

See Distribution

Date: 13 Jan 11 (Edition 6)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS AND WELCOME GUIDE FOR ALL GLIDING SCHOLARSHIP TRAINEES WITH 644VGS

References:

- A. AP1919, Chapter 5.
- B. Air Cadet Training Instruction, Instruction No 32, Gliding Training.

1. **WELCOME TO 644 VOLUNTEER GLIDING SQUADRON.** For the next few week(s) you will be a trainee on the Gliding Scholarship (GS) course, undergoing flying training provided by the Royal Air Force. The course by nature is demanding but also rewarding. The rules and standard operating procedures are provided for your own safety and that of everyone involved with the flying operation. On behalf of the Officer Commanding (OC), Squadron Leader Nadin and everyone at 644 Volunteer Gliding Squadron (VGS) we hope you enjoy your course and your time with us. Below is some information which you may find useful. For those of you on a continuous course, the reporting in details, times and locations issued by Headquarters Air Cadets (HQAC) supersede what is written below.

2. **CONTACT DETAILS DURING THE COURSE.** Please note that the VGS mobile and Sqn HQ is only manned at weekends from 0800hrs. Should you need to contact the VGS as a matter of urgency please call one of the numbers below in the order specified.

a. **Address**

644 Volunteer Gliding Squadron
Royal Air Force Syerston,
Newark,
Nottinghamshire,
NG23 5NG

b. **Contact Telephone Numbers**

644 VGS Mobile	07920 781813
644 VGS HQ	01400 264533
Plt Off Heeral Poria (Adjutant)	See WGLO
Sqn Ldr Richard Nadin (OC)	See WGLO

3. **LOCATION AND ROUTING.** 644 VGS is located at RAF Syerston, which is located just off the A46 between Syerston and Flintham, approximately 5 miles south of Newark. The airfield is not signposted and the entrance is hard to see. Please call the Sqn HQ when you are at the gate and a staff member will let you in.



4. **REPORTING IN FOR CONTINUOUS COURSE TRAINEES.** You are to report to the main guard room at RAF Cranwell between 1800hrs and 1900hrs on the Friday night before the course is due to start. There will usually be a briefing for all cadets at 2000hrs. At the guard room explain that you are there for a gliding course with 644VGS and they will direct you to your accommodation. Should you encounter any issues than contact one of the numbers above if the situation can't be resolved. Please note that this is subject to change; should this be the case you will be informed well in advance.
5. The nearest railhead is Grantham which is on the Nottingham to Boston Line. From Grantham cadets can take a bus to RAF Cranwell. Service Transport is provided. On arrival you are to telephone RAF Cranwell Mechanical Transport (MT) 01400 267349 and request details of transport to Cranwell. Normally the last bus leaves at 1510hrs.
6. **MESSING FOR CONTINUOUS COURSES.** Food will be provided from service sources for the duration of your course; please make sure that the VGS is aware of any special dietary requirements as soon as possible before the course starts. Costs for the week's course will be approximately £25 which will need to be paid in cash on arrival.
7. **REPORTING IN FOR WEEKEND COURSE TRAINEES.** You will be expected to arrive at 0830hrs. On arrival report to the operations room at 644 VGS and make the member of staff that you speak to aware that you are a new Gliding Scholarship trainee. You should present your F3822 /Record of Service book and this should be left on the desk in the operations room.
8. **SECURITY.** All MOD establishments operate a high level of security. It is important that candidates are correctly identified i.e. by their Record of Service Book. All baggage must be labelled with your name and 644VGS.
9. **CASH AND VALUABLES.** There are no facilities at Syerston for safe keeping therefore valuables will be near to hand. Do not leave money or valuables lying around.
10. **WHAT TO DO ON THE FIRST DAY.** You should aim to arrive at 644 VGS HQ at 0830 on the day your course commences. The cadets holding room and caravan will be your home when you are here at 644 VGS, please take care of these areas and help to maintain their clean state. Make time to read the posters on the walls and our Health & Safety policy (copies of this booklet can be found on the front desk). It is in your best interests to acquaint yourself with our safety procedures. Should the fire alarm sound (a continuous ringing bell), proceed to the Fire Control Point specified on all "Fire Action" posters.
11. **SUBSEQUENT DAYS.** You are to arrive at 0830 each day and hand your 3822/Record of Service book to the Duty Instructor (DI), failure to do so may mean that you miss out on flying! The working day for staff starts at around 0730 usually, so if you arrive early not only does it make a good impression but you will be able to assist with some of the activities during the busiest time of day.
12. The working day often finishes an hour past last landing time, this can sometimes be as late as 1900. A cleaning period follows last landing so be available to help out the Flight Staff Cadets (FSCs) and squadron staff. You are welcome to use the telephone to arrange being picked up by your parents/guardians. The Duty Instructor will be able to advise you of a sensible time to expect to finish on the day.
13. **BEHAVIOUR.** 644 VGS is an active flying unit within the Royal Air Force and a detachment of RAF College Cranwell, and therefore, normal military regulations and etiquette apply. Staff should be paid the normal compliments and courtesies. Your behaviour not only reflects upon you as an individual but additionally your ATC Squadron/CCF Unit and the Air Cadets as an organisation. You are to read and sign the GS cadet rules, of which a copy will be available from the FSC's.

14. **CLOTHING.** You are to report in No 2 Working Dress complete with beret which must be worn on arrival and departure, however, berets should not be worn when airside. You will be issued with a flying coverall on the day for when you fly. If you wish to wear trainers or any clothing underneath your flying coverall for your own convenience, please feel free to do so but bring these items with you.
15. **FOOTWEAR.** There is no restriction on the type of footwear which may be worn while operating on the airfield. However, the following footwear, which can readily pick up and transfer soil, are not to be worn in the cockpit of Air Cadets gliders:
- a. Service boots with heavy Direct Molded Soles (DMS)
 - b. Wellington boots
 - c. Boots or shoes with deep tread soles
16. Shoes or lightweight boots with a smooth sole are preferred for wear in the cockpit but shoes or lightweight boots with a shallow tread are acceptable.
17. **FITNESS TO FLY.** If at any time if you are unwell or do not feel fit to fly, please inform your instructor. If you have had or have got a head cold your instructor needs to know. A signed RAF Form 6424 (Air Cadet Medical Certificate of Fitness for Glider Pilot Training) is required by all cadets attending for training.
18. **PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS.** Cadets should be aware that there are certain limitations in respect of weight and sitting height for the Vigilant aircraft as below.
- a. Maximum sitting height measured from seat to top of head - 99.23 cm. A 3cm head clearance should be maintained.
 - b. Maximum weight dressed for gliding excluding parachute - 103 Kg. (A Mk 71/72 parachute weighs 7 Kg).
 - c. Minimum weight - 45 Kg.
 - d. Minimum Age - 16 Years
19. **LOOSE ARTICLES.** Before you go flying please check your pockets for loose articles including pens, coins e.t.c. You must never take loose articles flying with you to the aircraft as they could become free and end up in the worst case jamming the aircraft controls. Items such as earrings, necklaces and hair grips are included.
20. **ABSENCE FROM TRAINING.** The gliding course is to take precedence over all other Sqn activities¹. Should you be unable to attend for any reason then you must inform the VGS Adjutant. If you are ill on the morning then make sure the VGS are contacted and informed of your absence via the VGS mobile phone number or direct line to the squadron HQ. Any unauthorised absences will be notified to your Wing HQ and the OC of your squadron and you will have to explain to them why you did not attend.

¹ ACTI 32 Para 10.

21. **THE GROB 109B 'VIGILANT' MOTOR GLIDER.** 644 VGS is equipped with the Grob 109B 'Vigilant' Motor Glider. The Vigilant is a self-launched motor glider with an airframe made out of Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP).

a.	Wing Span	17.4m
b.	Wing Area	19 Sq m
c.	Length	8.1 m
d.	Height	1.7m
e.	Max Flying Weight	908kg
f.	Engine	Grob 2500 developing 95hp
g.	Climbing Speed	55 knots
h.	Normal Flight Speed	60 knots
i.	Approach Speed	
	(1)	65 knots (Headwind < 15 knots).
	(2)	70 knots (Headwind > 15 knots).

22. **THE GLIDING SCHOLARSHIP COURSE.** At 644 VGS we run both the Gliding Scholarship and Advanced Glider Training (AGT) courses. Usually the AGT course is reserved for FSCs and cadets on a continuous G.S course who demonstrate a high flying ability. Both of these courses involve an element of ground school training in order to give you the theory as well as the practice (time spent in the air).

23. As with any flying training, success can be achieved by demonstrating the below.

- a. **Common sense**
 - (1) Both on the ground and in the air.
 - (2) Listening to your instructor and those more experienced around you.
- b. **Consistency**
 - (1) In terms of flying and handling the aircraft to a high standard (particularly in the later stages of your training).
- c. **Continued progression;**
 - (1) By learning from the last sortie and retaining what you have been taught.

