

## **The RAF in Shinfield WW1**

The School of Military Aeronautics was a WW1 training School based at Wantage Hall, Reading Uni. It was formed in 1915 as an instructors college but expanded in 1916 to a full RFC training School. The technical skills were separated and moved to Coley Park airfield nearby. All training at the school was on the ground. The RFC commandeered buildings belonging to the University of Reading for the purpose of training flight instructors. The Schools headquarters were based in Yeomanry House whilst most lessons were taught at Wantage Hall (a Halls of residence belonging to the University). The School was for preliminary training for Cadets who were taught theoretical aspects of flight, including map reading, gunnery and mechanics. The technical trades were split off from the flight school which operated from a Jam factory adjoining the airfield at Coley.

## **Reserve Command WW11**

RAF Hendon, London; Wantage Hall, Reading University, Reading, Berkshire (from 4 Sep 1939)

was formed 1 Feb 1939. Absorbed into Flying Training Command 27 May 1940. Reformed 1 May 1946.

Renamed Home Command 1 Aug 1950. Post WW2 Groups shown under Home Command.

## **Commanding Officers**

1 Feb 1939	AM Sir Christopher Courtney
28 Aug 1939	ACM Sir John Steel (retd)
22 Apr 1940	AVM W L Welsh
1 May 1946:	A/Cdr E D H Davies (Temp)
20 May 1946	AM Sir Alan Lees
1 Oct 1949	AM Sir Robert Foster

## **Flying Training Command**

Shinfield Park, Reading, Berkshire

Formed by splitting Training Command 27 May 1940. Absorbed into Training Command, 1 Jun 1968

## **Air Officers Commanding-in-Chief**

27 May 1940      Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Pattinson KBE CB DSO MC DFC  
Born 8 October 1890 - Died 28 March 1955) was a Royal Air Force officer who became the first Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Flying Training Command.

Educated at Cambridge University, Pattinson was commissioned into the 5th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry in 1914 at the start of World War I. He subsequently transferred to the Royal Fusiliers and then to the Royal Flying Corps and became Officer Commanding No. 57 Squadron on the Western Front in 1916. In March 1918 he became Officer Commanding No. 99 Squadron and later that year he took command the 41st Wing.

Between the Wars he was Station Commander at RAF Andover and then, from 1930, Deputy Director of Organisation at the Air Ministry. He went on to be Air Officer Commanding the Armament Group in 1934 and Air Officer Commanding No. 23 (Training) Group in 1937. He served in World War II as Air Officer Commanding Flying Training Command and then as Head of the RAF Training Mission to the Chinese Air Force before retiring in 1945. In recognition of his contribution to the development of the Chinese Air Force, in 1943 General Chiang Kai-shek gave him a black and gold lacquerware vase which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

(see Wikipedi for Military service of the following)

7 Jul 1941	Air Marshal Sir William Welsh
17 Aug 1942	Air Marshal Sir Philip Babington
6 Oct 1945	Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham
15 Oct 1947	Air Chief Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane
1 Mar 1950	Air Marshal Sir Hugh Walmsley
1 Aug 1952	Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Pendred
20 Dec 1955	Air Marshal Sir Richard Atcherley
1 Mar 1959	Air Marshal Sir Hugh Constantine
24 Sep 1961	Air Marshal Sir Augustus Walker
26 Jun 1964	Air Marshal Sir Patrick Dunn
1 Oct 1966	Air Marshal Sir John Davis

## History

The site of Flying Training Command is on land where hastily erected wooden huts were placed on land between Goodrest (now Crossfields School and the Roundabout before the M4 bridge on the Shinfield Road. A house called 'The Grove' stood on land next to where this roundabout and was where the C in C's were originally billeted. This house was formally the home of a wealthy Clergyman named Revd. George Hulme. The house was demolished in the 1960's. Shinfield Lodge was also owned by the same family and was used for billeting other officers until 1951. New houses were then constructed at the bottom of the hill bordering Whitley Wood Road and Whitley Wood Lane. The

Lodge then became the Officers Mess. Footpaths led from the officer's quarters on Whitley Wood Lane and warrant officer's quarters on Whitley Wood Road up through woods that covered that side of the hill. Hidden in the woods was a rifle range. Tennis Courts, Hockey, Football and Cricket pitches were provided. Fishing was also available in Crossfields Lake that belonged to the school (now filled in and built over). A NAFFI and Sergeants Mess was also available. The Mess was used in the filming of 'Virgin Soldiers'. Some very old Oak Trees were part of Shinfield Park and these were planted by the Hulme Family. A public footpath ran through the site and connected the residents of Whitley with the Shinfield Road but this has now been closed off.

The origins of the Flying Training began at Reading University where Wantage Hall was used as headquarters for training of the Royal Flying Corps until 1917 when the RAF took over.

Flying Training Command was formed from the elements of Training Command which were responsible for flying training on 27 May 1940.

No. 21 Group was transferred to Flying Training Command on 27 May 1940, responsible for the RAF College and the Service Flight Training Schools from the Midlands northwards.

Nos 50, 51, and 54 Groups were flying training organisations transferred from Reserve Command to Flying Training Command when it was formed. Flying Training Command was eventually re-absorbed into the newly re-established Training Command on 1 June 1968.

No. 23 Group was reformed as No 23 (Training) Group in Inland Area on 12 Apr 1926 by re-numbering No. 3 Group RAF. It was transferred to RAF Training Command on 1 May 1936. It was then transferred again to Flying Training Command on 27 May 1940. It was reabsorbed into Training Command in 1968 and disbanded on 2 May 1975.

After Flying Training Command left, the Meteorological Office College relocated from Stanmore in Middlesex in October 1971.

Following the relocation of the Met. Office HQ from Bracknell in Berkshire to Exeter in Devon in 2004 the college relocated at the same time. The site has since been developed into residential accommodation. The Lodge, the centrepiece of Shinfield Park, is a Georgian listed building that has now been redeveloped.