

Disbanded Squadrons & Detached Flights.

Gunners who flew and trained in Percival Proctors. The two Units provided about twenty cadets each for a very interesting and informative week.

A cadet from the Squadron - Graham Hauser - played in an ATC English Amateur Football XI against Ireland in October 1946.

In 1948 came the fourth change of name for the "Corps" when the School formed a Combined Cadet Force Unit. The JTC became the Army Section and the Squadron became the RAF Section - carrying on the work of the Air Training Corps. These together with the Naval Section resulted in a Contingent some two hundred and seventy strong. The CCF was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel A R W Hutchinson TD who had joined the officer-personnel of the School OTC in 1923.

Upon his appointment as Deputy Headmaster in 1957 Colonel Hutchinson, holder of the Territorial Decoration with three clasps, relinquished command of the Unit. At this time he had served first the OTC then the JTC and finally the CCF for a total of thirty four years during which he had only missed one Camp (that though being in hospital).

Lieutenant - Commander D J I West assumed command of the Contingent.

No 1048(Royal Leamington Spa) Squadron

This Squadron was founded in February 1941 by a committee with the Mayor of Leamington Spa as Chairman. Dr R Andra Fegan was appointed Secretary and Capt J A E Durham Treasurer with additional committee members:- Col R J Cash, Col Erskine-Murray and a representative of the local branch of the National Union of Teachers. Wg Cdr Lord Willoughby de Broke DFC the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire accepted the Presidency of the Squadron. Committee meetings were held in Room 18 in the Town Hall Leamington Spa.

The Unit was based at the Leamington Spa Boys College situated in Beauchamp Avenue. It was believed to be composed of three flights - 'A' and 'B' Flights from the Town and 'C' Flight from the College.

A Detached Flight was raised in Kenilworth but there is some doubt as to whether it may have been a D/F of No 1368(Warwick) Squadron. At any rate this D/F whatever its origin was apparently disbanded in 1945.

The first Commanding Officer of the Squadron was Flt Lt C Burgess RAFVR(T) who in civilian life was the managing director of Burgess and Colbourne a large department store in the town. Among his Staff were Flt Lt Foster RAFVR(T) who was responsible for navigation, a very impressive disciplinary officer in WO Waters and a bandmaster Cpl Welch.

The list of Commanding Officers known is as follows:-

- Flt Lt Burgess RAFVR(T)
- Sqn Ldr McIntyre RAFVR(T) - who was head of the Leamington Art School.
- Flt Lt Arthur Pratt RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt S Graham RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt A Faulkner RAFVR(T) - a schoolmaster and former RAF 'Y' Service Entrant who joined as Adjutant in 1949 and almost immediately took over as CO
- Flt Lt E Burden MBE RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt E James RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt M Harrison RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt D Cole RAFVR(T)
- Flt Lt R Gardner RAFVR(T) who later became Wing Chairman
- Fg Off Noble RAFVR(T) - a temporary appointment
- Fg Off I Frimstone RAFVR(T) - a temporary appointment
- Flt Lt D Brierley RAFVR(T)

The Squadron held its parades on Mondays Wednesdays and Friday evenings during the week. When Flt Lt Faulkner RAFVR(T) became the Commanding Officer in 1949 the Civilian Committee Chairman was

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Alderman O R Davidson J P. His officers included Lt Col the Rev D V Gibbon as Secretary, Mr P J Luke a deputy manager of Lloyds Bank as Treasurer together with Lt Col Masterson MC TD and Mr R Pullen a local stonemason as members.. The medical officer was Dr De Courcey. In 1952 Alderman O R Davidson JP resigned and was replaced by Lt Col G L Moss MC TD.

During 1949 Flt Lt Faulkner RAFVR(T) asked for instructional help from RAF Wellesbourne Mountford. The Station obliged with a pilot and a navigator who remained with the Unit for about twelve months.

Flt Lt Faulkner RAFVR(T) took a post at Campion Boys School and a number of pupils from the School joined the Squadron including a Cadet Hudson and a Cadet Wheeler. Both became Schoolboy National Sports Representatives.

In September 1950 the Unit was forced to move to new premises in Bury Road. To celebrate becoming owner-occupiers of their own accommodation a Grand Ball was held in the Town Hall. The guests were the Mayor Alderman W Walsgrove and the Mayoress, members of the Civilian Committee and their wives and officers and cadets of the Girls Training Corps.

Unfortunately the chosen new location was very close to a council estate and a playing field in one of the least salubrious districts of Leamington. Despite reservations on the part of the Staff the hut was erected within twenty feet of the boundary. The location was a virtually 'open' one and despite the erection of a seven foot fence the area was soon invaded by young locals who did a tremendous amount of damage. Arrangements were made for a second hut to be erected but the vandalism problem prevailed.

In October 1985 the Commanding Officer Flt Lt R Gardner RAFVR(T) opened a Detached Flight at the Heart of England School in Balsall Common. This started with fourteen very enthusiastic cadets with the approval of the Headmaster. Unfortunately Flt Lt R Gardner RAFVR(T) found the administration of the Unit somewhat difficult because he only had a very small Staff. He suggested that it might be better if the Flight was transferred to another squadron. It was eventually transferred to No 492(Solihull) Squadron who were nearer and had a much larger Staff. In addition because the Squadron was one that could recruit girls this would enable the Detached Flight to do likewise.

The Squadron was affiliated to RAF Wellesbourne Mountford for Air Experience Flying. They flew in Avro Ansons of the RAF School of Photography, who were co-residents of this OTU. Over the years cadets have flown in all sorts of aircraft - Airspeed Oxfords, Tiger Moths, Sunderland flying boats, Miles Masters and others.

Gliding regularly took place at RAF Honiley when many of the cadets qualified for their Gliding Proficiency badges.

The Unit excelled in sport and were 'runners-up' in the first County of Warwick Inter-Squadron Sports held on the playing fields of Warwick School. They won the Captain Black Swimming Trophy in the swimming events which followed.

The RAF Wellesbourne Mountford range was used for full-bore shooting and the range of the Lockheed Brake Company was also made available to the cadets for small-bore practices.

Transport donated by the Chairman's Company allowed almost unlimited access to the Wellesbourne range which resulted in cadets taking part in a competition at Bisley in which they obtained second place.

The Squadron had a band which was originally composed of silver bugles and drums and which at a much later stage joined with other youth organizations units of the Town to form a large Leamington Spa Youth Band. Summer Camps were held at RAF Stations at Bramcote, Sealand, Stranraer, Whig Bay, Pembroke Dock and Llandaf. From the time of its formation the Unit held annual dinners and these took place in the restaurant of Burgess & Colbourne Ltd.

In October 1985 while the cadets were away on a weekend exercise one of the huts was broken into and set alight. The wooden building burned quickly and was totally destroyed. The Commanding Officer Flt Lt Brierley RAFVR(T) said that they were able to salvage the Unit's records but most other equipment was ruined. Reluctantly it was decided that 'enough was enough'. The Unit was closed down and amalgamated with No 1368(Warwick) Squadron to form No 1368(Warwick & Royal Leamington Spa) Squadron.