

PART I

Terms of Service of Officers

Introductory Notes

1. Part I of this air publication contains the regulations governing the terms of entry and service of officers. The regulations apply equally to women unless it is stated to the contrary.

Precedence

2. In chapters where terms of service are set out under individual branches, the order of the branches is set out in accordance with the precedence laid down in Queen's Regulations (RAF), viz:

General Duties
General Duties (Ground)
Engineer
Supply
Administrative
Security
Medical
Dental
Chaplains
Legal
Directors of Music

Terms of service relating to Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service follow those relating to Directors of Music. Where the terms of service of two particular branches are sufficiently similar to justify grouping them under one heading, they are listed under the heading of the branch which comes higher in the order of precedence.

Definitions

3. The terms used in this air publication are defined in Queen's Regulations (RAF) unless otherwise specified. In addition, certain terms are used as defined below:
 - a. *General Duties Branch.* For the purpose of this publication terms of service listed as referring to the General Duties Branch without further qualification, apply only to those officers within that branch who are appointable to flying duties. Terms which apply to officers serving in the General Duties (Ground) Branch are detailed under the heading 'General Duties (Ground) Branch'.

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- b. *University Graduate.* Unless otherwise specified the term 'university graduate' as used in this publication includes graduates of colleges of advanced technology but not graduate members of professional bodies and institutions.

Women Officers – Use of Suffixes

4. Women appointed to commissions in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service use the suffix PMRAFNS.
5. This air publication is sponsored by CS(Sec)1B.

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

CHAPTER 1

General Terms of Service

Appointment to Commission

Types of Commission

0101. Commissions may be granted in the regular air force as follows:

- a. Permanent commissions (PCs)
- b. Short service commissions (SSCs)
- c. Temporary commissions
- d. Honorary commissions.
- e. Short Term Regular Commissions (STRCs)

Commissions are granted for service in one of the branches listed in Introductory Note 2. The types of commission available in each branch and the conditions of entry are set out in this chapter.

Appointments to Temporary and Honorary Commissions

0102. Temporary and honorary commissions are given in such ranks and under such conditions as the Defence Council may determine.

Change of Commission

0103. The Defence Council may, with his consent and under such conditions as they may prescribe, appoint an officer to a different form of commission.

Conditions of Entry for Candidates with Family Responsibilities

0104. Officers are required to give a written assurance on entry or re-entry to the Service that any family responsibilities will not prevent them from meeting the full requirements and responsibilities of commissioned service.

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Terms of Service

0105. The general regulations governing terms of service are set out in the following paragraphs and their application to each branch is detailed in Chapter 3.

The 1970 Officer Career Structure

0106. During 1970 changes were made in the officer structure of the Royal Air Force. Instead of 2 lists in each branch of the Service, the General List and the Supplementary List, the former comprising full career officers and the latter those with a limited career, there is now only one list in each branch.

Permanent Commissions

0107. Service to 38/16 point. Officers appointed to permanent commissions (except Branch Officers and Officers in certain professional branches) will serve initially to their 38/16 point.

The 38/16 point is:

- a. The date on which an officer reaches the age of 38, or
- b. The day after the date on which he completes 16 years reckonable service from the age of 21 to qualify for immediate retired pay, or
- c. The day after the date on which he completes:
 - (1) Eight years service on a permanent commission if appointed to a permanent commission before 2 February 1989, or
 - (2) Eight consecutive years commissioned service from the date of appointment/re-appointment/re-instatement to, or re-employment on a commission, on or after 2 February 1989, whichever is the latest.

Service to Age 55 (Officers Promoted by Selection)

0108.

- a. *Officers promoted to Squadron Leader by their 38/16 point.* Those officers who are promoted to the rank of Squadron Leader by their 38/16 point will have the option of serving to age 55 or retiring at the 38/16 point.
- b. Officers in the General Duties Branch who are not promoted to Squadron Leader by their 38/16 point may:
 - (1) Be offered service to age 55 as specialist aircrew from the 38/16 point. As Flight Lieutenants their Active List emoluments will be broadly comparable with those of full career Squadron Leader (GD).

- (2) Be offered service to age 55 with transfer in the rank of Flight Lieutenant at the 38/16 point to the General Duties (Ground) Branch or to a ground branch. Officers accepting such an offer would cease to be eligible for flying pay with effect from the date of transfer.
- c. *Officers in the ground branches who are not promoted to Squadron Leader by their 38/16 point.* A limited number of officers in the ground branches who are not promoted to the rank of Squadron Leader by the 38/16 point may be offered further service to age 55.

Definitions of Terms (for definition of 38/16 point see paragraph 0107)

0109.

- a. *Normal retirement date (NRD).* The date upon which an officer is due to retire having reached the age appropriate to his rank for compulsory retirement laid down in Chapter 5. (Applicable to an officer who has been promoted to Squadron Leader by his 38/16 point or who has accepted an offer of further service to NRD.)
- b. *Initial retirement date (IRD).* The date upon which an officer is due to retire having reached his 38/16 point or his retirement date if he is serving on DEC A terms. (Applicable to an officer who has not been promoted to Squadron Leader by his 38/16 point and who has not accepted an offer of service to NRD.)
- c. *Optional retirement date (ORD).* The date upon which an officer may elect to retire, having reached his 38/16 point. (Applicable to an officer who has been promoted to Squadron Leader by his 38/16 point or has been appointed initially to a PC to age 55 or later.)
- d. *Optional exit point (OEP).* The date upon which an officer may elect to transfer to the Reserve. (Applicable to a graduate or professionally qualified entrant in accordance with paragraph 0116 and to an officer of the GD Branch appointed to a 12 year SSC in accordance with paragraph **0126** Note 3A.)

Optional Retirement Date

- 0110.** Officers who have an optional retirement date (ORD) at the 38/16 point are to state as soon as possible after coming within 3 years of the ORD whether they intend to exercise their option. If an officer has not previously been asked to state his intention, he is to do so not less than one year before his ORD, unless exceptional permission to delay the decision has been changed. An officer without exceptional permission who fails to state his intention by one year before his ORD will forfeit his option. Officers are to notify the Ministry of Defence direct in the form shown at Annex A to this chapter. All notifications will be acknowledged.
- 0111.** To help such officers to decide whether or not to exercise their option the Air Secretary will give the best possible assessment of career prospects between 3 years and one year before their ORD. This assessment cannot be taken as a

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guarantee of an officer's progress; this must depend, amongst other things, on the quality of his subsequent service.

- 0112.** An officer who has elected not to exercise the right of optional retirement, or who has forfeited that option, and who subsequently wishes to retire at the optional date, if permitted to do so, will normally be required to retire under the conditions for voluntary retirement (*see* Chapter 5).
- 0113.** An officer who has elected to retire will normally not be allowed to rescind his decision.
- 0114.** Provided that he is otherwise eligible an officer will be considered for promotion by selection irrespective of his statement of intention about optional retirement. However, he will not be promoted during the 3 year period preceding the ORD unless he has either:
- a. Elected not to exercise his right of optional retirement; or
 - b. at the invitation of the Ministry of Defence
 - (1) Cancelled his election to retire at the ORD; or
 - (2) stated that, if he is promoted during that period, he is willing to have his ORD deferred to 3 years from the date of substantive promotion.

Optional Exit Points

- 0115.** Officers awarded short service commissions in the General Duties Branch have an OEP at the 8 year point. For officers commissioned after 1 April 1987 this OEP will be deferred to provide 6 years' productive service following successful completion of an operational conversion course for the first time. If they do not wish to continue in the Service beyond this point they must apply on the form shown at annex A to this chapter not less than 12 months before the due exit date. Failure to give the required notice will normally entail a loss of option. All notifications will be acknowledged.