24. The flying training that you will be provided with will be to a high standard and takes place in several ways:

- a. Ground lectures provide the basic theory behind the airborne practical of the exercises that you will be flying. Often these lectures are given to a group of trainees together. You are encouraged to ask any questions you may have. If at any point you are unsure of something please ask.
- b. Pre-flight briefs are done just before each flight. They clarify the aims of the sortie, point out any special airmanship considerations and give you opportunity to clarify any issues that you may have preceding the flight.
- c. Post flight debriefs are done at the end of each sortie. You will discuss with your instructor how you performed and what you will be doing next.
- d. Ground exams that cover all aspects of the course will be taken at the end. The minimum pass mark is 75%. The test is in a multiple choice format.

- e. A copy of ACP124; The Vigilant Trainee Guide is available to access and download on the 644 VGS website.

25. **GLIDING SCHOLARSHIP TRAINEE GUIDANCE.** The G.S course consists of up to eight hours of formal instruction flight time. Your flight time allocation may be increased to ten hours if you show the aptitude and ability to be able to go solo. Once you have completed the G.S syllabus you will be awarded with Blue G.S wings (the primary aim of the G.S). This is a good achievement overall and you should be proud as to having completed an intense flying course in a relatively short space of time.

26. Those who achieve the required standard may finish the course after having gone solo in the Vigilant and will subsequently be awarded Silver G.S wings. This again is a good achievement and you should feel proud that at such a young age you will have flown an aeroplane completely by yourself.

27. Many trainees may feel unwell at times during parts of their training; this is not uncommon and is nothing to be ashamed of. If you do feel unwell at any point, tell your instructor. Do not continue in the hope that the feeling will disappear, usually you begin to feel worse and subsequently your flying deteriorates. There are however a number of things that you can do to prevent yourself from feeling unwell whilst flying.

- a. Eat something before flying. Flying on an empty stomach can often make you feel sick.
- b. Eat sensibly. Chocolate bars and cans of coke are not advisable before flight.
- c. Keep looking out of the cockpit. Trainees who spend too long with their 'heads in' can often feel unwell and get disorientated.

28. It is worth remembering that whilst the G.S course can provide you with the opportunity to fly the Vigilant solo, it is not a competition amongst you and your fellow trainees. Treating it as such will detract from the real reason why you are undertaking the course, to learn how to operate a light aircraft in a professional environment.

29. **INCLEMENT WEATHER.** Should you not be able to fly due to bad weather, you should use your time wisely. Spending time reading your trainee guide is invaluable and gives you an indication as to the next flights content and what you should be aware of before you fly. Remember, your instructor will ask you questions during the sortie!

30. **SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS.** Any airfield is a potentially dangerous place. You must keep your wits about you and behave sensibly at all times. In particular:

- a. Always treat aircraft propellers as live. Keep clear of them by at least a metre.
- b. Never approach the aircraft from directly in front. Approach from the side and get into the cockpit from the left hand side.
- c. Never leave the cockpit doors open, even in the lightest of winds, as they can slam shut causing the glass to break. This can be very expensive and will put the aircraft unserviceable for several months.
- d. When walking across the dispersal keep out of the way of taxiing aircraft.
- e. Always listen to instructions from squadron staff, including the Flight Staff Cadets regardless of rank. They know the safety issues affecting both the aircraft and you!

31. **DEPARTURE PROCEDURE FOR CONTINUOUS COURSE TRAINEES.** The last day of the course is normally Sunday and departure is normally by 1700 hours unless otherwise mentioned by HQAC. Pickup will usually be from RAF Syerston; however for those travelling by train, transport to Grantham rail station can be provided. You are to inform staff of your travel arrangements at the earliest possible opportunity available.

32. **DEPARTURE PROCEDURE FOR WEEKEND COURSE TRAINEES.** Departure is normally around 1700; you will need to be picked up/depart Syerston after the end of day shutdown. Please be aware that times can vary as per Para 12.

33. **AWARD OF WINGS AND CERTIFICATE.** Ensure your Record of Service Book (F3822) is up to date with gliding entries. Gliding wings & certificates will be awarded on the successful completion of the course.

34. **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS.** Cadets are to ensure that Enclosure A is handed to parents and/or guardians.

35. **CONCLUSION.** Providing you put into practice the advice within this booklet and work hard, you should complete the course. Ultimately the course should be fun. You should approach your time on the G.S course with common sense and cooperation and be ready to help out with tasks surrounding flying activities. The Officer Commanding 644 VGS, Sqn Ldr Richard Nadin and his staff hope that you enjoy the G.S course and hope that the experience and potential achievement benefit you in future life.



