



**Headquarters Director Army Aviation
Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hants,
SO20 8DY**

Telephone:
Fax:

Military Network:
Email:



53

Reference: D/AAvn/31/003

Date: 6 Sep 07

HARMONISATION OF SPECIALIST PAY (FLYING)

Reference:

A. JSP 754 – Tri-Service Regulations for Pay and Charges.

INTRODUCTION

1. Section 17 of Ref A lays down the policy for the award of Specialist Pay (Flying) (SP(F)). In all three Services, SP(F) commences on completion of flying training. However, there are significant differences between the rates of SP(F) awarded. All RN, RM and RAF helicopter pilots are initially granted Aircraft Commander rates of SP(F)¹. Army helicopter pilots, however, are initially granted Non-Aircraft Commander rates of SP(F)². Once granted the higher Aircraft Commander rates of SP(F) by the CO of their units³, they remain behind their peers in the other two Services in progressing to the higher flying pay bands⁴.

PILOT TRAINING

2. **Formation of a Tri-Service Helicopter Flying Training System.** Prior to 1997, helicopter flying training was undertaken under single Service arrangements. On 1 Apr 97, the Joint Elementary Flying Training School⁵ (JEFTS) and the Defence Helicopter Flying Training School (DHFS) were established to teach student pilots from all three Services.

3. **Comparison of Flying Training Across Defence.** Following basic fixed wing training at DEFTS⁶, students move to DHFS at RAF Shawbury for helicopter training. After completing the Single Engine Basic Rotary Wing syllabus within 660 Sqn, students move on to 705 Sqn to complete instrument flying, navigation and night flying. Once this phase is complete, the final elements of flying training are undertaken under single Service arrangements as shown at Annex A and below:

¹ JSP 754 refers to the higher rates of pay as P1 rates of pay.

² JSP 754 refers to the lower rates of pay as P2 rates of pay, though P2 is no longer a term in use in the Services.

³ Normally 6 – 18 months following completion of the Army Pilots' Course.

⁴ For example 5 years after qualifying as a pilot, a pilot in the RN or RAF would be in receipt of £21.97 per day SP(F). The majority of Army pilots would be in receipt of £12.95 per day.

⁵ Later re-named the Defence Elementary Flying Training School (DEFTS).

⁶ RAF students do not attend DEFTS. They undertake basic fixed wing flying training under separate RAF arrangements.

a. **RN.** RN student pilots remain within 705 Sqn to determine the nature of aircraft on which they will subsequently qualify. Most rotary pilots will then progress to either the Sea King or Merlin Operational Conversion Phase (OCP) at Culdrose and Yeovilton before joining their operational unit.

b. **Army.** Army student pilots move to the School of Army Aviation (SAAvn) at Middle Wallop for the Operational Training Phase (OTP) of their course. This is followed by a Conversion To Type (CTT) course on the aircraft they will subsequently fly in their unit. On successful completion of CTT, they join their operational unit.

c. **RAF.** RAF student pilots complete Griffin helicopter training at 60 Sqn, RAF Shawbury. Thereafter, they undertake operational conversion training on the Chinook, Merlin or Puma helicopter before joining their operational unit.

4. **Output Standards.** The output standard at the end of all Service flying training courses⁷ is Aircraft Commander⁸. It is at this point that the award of wings is confirmed for pilots from all three Services. Each Service has a system of progression in flying units to further develop the flying skills and experience of newly qualified pilots.

5. **Recruiting and Retention.** The inequality in SP(F) has been brought into focus by the increase in the level of joint activity between the Services. Pilots from all three Services undergo joint flying training and are subsequently employed together on training exercises and on operations. It is thus possible to find two pilots from different Services who, having attended the same training course and subsequently qualified as pilots at the same time, are flying in the same operational theatre on similar tasks, but on very different rates of SP(F). This disparity and perceived unfairness is having a detrimental effect on morale. Additionally, and on a financial level, the lower rates of SP(F) do not provide the required incentive for personnel to remain in the Army⁹ rather than leave the Services to find employment with the airlines¹⁰. These factors are contributing to the current retention problems within Army Aviation¹¹. Finally, since each Service recruits officers from the same pool of manpower, any difference in pay and allowances on qualification as a pilot is likely to have an impact on recruiting.

CONCLUSION

6. The Army Pilots' Course has been developed over the years. As with pilots in the other Services, Army personnel are qualified Aircraft Commanders on completion of their flying training. However, unlike pilots in the RN, RM and RAF, Army pilots are awarded the lower Non-Aircraft Commander (P2) rates of pay at the end of their flying course. The increasingly joint nature of training and deployment has served to reveal this inequity and it is now common knowledge throughout military aviation. This has had an impact on the morale of Army pilots, it is retention negative, and it is likely to have an effect on recruiting.

⁷ The end of flying training is after the OCF (RN), CTT (Army and RM) and OCP (RAF). Following each of these courses, qualified pilots join a flying unit, though RM pilots undertake a short course at RNAS Yeovilton immediately following CTT.

⁸ As shown at Annex A, this is also the input standard for all pilots joining the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC).

⁹ Once the Training Return of Service (currently 5 years, rising to 6 years from 1 Apr 08) has expired.

¹⁰ A buoyant civil aviation market was a major factor in the recent award of an FRI to RN and RAF career stream officers at the IPP. This award further contributed to poor morale in the Army.

¹¹ The PVR rate for Direct Entry (DE) Capts has more than doubled during the last year. Similarly, 14 officers are in the process of transferring to the RN and RAF, compared to a historical rate of 1 or 2 a year.

RECOMMENDATION

7. It is recommended that SP(F) rates are aligned across all three Services and that all Army pilots who complete flying training after 1 Apr 08 are awarded Aircraft Commander (P1) rates of SP(F). A proposed amendment to Ref A is enclosed at Annex B. You are requested to take this forward through SP Pol.

(Original Signed)

Annexes:

- A. Pilot training timelines.
- B. Proposed amendments to JSP 754.

Copy to:

COS