

## **DEFENCE WRITING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Defence Community has its own particular formats for organising writing. For the novice the particular uses of underlining and abbreviations may appear both confusing and unhelpful, however, once the writer is familiar with service conventions, it is much easier to plan and structure a piece of written work. Joint Service Publication (JSP) 101 is the main source of rules and conventions governing Defence Writing (DW) however this handout should provide members of the Air Training Corps with the minimum amount of material required to start using Defence Writing techniques effectively.

### **DEFENCE WRITING TECHNIQUES**

2. All forms of DW should conform to the following principles:
  - a. Relevance – do not include material not relevant to the subject.
  - b. Accuracy – always ensure that your facts are correct.
  - c. Clarity – keep it simple and unambiguous for the intended reader.
  - d. Logic – common-sense reasoning.
  - e. Brevity – do not use 10 words when 2 or 3 would suffice.
3. You will note from the examples provided at Annexes A to D that there are a number of fundamental differences between DW and civilian conventions:
  - a. Security / Protective Markings. The highest security marking normally used on an ATC Sqn. Is Restricted, which is placed top and bottom, front and rear of each page used and over-stamped in red. Should a document require a privacy marking it is given the appropriate security rating followed by the privacy i.e. Restricted-Staff, Restricted-Medical etc.
  - b. Date. All documents are to be dated. Dates are in full in a Formal and Demi-Official letter, i.e. 14 July 2005. In all other correspondence dates are abbreviated in the format DD MMM YY i.e. 14 Jul 05.
  - c. File References. All correspondence must carry the originating units file reference in the format UNIT / FILE / SUB-FILE i.e. 121/17/4
  - d. Headings. All headings are to be in capitals and underlined.
  - e. References. All other previous documents being referenced to within your correspondence must be listed at the beginning of your document. See example correspondence.
  - f. Times. Times are always expressed by the 24 hour clock, 1430 hrs instead of 2.30 pm.

- g. Paragraph Numbering. If your letter contains more than one paragraph they should be numbered simply with the number followed by a full-stop i.e. ' 2.' Single paragraph letters are not to be numbered.
- h. Abbreviations. [Annex E](#) provides a list of the more common abbreviations ATC personnel are likely to use. If you consider that all recipients will understand an abbreviation, it need not be explained. However, if not then the first time you use it (including the heading) explain in full, followed by the abbreviation in brackets i.e. Defence Writing (DW). Thereafter, the abbreviation should be used consistently.
- i. Typeface / Font. The preferred typeface is 'Times New Roman' with a font size of 12

## **CONCLUSION**

- 4. As previously stated this document is a brief introduction to DW, however, by using the above guidelines together with the examples within Annexes A to E you will be able to produce professional looking correspondence which conforms to JSP 101.

**ANNEX A TO  
DEFENCE WRITING**

**EXAMPLE OF A FORMAL LETTER**

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EXERCISE RESTRICTED - STAFF

121/5/4

121 (Nuneaton) Squadron  
Air Training Corps  
Drill Hall  
Nuneaton  
CV11 4JF

Officer Commanding  
Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing  
Royal Air Force Little Sonny  
Coventry  
CV13 8HB

024 7637 2222

14 July 2005

Sir

**PERMISSION TO TRANSFER TO THE NON-EFFECTIVE POOL**

1. I have the honour to request permission to transfer to the non-effective pool so that I can settle into my new home and the new job as Managing Director of Picturescape Windows. The period requested is 3 months commencing 1 August 2005.

2. I have enjoyed my time in 121 Squadron and wish to continue my link with the Air Training Corps but I need this period of time to settle personal arrangements. Your response to this request by 28 July 2005 would be much appreciated.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant

H O Hopeful

H O HOPEFUL  
Flight Lieutenant

EXERCISE RESTRICTED - STAFF

**ANNEX B TO  
DEFENCE WRITING**

**EXAMPLE OF A DEMI-OFFICIAL LETTER**

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From Flight Lieutenant P E Brooks BA RAF

ACTC/17651/Air

Air Cadet Training Centre  
Whittle Hall  
Royal Air Force College Cranwell  
SLEAFORD  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 8HB

Military Network: 95751 Ext 6240  
PSTN: (01400) 261201 Ext 6240  
FAX: 95751 Ext 6265

Flight Lieutenant T R Jones MA RAFVR(T)  
No 121 Sqn Squadron  
Air Training Corps  
Drill Hall  
ANYTOWN  
AN12 2PQ

14 July 1999

Dear Terry

**ACCOMMODATION - SQUADRON COMMANDER COURSE 18/96**

1. There has been a change in the accommodation allocated to Course 29/99. Students will now be accommodated in an annexe to Trenchard Hall Officers' Mess rather than College Hall Officers' Mess for the week of their course.
2. Students should meet me in the Polygon Room Trenchard Hall Officers' Mess at 1930 hours for a briefing on the Sunday evening. Should you have any difficulty with these arrangements, please give me a call.

Yours sincerely

Peter Brooks

**ANNEX C TO  
DEFENCE WRITING**

**EXAMPLE OF A ROUTINE LETTER**

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121/13/1

121 Sqn ATC  
TA Centre  
ANYTOWN

02476 8035 Ext 56

RAF Benlow  
(OC Supply Sqn)

11 Jan 99

**EXCHANGE OF CADET UNIFORMS**

References:

- A. 121/13/1 dated 2 Dec 88.
- B. BEN/366/3/Sup dated 4 Jan 89.

1. This Sqn requested in Reference A that arrangements be made to exchange various items of Cadets' uniforms. At Reference B, RAF Benlow confirmed that this could be effected at 1030 hrs on 6 Feb 99 and requested both the name of the Sqn officer who would attend, with details of the uniform items concerned.

2. Plt Off L M ENN RAFVR(T) will report to the Main Guardroom, RAF Benlow at 1020 hrs on 6 Feb 99 and will bring the following uniform items for exchange:

- a. 28 Jerseys blue/grey HD.
- b. 8 prs trousers.

***A D Min***

A D MIN  
Fg Off  
for OC

**ANNEX D TO  
DEFENCE WRITING**

**EXAMPLE OF A MEMORANDUM**

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MEMORANDUM

MOD Form 4A

To: *OC 241 Sqn*

From: Trg Off  
296S Sqn

Date: 24 Jul 02

Tel: 02476 92855

Your Ref:

Our Ref: 121/11/5

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Subject: SUMMER CAMP - RAF DEEP RUTT - 10-19 AUG 02

1. We have been finding difficulty in obtaining enough transport to Deep Rutt for Summer Camp. Since we will be sharing facilities at the Stn, I thought it might be possible to share some transport.
2. I know from Plt Off Toldus that you intend travelling on the same day as us and that your route will pass by 121 Sqn building. If you are agreeable, I would like AWO Heavie and 4 cadets to RV with your transport on 10 Aug 02
3. I would be grateful if you could let me have a decision by 31 Jul 02 so that I can make any necessary arrangements

Rank/ Name in

Appt: **FG OFF** Block Letters: **I M BEGGIN**

Signature: