

ATC Formation at Hemsworth Grammar School

Outline of training

The formation of a local squadron of the Air Training Corps was approved at a meeting convened by Mr. R. W. Hamilton, headmaster of Hemsworth Grammar School, held at the school last Thursday. Mr. Hamilton explained the scheme and said that already nearly 200 boys had applied for membership. Boys with elementary school and secondary school education were eligible. With regard to training it was proposed that at first there should be drill, physical training, mathematics, morse code and lectures of general interest, and later training would probably be divided into two main categories:

- Air Crew, comprising mathematics, navigation, and morse code, aircraft identification and administration;
- Technical, comprising courses for wireless operators and mechanics, flight mechanics, instrument repairers, electricians and motor transport mechanics.

Approved cadets would receive free uniform of a similar pattern to that worn by the Air Defence Cadets. No cadet would be liable for service in HM. Forces at an earlier age than would have been the case if he had not enrolled.

Officials and members of a local committee in connection with the scheme were appointed as follows:

President, Captain L. Hallam, J.P.;

Chairman, County Coun. A. Flavell, J.P., Chairman of the Grammar School Governors;

Vice-chairman, Rev. A. E. Duckett, Rector of Hemsworth;

Committee:

Coun. D. Harper, chairman of Hemsworth Urban Council;

Coun. H. Bamforth, chairman of Hemsworth Rural Council;

Mr. Alva Wright, Clerk of Hemsworth Urban Council;

Commanding officer, Mr. R. W. Hamilton;

Treasurer, Mr. C. Alcock, manager of Barclays Bank, Hemsworth;

Secretary, Mr. Gwilym Price, Clerk of Hemsworth Rural Council;

Hon. Medical Officers Doctors M. S. Ross and F. W. Sullivan.

HGS Staff

Pending receipt of definite information as to the authorised establishment of commissioned officers, the following members of the Grammar School Staff were recommended for appointment in order that training and lectures might commence immediately:

Messrs. R. W. Hamilton (Officer Commanding), P. Crossland, L. N. Collette, L. T. Hyde and W. J. Leonard.

February 22nd. 1941

Newspaper Article submitted by Geoff Govier. Thank you.

Aerodrome Visit

Forty members of the Hemsworth Squadron of the Air Training Corps visited the aerodrome to which they are affiliated on Sunday. The cadets were divided into three squads and escorted round the aerodrome in charge of R.A.F. personnel. The parachute inspecting and folding room was visited, where highly trained members of the W.A.A.F. inspect and re-fold the air crews' parachutes at regular intervals. The rubber dinghy room, where the portable rubber vessels carried by air crews in case of a forced landing in the sea, are inspected and folded for use, was also seen, followed by the highlight of the morning, a visit to Wellington, Hampden and Manchester bombers. The cadets took a keen interest in everything explained to them by the flight mechanics and spent considerable time in the aircraft before proceeding to the signal room, where a D.F.M. Sergeant Air-gunner was busy contacting an aeroplane on reconnaissance duties. Link trainer aircraft were next inspected, where pilots in the making spend their first hours "flying", and the tour rounded off with a visit to the armoury to see everything from an incendiary detonator to a 500 lb. armour-piercing bomb. The cadets had dinner in the canteen before returning.

This 1941 newspaper article and the images below come from Geoff Govier. Thank you.

Comments from two pupils

1. I suppose I got to know some of the staff outside normal school hours. In 1941 the ATC came into being and I was one of the founder members. Some of the male staff were appointed as officers. RWH was the C.O., Percy Crossland was the Adjutant, and Froggy Hyde taught Morse Code. Jimmy Nelson took us for P.E. in the gym, and we spent a lot of time playing "Pirates".

Stuart Walker, HGS 1935-40

2. I'm afraid I can't be of any help re the ATC - I don't recall much about it, though the names of many of the people in the article are familiar. Councillor Flavell (did he become an Alderman?) was the Chairman of the Governors and I regret to say that we used to be very naughty at the School Speech Day, waiting for him to drop his 'aitches' and being consumed with giggles. I think he was a very worthy man. The article was written in 1941 - I was in the 6th form from 1941 to 43 and we actually had very few boys in the 6th, so perhaps there was more activity lower down the school.

Jean Burton, HGS 1936-43

NO. 397 HEMSWORTH AND DISTRICT SQUADRON A.T.C.

The following Civilian Instructors are urgently needed if the work of the above Squadron is to continue successfully:—

Moorthorpe Headquarters:
 2 Instructors for Elementary Calculations every Monday night and alternate Thursdays.
 1 Instructor for English every Monday night.

Hemsworth Headquarters.
 Swimming Coach, who will be prepared to coach at the Frickley Baths each Wednesday night during the summer.

Intending Instructors please apply to F/Lt. Hamilton, R.A.F.V.R., Officer Commanding the Squadron, the Grammar School, Hemsworth.

FRANK P. WARD,
 Hon. Secretary.

District Council Offices,
 Cross Hill,
 Hemsworth.
 15th April, 1944. **E734**

AIR TRAINING CORPS.
 No. 397 (Hemsworth and District) Squadron.

First Annual Sports

will be held at the
 Hemsworth Grammar School Grounds, Hemsworth,
on Friday 25th July, 1941, at 7 p.m.

Music by the Hemsworth Colliery Band.

PRESENTATION OF PRIZES BY THE
Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF HAREWOOD
K.C., G.C.V.O., D.S.O., T.D.

Price of Admission 3d.
 Programmes 3d. each.

BAND PERFORMANCE
 at the Hemsworth Grammar School Grounds, Hemsworth,
on Sunday 27th July, 1941, at 7.30 p.m.

Music by the Frickley Colliery Band.

Price of Admission 3d. ... Programmes 3d. each.

Air Training Corps Membership Card 1941

AIR TRAINING CORPS

This is to certify that

Name *John Stuart Walker*

Address *House 1 of Cottages, Balasore*

is a Member of the *Hemsworth District Squadron*

enrolled under the AIR TRAINING CORPS

R.W. Hamilton (Name)
F/Lt. (Rank)
 Commanding

Date *30th April 1941*

(SEE OVER) No. *397*



Stuart in A.T.C. uniform. 1942.

"I was a founder member of the Air Training Corps at School when R.W. Hamilton was the Commanding Officer and Percy Crossland was the Adjutant. Some of the teaching Staff were officers or instructors. We met at the School, using the gym for P.E. and the playground for drill once or twice a week in the evenings, as most lads had a job of work to do during the day. To start we wore civilian clothes, but slowly we acquired uniforms and forage caps. Some lads with good physique were chosen to be N.C.O'S. We were taught Maths, Morse Code and Basic Wireless. I was given the job of teaching Maths because I was already proficient. I constructed a machine which delivered Morse into headphones at varying speeds. It was driven by a gramophone motor which dragged a piece of film between two spools. Slots were cut in the film to enable a small brass wheel to make electrical contact with a base plate. I got an article in the ATC magazine which was published monthly, because I invented this machine for sending audible Morse Code, driven by a wind-up motor.

In the summer of 1942 I went on an excursion with a group to RAF Finningley, South of Doncaster, for a week's camp. We were under canvas. We toured the various sections of the camp, and I well remember seeing the WAAFS who were packing the parachutes. We also had a short flight in an Avro Oxford training plane. I was in the ATC until I was called up on 26TH November 1942, and because of my interest in Wireless, I was drafted into Radio Direction Finding, which was the

forerunner of RADAR."