

492 (Solihull) Squadron Air Training Corps

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Junior Cadets Induction Handbook



Welcome to the home of everything that is Air Cadets

Each year over 60,000 cadets, volunteer staff and civilian committee members' help engage in pursuits and rewarding opportunities such as championing good causes in the local communities, sporting events etc.

Air Cadets aged 13 to 20 are given the chance by our team of staff and adult volunteers to learn to fly aerobatics, learn skills to lead expeditions, tour foreign countries, become target shooting marksman, and learn about aviation and aerospace - only a small list of the many activities and opportunities for an enviable social life with many new friends.



Foreword by Flight Lieutenant Elliot Hemes MEng (Hons) CEng MIMechE RAFVR(T)

Welcome to 492 Squadron. We hope that your impression of the unit will help you make up your mind to become part of our team. We insist that our cadets are smart, polite, friendly and hard working, each one of us striving to make the Squadron the number one unit in the country.

You have decided to have a look at the best youth organisation in the UK, funded by the Royal Air Force and offering a wide range of activities from flying and gliding to sports and academic qualifications.

The Squadron works hard to be world class in all its activities and the cadets on the unit are well travelled, having attended activities in France, Austria, Germany and Gibraltar in the last 12 months.

Our aim is to provide our cadets with qualifications to help them achieve in both civilian and service life. At Solihull Squadron we are actively engaged with the BTEC scheme and offer qualifications in Public Services and Aviation. Running parallel with this is the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, First Aid courses and Radio Communication qualifications. We are the only squadron in Warwickshire & Birmingham Wing with Gold DofE Accredited Assessor, Mountain Leader and Rock Climbing Instructor qualified staff.

There is so much available to the young person wishing to join Solihull squadron it is impossible for me to mention it all here. Joining this unit will be a life changing experience and one in which the memories and friends will be with you for life.

What I must say to you is that, you only get out what you put in, have a go at all that is offered you, work hard for your Squadron and the achievements will follow.

Elliot Hemes
Officer Commanding 492 (Solihull) Squadron ATC

The Aims of the Air Cadet Organization Are:

- 1) To promote and encourage among young people a practical interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force.
- 2) To provide training which will be useful in civilian and service life.
- 3) To foster the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship.

The "Air Cadets" provides the opportunity for members to take part in a huge and diverse range of exciting and challenging activities. Many are organized at National and Regional level, and many others take place locally at Wing and Squadron levels. If you're interested in flying, sports, adventure training, camping, shooting, drill, music, water sports, abseiling, overseas travel... (the list is a VERY long one!) you will find out about these activities, and much more by looking around these websites:

www.aircadets.org
www.492aircadets.org

Many of the competitive elements could see you competing at International level. There is also a very important social aspect too - you will get to meet and make a lot of new friends.

The ACO (Air Cadet Organisation) develops personal qualities and a sense of community and citizenship valued by employers, both military and civil.

As a cadet you will discover this is great FUN!!



As a Junior Cadet What Will I Be Doing?

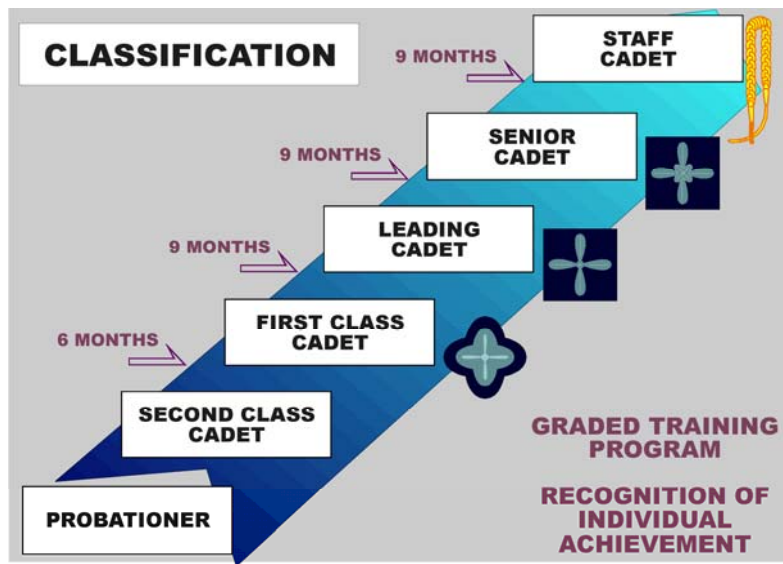


Fg Off Gilbert



CI Hemes

- As a new starter you will be looked after by the Junior Cadet training team. This consists of Flying Officer Gilbert and CI Liz Hemes, together with a team of experienced cadets consisting of a Flight Sergeant and Sergeants. We have an extensive and varied training program.
- On the first parade you will be issued with a pair of green coveralls, and go straight into that parade's training program. After approximately 12 weeks you will be issued your uniform (subject to availability). It will be your responsibility to look after your uniform. Make sure it is kept clean and well pressed, as we have regular inspections.
- You will learn about the Air Training Corps which will combine both practical and theory sessions. These will cover:
 - The Royal Air Force.
 - History of Flight.
 - Initial Expedition Training (outdoor expeditions).
 - Radio Communications.
 - Map Reading.
 - Airmanship.
 - Marksmanship Principles.
- All of the above should take 4 to 6 months to complete if you parade both Tuesdays and Sundays. You will also be able to take part in a wide range of activities which include flying, gliding, sports, fieldcraft, target shooting, first aid, camps and much more.
- In the Air Training Corps, every cadet has a classification. This is totally separate from rank. Rank is awarded purely by merit, while classification is given by academic achievement in RAF related subjects.



