No 663 VGS** Kinloss, Moray – Vigilant T1

### Air Experience Flights – Support Command

Formed: October 1958 with DHC Chipmunk T10.

April 1993: At the following bases with (51)

**DHC Chipmunk T10** (except No 13 AEF which

also has one **SAL Bulldog T1**).

**No 1 AEF** Manston, Kent

**No 2 AEF** Hurn, Dorset

**No 3 AEF** Colerne, Wilts

**No 4 AEF** Exeter, Devon

**No 5 AEF** Teversham, Cambs

**No 6 AEF** Benson, Oxon

**No 7 AEF** Newton, Notts

**No 8 AEF** Shawbury, Shropshire

**No 9 AEF** Finningley, South Yorks

**No 10 AEF** Woodvale, Merseyside

**No 11 AEF** Leeming, North Yorks

**No 12 AEF** Turnhouse, West Lothian

**No 13 AEF** Sydenham, NI

### DIRECTLY ADMINISTERED NON-FLYING UNITS

#### RAF SUPPORT COMMAND

##### Ground Training and Maintenance Units

#### No 1 School of Technical Training

– Support Command

Formed: 10 September 1917 at Halton (as

Halton School of Technical Training).

April 1993: At **Halton**, Bucks with various ground-instructional airframes

#### No 2 School of Technical Training

– Support Command

Formed: By August 1938 at Cosford.

April 1993: At **Cosford**, Salop with various ground-instructional airframes

#### No 4 School of Technical Training

– Support Command

Formed: By February 1939 at St Athan.

April 1993: At **St Athan**, South Glamorgan with various ground-instructional airframes.

#### Department of Special Ground Training

– Support Command

April 1993: At **Cranwell**, Lincs with **Hawker Hunter** instructional airframes.

#### Trade Management Training School

– Support Command

Formed: February 1983 at Scampton.

April 1993: At **Scampton**, Lincs with **Hawker Hunter** instructional airframes.

### MAINTENANCE UNITS:

#### Aircraft Maintenance Unit

St Athan, S. Glamorgan

**No 7 MU** Quedgeley, Glos

**No 11 MU** Chilmark, Wilts

**No 14 MU** Carlisle, Cumbria

**No 16 MU** Stafford, Staffs

**No 30 MU** Sealand, Cheshire

**No 217 MU** Cardington, Beds

#### Aircraft Storage Flights

Shawbury, Salop;

St Athan, S. Glamorgan



**OTHER DIRECTLY ADMINISTERED SUPPORT AND STRIKE COMMAND UNITS:**

**Aerial Erector School** Digby, Lincs  
**Airmen's Command School** Hereford  
**Balloon Operations Squadron** Hullavington, Wilts  
**Central Servicing Development Establishment** Swanton Morley, Norfolk  
**Communications Site** Edelsborough  
**Electronics Battle Damage Repair & Prevention Development Centre** North Luffenham, Leics  
**Ground Radio Servicing Centre** North Luffenham, Leics  
**Guided Weapons School** Newton, Notts  
**Headquarters P & SS (UK)** Rudloe Manor, Wilts  
**Joint Services Air Trooping Centre** Stanbridge, Middx  
**No 1 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron** Brize Norton, Oxon  
**No 1 Parachute Training Squadron** Brize Norton, Oxon  
**No 1 Radio School** Locking, Avon  
**No 6 Signals Unit** Rudloe Manor, Wilts  
**No 7 Signals Unit** Byron Heights, Falkland Islands  
**No 12 Signals Unit** Ayios Nikolaos, Cyprus  
**No 26 Signals Unit** Berlin, Germany  
**No 144 Signals Unit** Ty Croes, Gwynedd  
**No 280 Signals Unit** Akrotiri, Cyprus  
**No 303 Signals Unit** Mount Kent, Falkland Islands  
**No 399 Signals Unit** Digby, Lincs  
**No 591 Signals Unit** Digby, Lincs  
**No 751 Signals Unit** Mount Alice, Falkland Islands  
**No 840 Signals Unit** Lindholme, Yorks  
**No 1001 Signals Unit** Oakhangar, Cambs  
**No 399 Signals Unit** Digby, Lincs  
**No 591 Signals Unit** Digby, Lincs  
**Officers & Aircrew Selection Centre** Cranwell, Lincs  
**RAF Hospitals** Halton, Nocton Hall (Reserve), Wroughton  
**RAF Music Services** Uxbridge, Middx  
**RAF Staff College** Bracknell, Berks  
**RAF Communications Centre** Rudloe Manor, Wilts

**RAF Mountain Rescue Service** Kinloss, Leuchars, Leeming, St Athan, Stafford, Valley  
**RAF Police School** Newton, Notts  
**School of Education** Newton, Notts  
**School of Management Training** Newton, Notts  
**Signals Engineering Establishment** Henlow, Beds  
**Supply Control Centre** Stanbridge, Middx  
**UK Mobile Air Movements Squadron** Lyneham, Wilts

**ROYAL AUXILIARY AIR FORCE**

**No 1 Maritime Headquarters** City of Hertford Northwood  
**No 2 Maritime Headquarters** City of Edinburgh Pitrievie Castle  
**No 3 Maritime Headquarters** County of Devon St Mawgan  
**No 4624 County of Oxford (Movements) Squadron** Brize Norton  
**No 4626 County of Wiltshire (Aeromedical Evacuation) Squadron** Hullavington

**ROYAL AUXILIARY AIR FORCE REGIMENT**

Ground Defence: **No 1310 Wing - Catterick**  
**No 2503 County of Lincoln Field Squadron** Waddington  
**No 2620 County of Norfolk Field Squadron** Marham  
**No 2622 Highland Field Squadron** Lossiemouth  
**No 2623 East Anglian Field Squadron** Honington  
**No 2624 County of Oxford Field Squadron** Brize Norton  
**No 2625 County of Cornwall Field Squadron** St Mawgan  
 Air Defence: **No 1339 Wing - Waddington** with Skyguard/Oerlikon  
**No 2729 City of Lincoln Squadron** Waddington  
**No 2890 Squadron** Waddington

**ROYAL AIR FORCE VOLUNTEER RESERVE**

**No 7006 Flight** High Wycombe (intelligence)  
**No 7010 Flight** Wyton (photographic interpretation)  
**No 7630 Flight** Ashford (interrogation)  
**No 7644 Flight** Uxbridge (public relations)

**ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT**

– *Strike Command*

**No 1 Group**  
**No 2 Squadron** Catterick Field Squadron  
**No 3 Squadron** Aldergrove Field Squadron  
**No 2 Group**  
**No 1 Squadron** Laarbruch Field Squadron  
**No 26 Squadron** Laarbruch BAe Rapier  
**No 37 Squadron** Brüggem BAe Rapier  
**No 11 Group**  
**No 15 Squadron** Leeming BAe Rapier  
**No 27 Squadron** Leuchars BAe Rapier  
**No 48 Squadron** Lossiemouth BAe Rapier

**No 6 Wing - (USAF)**

**No 19 Squadron** Brize Norton BAe Rapier  
**No 20 Squadron** Honington BAe Rapier  
**No 66 Squadron** West Raynham BAe Rapier

**British Forces Cyprus**

**No 34 Squadron** Akrotiri Light Armour

**ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT**

– *Support Command*

**No 63 (QCS) Squadron** Uxbridge Ceremonial/Field Squadron (Queen's Colour Squadron)

**RAF Fire Service**

**Fire Services Central Training Establishment** Manston



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