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**R T NADIN
SQN LDR
OC 644 VGS**

Annexes:

- A. Map Detailing Location of 644 Volunteer Gliding Squadron at Royal Air Force Syerston
- B. Map Detailing Location Main Guard Room at Royal Air Force Cranwell

Enclosure:

- A. Information for Parents / Guardians

Distribution:

HQAC - AO Flying (for onward cascade as appropriate)*
South & East Midlands Wing - WGLO (for onward cascade as appropriate)*
Trent Wing - WGLO (for onward cascade as appropriate)*

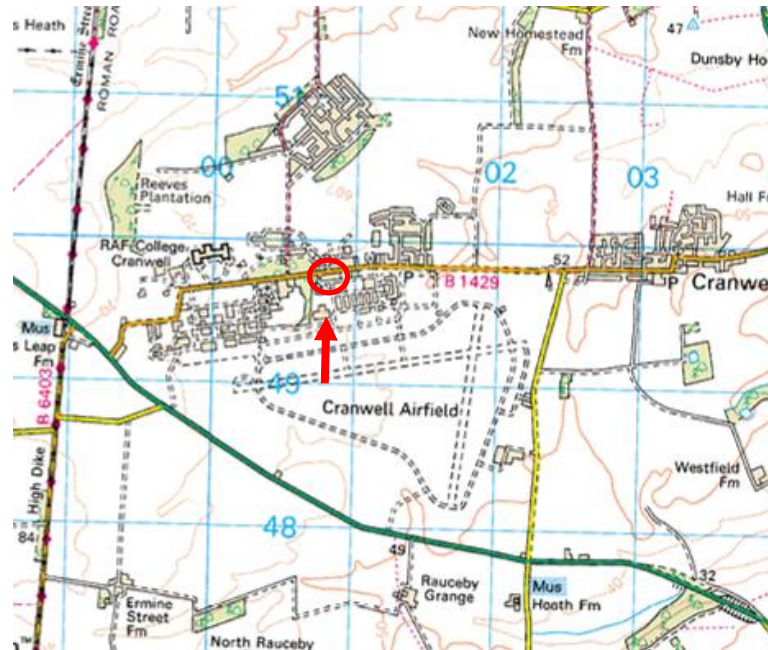
Copy to:

South & East Midlands Wing - WgAdO*
Trent Wing - WgAdO*

Map Detailing Location of 644 Volunteer Gliding Squadron at Royal Air Force Syerston



Map Detailing Location Main Guard Room at Royal Air Force Cranwell



Your reference:

Our reference: 644/300/11/Air

Date: 13 January 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child/ward has been selected to attend a Gliding Scholarship (GS) course at RAF Syerston with 644 Vigilant Gliding Squadron (VGS). The aim of the course is to teach your child to fly the Vigilant, should your child show the aptitude and ability at the end of the syllabus, there may be the chance to fly the Vigilant solo. The Vigilant has a mass of 900 Kg and cruises at around 75 miles per hour. The number one priority for my staff is that your child will learn to fly the aircraft, under supervision, in a safe manner.

Successful completion of the syllabus requires the cadet to read the training materials supplied. However, my staff also need your help. I need your child to be at 644 VGS, RAF Syerston (NG23 5NG for SATNAVs) by 0830. Your child will usually be with us until 1700; however this time may vary depending on when the flying day finishes. Please ensure they have something to eat, a jacket and other warm clothing sun screen and their glasses /contacts if required. We should be able to supply the rest.

To complete the course in a timely manner, continuity of training is essential; experience shows at least 6 complete days will be required. However, this could stretch to 9 days or more as rain, low clouds, strong winds and other inclement weather conditions all conspire to prevent training. To fly the cadets solo, in a safe manner we will need low winds, no rain and good light.

Nobody likes their time to be wasted and as such, should flying be cancelled due to meteorological conditions or other restrictions and this is known by the VGS in advance, all efforts will be made to post a notice on the front page of the 644 VGS website accessible at www.644vgs.org.

I recognise that getting your child to the site requires a concerted effort from you – thank you. I also recognise that your child may be studying for examinations. There is time to conduct revision whilst they are at the airfield so they are welcome to bring study material.

For more information about the course and what it entails your child will have been issued with a Joining Instructions which should contain all the required information. If you have any questions or queries then please contact us.

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R T NADIN
Squadron Leader
Officer Commanding