

THE CORPS STRUCTURE – ORGANISATION

SQUADRONS

1. In building a structure it is usual to start at the bottom by laying the foundation, and the strength of the structure relies almost entirely on the strength of this foundation. Fig 1 on page 5 shows how this process applies to the Corps structure, starting with the squadrons and detached flights which are, of course, the basic formations of the Air Training Corps and thus are the foundation on which the rest is built. There are 928 Squadrons and 56 Detached Flights at the time of this amendment (Jul 05). Each squadron stands very much on its own feet, ordering its own life within the framework of the Corps under its own officers and staff, helped by its own committee of local citizens.
2. There are 2 kinds of squadron, 'open' and 'school'. 121 (Nuneaton) Squadron is an 'Open' Squadron which means that membership is open to any eligible young person selected by the squadron commander. In 'school' squadrons membership is restricted to pupils and former pupils. There are many more 'open' than 'school' squadrons. Every squadron has a number in our case '121' and the name of the town or community from which it draws its members thus '121 (Nuneaton)'. Those numbered 1 to 50 have a letter (F) as well, which means that they were in the first 50 squadrons to be formed in 1938 to lay the foundations of the old Air Defence Cadet Corps. When the ADCC was disestablished and the Air Training Corps was formed in February 1941, all the ADCC squadrons were absorbed and these original units were permitted to display the letter 'F' in recognition of the fact that they were the Founder Squadrons. Over 30 of them are still operational today.
3. Squadrons (and detached flights) are of varying sizes and their establishment of staff is laid down in Instruction No 101 of the Air Cadet Publication 'ACP 20B – Administrative Instructions'. 'Establishment' in this sense means the number of adult staff that may be appointed to run the squadron or detached flight – this number may not normally be exceeded. Staff Cadets should learn the establishment of their squadron and know where to look it up for other different-sized squadrons – your squadron holds a copy of ACP 20B. Remember too that when there is a significant change in squadron strength which is held for 3 consecutive reporting periods (Jan – Mar, Apr – Jun, Jul – Sep, Oct – Dec) HQ Air Cadets will automatically adjust the establishment.
4. Cadet corporals, cadet sergeants, cadet flight sergeants and cadet warrant officers also play a part in the squadron structure and the establishment for these is laid down in 'Regulations for the ATC' AP 1919, paragraph 408.
5. While on the subject of establishments, note that cadet classifications – i.e. Second Class, First Class, Leading, Senior and Staff Cadets – are not restricted by establishment. The number of cadets of a particular classification in any squadron depends solely on how many cadets have passed the appropriate examination.
6. The welfare and recreational side of a squadron's activities, as distinct from training and parades, is the responsibility of the Squadron Civilian Committee, which also administers the squadron's funds. A squadron fortunate enough to have an active, harmonious and sympathetic committee is sure to be happy.

ATC squadrons are financed on the broad principle that the Ministry of Defence meets the cost of the official training programme, whilst other recommended activities and social facilities are provided from a 'non-public' fund, i.e. money which has not been provided by a Government department. Your squadron non-public fund is raised by the Civilian Committee. The Air Training Corps, therefore, has good reason to be grateful to members of squadron committees, people with business experience and also often of local eminence, who thus show in a practical way a genuine interest in youth and the ATC.

7. Squadron Commanders arrange the appointment of chaplains to their squadrons in consultation with the civilian committee. They provide the chaplain with the opportunity of meeting cadets and of taking part in the squadron training programme.

