

INITIAL FLYING TRAINING (CONTINUED)

... most pupils get off solo between eight and ten hours but those who take twelve have no need to worry.

Precautionary landings are a fairly new arrival in the syllabus, and are used as the name suggests when weather or loss of position makes a landing advisable or necessary. Unlike forced landings, however, the pilot has engine(s) to help him and sufficient petrol to find a really suitable field in which to land. The practice is in how best to find and prove your field, and how to make a safe approach and landing with engine, at a minimum safe speed (to reduce landing run). This entails at least one "dummy run."

Instrument Flying

One of the biggest changes in early training during the last year or two is the concentration on instrument flying. The standard of blind flying has been raised considerably, thanks partly to the Link Trainer which is now to be found at least singly and often severally at all R.A.F. stations. A definite Link syllabus is carried out at the same time as ground and flying training. As aeroplanes improve and radio methods of aerodrome control advance, the use of instrument flying will, of course, extend even beyond its present stage. Already it is possible to fly in almost any weather, and but for the need to preserve a good name and avoid all undue risks, airlines could operate an unbroken schedule for the full twelve months of every year. In bad weather this would entail flying blind most of the time. The Link Trainer can be used for almost all blind flying practices, including Lorenz approaches (and landings). There would, however, seem to be only very limited use for a "Visual Link" as an aid to control of an aeroplane in the early stages of instruction.

Conditions of entry of pilots into the R.A.F. are similar to those for air crews generally. Pilots, observers, wireless operators and air gunners are all drawn from recruits who enlist in the first instance for training as "aircraft crew." They must pass a special medical examination, and must be adjudged as suitable by a selection board.



"Flight" photograph.

The age limits for enlistment are 18 to 28 for airman pilots and 18 to 32 for other members of the air crew. When he enlists a man may state his preference for the job of pilot, observer or other of the air crew trades. Those unsuitable for enlistment as members of air crews may be given an opportunity to remuster for ground duties.

All recruits are enlisted for the duration of the war.

Recruits selected as suitable for air crews are first mustered as Aircraftmen 2nd Class with pay at the rate of 2s. a day during training. Pilots are then remustered and reclassified as Leading Aircraftmen and paid at the rate of 5s. a day plus flying instructional pay at the rate of 2s. a day.

Air observers under training are also remustered as L.A./C. and paid 5s. a day plus flying instructional pay at the rate of 1s. 6d. during training. Other members of air crews remain A.C.2s during training with pay remaining at 2s. a day.

When their training is complete airmen are remustered and reclassified or promoted according to the percentage of marks they obtain on passing out of training.

An airman pilot becomes a sergeant with pay at the rate of 12s. 6d. a day. An observer may be either a sergeant or an acting sergeant. If the latter, he receives pay at the rate of 9s. a day.

A wireless operator may be classified on completing training as a L.A./C., an A.C.1 or an A.C.2 with pay at the rate of 5s., 4s. 3d. or 3s. 6d. a day respectively, plus air crew pay and air gunner pay of 1s. 6d. a day.

An air gunner is classified in the same way but receives pay of 4s., 3s. 6d. or 2s. a day, plus the air crew and air gunner pay of 1s. 6d. a day.

In all instances pay is for a seven-day week.

A certain number of airman pilots and observers are selected for commissions on the results they obtain in the examination at the conclusion of their training.

The wives of married airmen are paid a family allowance varying from 17s. to 23s. 6d. a week according to rank with additional allowances for children.

At the same time airmen receive free accommodation, food and clothing (or money allowances instead) and medical attendance.

... where flaps and straight glide might be used on, say, a Battle.



"Flight" photograph.