Twelve Year Option Point

- 0116.** The following types of entrant appointed to a permanent commission to the 38/16 point on entry to the Service on or after 1 April 1970 and who are not offered promotion to the rank of Squadron Leader within 12 years' whole time service (excluding service as a university cadet) will after the completion of 10 years have the option to leave the Service at the 12 year point:
- a. Graduate
 - b. University cadet

- c. Professionally qualified (graduate equivalent)

Note:

The 12 year point for university cadets is the date they complete 12 years' full-time service, from their effective date of promotion to Pilot Officer.

Officers intending to exercise this option are to do so, in the form shown at Annex A to this Chapter, not less than one year before the due date.

- 0117.** An officer leaving the Service at the 12 year option point will be transferred to the RAF Retired List.

Officers Appointed Before 1 April 1970 (General Duties Branch) and 1 September 1970 (all ground branches)

- 0118.** Those officers who were serving on permanent commissions on the former General List and officer cadets who were serving on terms formerly leading to such commissions, before 1 April 1970, in the General Duties Branch and before 1 September 1970, in all ground branches, retained their existing retirement dates and their options to retire at the 38/16 point. Certain officers awarded permanent commissions prior to 1 April 1960, also retained their option to retire at the 38/16 point. Officers of the General Duties Branch who have not been promoted to Squadron Leader by their 38/16 point will be designated specialist aircrew at that point provided that they have not elected to retire.

Short Service Commissions

- 0119.** Officers appointed to short service commissions serve for periods varying from 3 to 12 years according to branch and normally for a further period of 4 years on the RAF Reserve of Officers. Appointments will be on pension-earning terms except in the case of officers of PMRAFNS who may enter either on pensionable or gratuity-earning terms as they prefer. Gratuity earning service may not, in any circumstances, exceed 8 years. Officers appointed before 1 April 1989 (1 May 1989 for medical and dental cadets) and the majority of PMRAFNS officers irrespective of their appointment date, will have entered on gratuity earning terms, but have all been given the opportunity to transfer to pension-earning terms. Those who elected to remain for the time being, on gratuity-earning terms may exercise the option to transfer to pension-earning terms at any time up to 31 March 1992 subject to the following conditions:
- a. The commission is not due to terminate within 6 months of the date of application.
 - b. The individual is not in medical category A4 G4 Z4/5 or under notice of invaliding;
 - c. Notice has not been given of intended premature termination of service.

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Transfer from Short Service Commissions to Permanent Commissions

- 0120.** Officers serving on SSC terms of service are eligible for appointment to a permanent commission. On appointment, such officers must be able to complete at least 16 years' reckonable service before age 55 to qualify for immediate retired pay; at least 8 years of such service must be served on a commission.
- 0121.** Those serving on gratuity earning terms will, on appointment/transfer to a permanent or pensionable commission, forego any right to a gratuity in respect of their service on a non permanent/pensionable commission, but that service will instead count towards retired pay and terminal grant under the regulations applicable to officers holding permanent commissions.
- 0122.** Where an officer has retained membership of a former occupational pension scheme (e.g., the Teachers or NHS Superannuation Scheme, or has taken out a personal pension arrangement), it will be necessary, in order for past service to count towards terminal benefits, for him to arrange for a transfer value representing the accrued benefits in that scheme or arrangement to be paid into the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.
- 0123.** The effective date of appointment to a permanent commission will be the date on which medical fitness is confirmed. On appointment to permanent commissions, officers will normally have their rank and seniority re-assessed as though all their service had been on a permanent commission.

Branch Officers

- 0124.** Branch Officer commissions provide airmen and airwomen with a career outlet to commissioned service in those branches in which experience gained as an airman is of value. They serve on permanent commissions until age 55 and receive pay at special rates in the ranks of Flying Officer and Flight Lieutenant.

Detailed Terms of Service

Commissions in Individual Branches

- 0125.** Each of the following paragraphs deals with a branch or related group of branches. The tables show the type(s) of commission(s) available in each branch, or group of branches, and periods of service. This information is supported with explanatory notes.

Note:

The following abbreviations have been used in the tables and notes in paragraphs **0126-0133:**