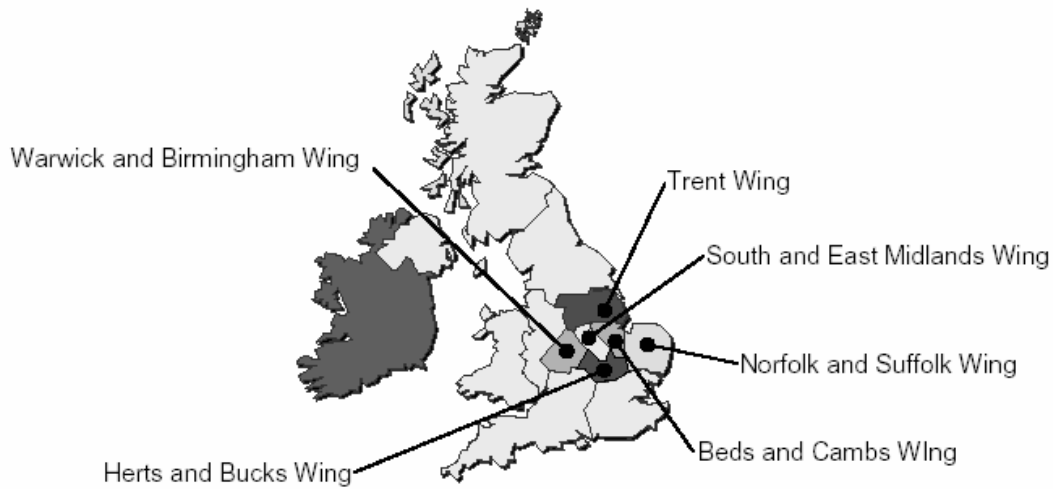
WINGS

8. The structure of the ATC Wing now begins to emerge. Groups of squadrons are formed into wings, of which there are 36 (as of Jun 04). 121 (Nuneaton) Squadron is part of the Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing. Each wing is commanded by an RAFVR(T) officer of the rank of Wing Commander. Each wing HQ has a small professional staff for administrative duties headed by a Wing Administration Officer, who is an officer commissioned into the Royal Air Force Reserve and established in the rank of Squadron Leader. The number of professional staff at a wing headquarters is detailed on a special form known as the 'Local Unit Establishment' (LUE), held at HQ Air Cadets. The Wing Commanding Officer also commands a number of RAFVR(T) officers known as Wing Staff Officers, who are responsible to him for general standards in the wing. The establishment of the RAFVR(T) officers on the wing staff is laid down in AP 1919, Chapter 2.
9. Just as a squadron has a Squadron Committee each wing has a voluntary civilian Wing Committee, headed by the Wing Chairman and including the Wing Commanding Officer and Wing Chaplain as ex-officio members. The functions of committees are covered more fully in the section entitled 'The duties of the Civilian Committee'.