Second Class

This classification is given to every cadet as soon as they have enrolled. There is no badge for this classification and it is kept until the first class exam is passed.



First Class Cadet

The syllabus for the first class exam includes is described above (including first aid, the history of the RAF and ATC, weapons handling etc.).



Leading Cadet

Once the classification of first class is gained, training will begin on the leading syllabus. Subjects include, basic navigation, principles of flight and airmanship. Becoming a leading cadet will allow you to go on overseas camps and other "Good Things"!



Senior Cadet

To become a senior cadet, two subjects from the senior cadet course have to be studied.







Master/Instructor Cadet

There are two parts to becoming an instructor cadet. The part one exam is just like the others and as for Senior - two subjects are chosen from the list. After passing this section cadets become Master Cadets and wear a Master Cadet badge. Part two is an instructional techniques course at Wing HQ. Instructor cadets wear a yellow lanyard on their left arm.

Rank Structure

Eventually you will progress to a stage where you will be able to attend a cadet NCO (Non Commissioned Officer) course. This is the first step towards being promoted. It consists of a residential weekend course and is designed to put you through your paces. Any cadet who has aspirations to become an NCO needs to attend this course.

Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs)

			
Cadet Corporal (Cdt Cpl)	Cadet Sergeant (Cdt Sgt)	Cadet Flight Sergeant (Cdt FS)	Cadet Warrant Officer (CWO)

You will also be able to earn your Duke of Edinburgh awards, which runs consecutively with the BTEC scheme in Public services and Aviation studies. This could potentially gain you the equivalent of an extra 10 GCSEs on top of your school academic qualifications. Other qualifications available are in First Aid, and Amateur Radio Certificate.



Uniforms

We have a clothing store on the squadron. Please look after your uniform. Keep it clean and well pressed. Your shoes need to be clean and highly polished – talk to your NCOs, they are there to help you look smart. All issued uniform is the property of the RAF, and we as a Squadron are accountable for it. **(Please return all unwanted uniform to stores as we need to account for it on our inventory).**

As a Junior Cadet if you look the part you'll feel the part. Boys' hair must be short and smart. Off the collar and above the ears. (No designer patterns cut into the hair style please, and definitely no ear rings or studs whilst on the squadron). If girls have long hair it needs to be kept up in a bun using unobtrusive hair accessories if necessary. Jewellery is not permitted.

Your uniform will consist of:

- Beret and badge
- Shirts – 1 light blue and 1 dark blue
- Tie
- Jumper
- Brassard (armband) for badges
- Trousers or skirt
- Waterproof jacket
- Coverall (loaned as required)

The following items are required and will need to be purchased:

- Black parade shoes
- Tights or Black socks
- Black combat boots (*)
- Combat clothing (*) DPM Jacket, DPM Shirt, DPM Trousers, Combat belt, Plain Olive green or black 'T' shirt. Sqn logo only on the shirts please. DPM waterproofs)

(*) There are many brands on the market. If you are not sure ask a member of the recruiting staff for advice. Generally buy the best you can afford. Combat clothing will not be required immediately. Talk to the staff for confirmation of when you may require this.



Nearest Specialist Army Surplus Outlet

There are lots of army surplus stores on the internet and are they easy to find, but the best one closest to the squadron is:

T.W Ryder Ltd Surplus Stores

325-327 Harborne Lane, Harborne, Birmingham, West Midlands B17 0NT

Tel: 0121 472 1402

www.anchorsupplies.com (They normally give a 10% discount if you show them some proof that your child is involved with a cadet organisation)

Important Points

Parental Consent Form

On joining the Corps you will be given a form (3822A) for your parents to complete which gives consent for you to participate in some of the activities offered by the Corps and provides details of medical problems you may have. You cannot become a member until this form has been properly completed and returned to your Squadron staff. With this form, please also return two passport photographs and the gift aid form distributed at your induction morning.

Commitment To Events

There are many opportunities open to cadets, such as flying, gliding, shooting, leadership courses etc that cadets can apply for. We INSIST that cadets only put their names down for events that they can definitely attend, so that places are only given out to cadets who can go. Once a cadet has put their name down for an event, we will need parental commitment and support to ensure that cadets attend. If a cadet cancels their place on a confirmed event they will forfeit spaces on future activities. It is therefore essential that ALL cadets own and use a diary to track important dates, e.g. ATC events, family holidays etc. Please ensure important family events are effectively communicated between cadets and parents so they may be noted down in cadet diaries.