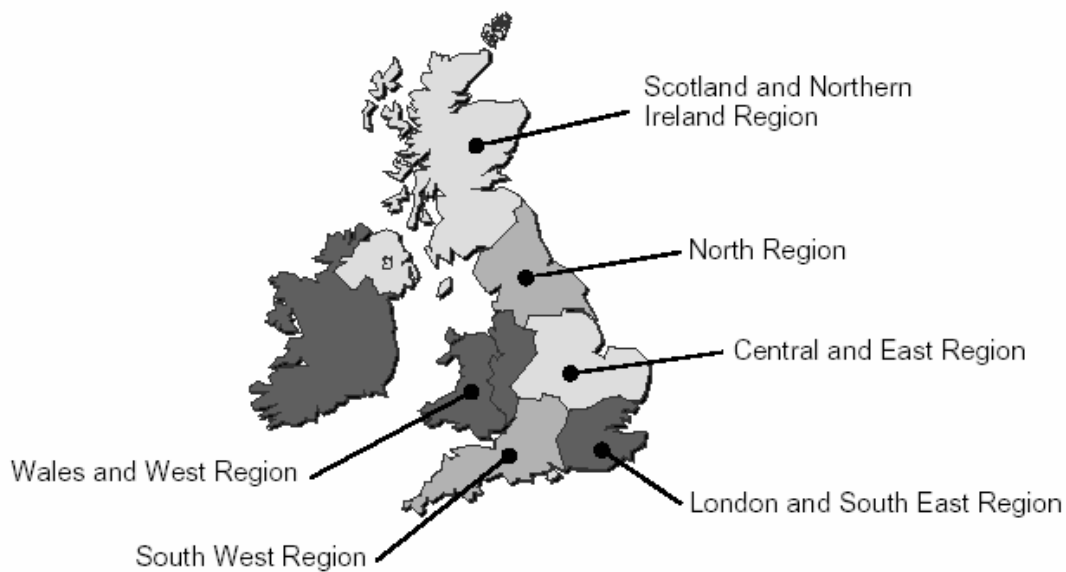
REGIONS

10. Groups of wings on a geographical are formed into regions. There are 6 regions, each with a headquarters composed of a small professional staff established on the HQ Air Cadets LUE and commanded by a Regional Commandant who is a retired RAF officer holding a commission in the Royal Air Force Reserve in the rank of Group Captain. Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing is part of the Central and East Region. Each region has a civilian Regional Chairman of a Regional Council, and a Regional Chaplain. Each region also has a small staff of RAFVR(T) officers who undertake various regional responsibilities, e.g. regional Training Officer and Corporate Communications Officer (CCO).

Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing is part of Central and East Region. The six Wings within our Region are:



The six regions are:



HEADQUARTERS AIR CADETS

11. The next formation above the ATC Regions is Headquarters Air Cadets (HQAC), composed of a staff of professionals headed by an Air Commodore of the RAF who is the Commandant Air Cadets. He is assisted by the Chief of Staff who is a retired RAF officer holding a commission in the RAF Reserve in the rank of Group Captain. HQAC is part of the RAF College Cranwell, which is commanded by the Air Officer Commanding and Commandant, a serving Air Vice-Marshal. The College is responsible to HQ RAF Personnel and Training Command (HQ PTC) for the command, discipline, training and administration of the Air Cadet organization. HQ PTC is in turn responsible to the Air Force Board of the Defence Council.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

12. The top of the structure is the Air Force Board of the Defence Council, which deals with matters of high policy concerning the Corps through the Air Member for Personnel who is an Air Chief Marshal and is a member of the Board by virtue of his position as Head of the Royal Air Force Personnel Department. The Air Force Board is advised on Air Training Corps matters by the Air Cadet Council. The President of the Air Cadet Council is the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Armed Forces (a high-level political appointment by the Government of the day), and the Vice-President is the Director-General of Training and Personnel (RAF) (an Air Vice-Marshal). Our own Commandant Air Cadets is a full voting member, as is the Assistant Under-Secretary of State (Personnel) (Air). The Members are the Chairman of each of the 6 Regional Committees. A representative of the ATC in Northern Ireland, and the Chairman of the Chaplain's Committee of the Council, who is the Corps Chaplain. The 6 Regional Commandants are in attendance but have no voting rights.
13. The Air Cadet Council has 2 subordinate committees; one is the Chaplain's Committee, which meets separately and forwards its recommendations to the Council through the Corps Chaplain; the other is the Welfare and Sports Committee, which meets separately under the Chairmanship of AOC Air Cadets for the administration of welfare and sport, and for maintaining and allocating the income of the General Purposes Fund.

AIR COMMODORE-IN-CHIEF

14. The Air Training Corps was established by Royal Warrant dated 5 February 1941; this means the King, who had himself been an RAF officer in 1918, had given his approval to the formation of the Corps and wished it to be known that the Corps was a national institution worthy of the support of all influential people up and down the country. King George VI was the first Air Commodore-in-Chief. The Royal Warrant has been amended from time to time, the most recent occasion being 1967 as a result of the report made by a special committee set up to review the Corps. The current wording of its main clauses is set out in ACTI No 1 in ACP 20A*. Marshal of the Royal Air Force, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, is the present Air Commodore-in-Chief. Cadets of today and tomorrow should be aware of the heritage that is theirs.

* ACTI means Air Cadet Training Instruction. The Instructions are issued by HQAC and are found in ACP 20A

CONCLUSION

15. The main structure is now complete. We have left out some of the important elements at this stage such as the Volunteer Gliding Schools (VGS), and Air Experience Flights (AEF) (which are mentioned in the next Chapter) so that you can see how the ATC is organized and controlled at all levels. You will now understand that at the ultimate head of our structure is the elected Government, which has the final word on policy and controls the purse strings for the supply of public money which keeps squadron training alive.

Staff Cadets should remember:-

- a) That the Corps structure is closely integrated into the RAF at the top but is operated entirely by volunteers at squadron level.
- b) That in a Government structure whenever a permanent job is to be done there must be an establishment before anyone can be nominated, appointed or promoted to do the job.
- c) Where to look to find your own squadron designation and establishment.
- d) That any significant change in the number of enrolled cadets which is held for 3 consecutive reporting periods will normally result in automatic re-grading, with consequent variation in establishment.
- e) The names of your own squadron officers and squadron committee, your Wing Commanding officer, your Regional Commandant and your Commandant Air Cadets.

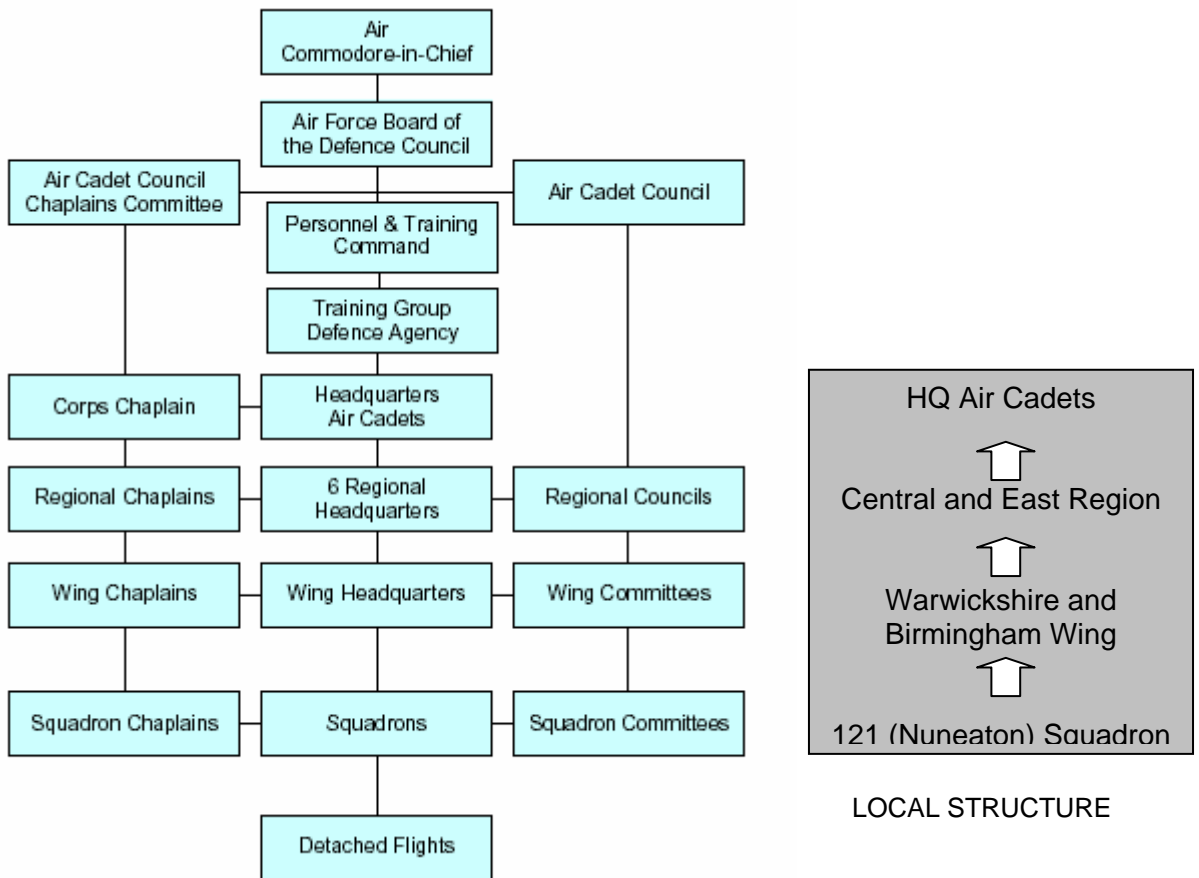


FIG 1 THE CORPS STRUCTURE