Civilian Committee

The Squadron can only be successful if it has a good civilian committee. The civilian committee is responsible for all of the fundraising that goes towards the squadron and is always looking for new parents to help support. For example the fundraising goes towards adventure training kit such as tents, rucksacks etc. to save parents from paying out for essential but expensive kit. If you are interested in joining the civilian committee, please telephone the Civilian Committee Chairman – number available from the sqn's Staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

When do you parade? The Squadron is open every Tuesday (7pm-9:45pm) and Sunday (9am-12:45pm). As a rule we only close for Christmas. Ad hoc stand-down periods (due to us all being away on camp for example) are posted on the website: www.492aircadets.org

Can anyone join? Yes. The squadron is open to young people from all parts of society. Starting age is from 13 years to 16 ½ years.

Can I bring a friend? Yes. The more the merrier, as long as they are 13 years or older.

How many cadets are there in the squadron? We parade approx 60 cadets depending upon the time of year. Other squadrons may have between 20 to 40 cadets. Hence we are allocated more camp and flying placements than some other squadrons.

How much does it cost? The ATC receives some funding each year from the Ministry of Defence, but this is insufficient to pay for the running of the Corps with all its buildings, aircraft, gliders etc. Each cadet is required to pay a small subscription towards the running costs of the Corps once they are in uniform. Fees are:

- £5.00 one off payment (administration fee)
- £26 quarterly subscriptions paid in advance (standing order, cash or cheque payable to "492 Solihull Squadron ATC") which equates to £2 per week subs

The blue uniform is issued by the squadron FREE of charge. However you will need to invest in black parade shoes, socks or tights and combat clothing as listed under the heading of Uniforms.

Do I get the uniform on the first night? No. As you can appreciate uniforms are expensive, and need to be looked after. New Junior Cadets are supplied with green coveralls. It gives you a chance to sample what we have to offer, and for us to establish if you will stay with us long enough to issue you a uniform. It indicates to other members of the Squadron that you are a new starter, and they will make allowances. It will also help prevent your clothes from getting dirty during the evening events. (Depending on the activity that parade) Please bring sensible footwear: school shoes for drill and old trainers for other activities.

Do I need to attend both parades? To get the best out of the Squadron we recommend that you attend both parades. We are different from other youth organisations in that we do require a level of dedication. The reason for this is that the Junior Cadets go through a rolling training program which will take approx 4 to 6 months. This makes 492 Squadron a very high achieving Squadron within the Air Cadet Organisation and is noted for its successes. However, we do make exceptions and will try to accommodate you as best we can.

How do you deal with bullying? We have a zero tolerance policy on any kind of bullying. The cadets' welfare is paramount. If there are any concerns it needs to be brought to the attention of the staff, and will be dealt with appropriately.

Is the discipline hard? There is a certain amount of discipline, which is what sets us apart from other youth organisations. Our rules are mostly common sense and good manners and you are expected to adhere to them at all times (see Squadron Standing Orders on the website). I must stress it's nothing like you see on TV with the American boot camps. The type of discipline exercised at the Squadron is geared to bring the best out of our Junior Cadets, and to build their self confidence and independence before they join the rest of the flights within the squadron.

Will I need a hair cut? As a Junior Cadet and whilst in green coveralls we will make allowances. However, if you decide to stay and are issued with a uniform then there is a dress code to follow which is standard across the ATC organisation.

Will I get to fly? Yes. All Squadrons are allocated flying slots throughout the year. The cadets experience a 25min flight with a fully qualified RAF pilot in either a glider or powered aircraft, and best of all it costs NOTHING as it's sponsored by the RAF. (Only available if the consent form is signed by a parent or guardian).

Do you go away on camps? Yes. We do go away on weekends and week-long camps. There's a misconception that being in the ATC we do not wear greens (DPMs). This could not be further from the truth. We do everything that the Army Cadets do and more. There is an additional charge to cover food, transport and accommodation. (Usually £30-40 for weekends and a little more for a week camp).

Are members of staff qualified? Yes. The members of the staff have to attend training courses to become qualified instructors in their chosen field, whether it is adventure training, drill, first aid, or target shooting. They also have to attend courses concerning child welfare issues, drug awareness courses, and all are 'CRB' checked.

Are members of staff employed by the RAF? No. All the staff members are volunteers, and come from all walks of life. They give up their free time not only on parade nights but also at weekends. So parent's support is vital and greatly appreciated whether it's transporting your child(ren) to an event or helping the civilian committee with fund raising events.

What if I find that I want to leave? Hopefully it won't get that far. However, if you really want to go all we require from you is to bring your uniform back and ensure your subs are paid up. There is no minimum time that you are contracted to stay at the Squadron.

Do you recruit for the RAF? No. We are a youth organisation which is sponsored by the RAF. We try to give the cadets varied, exciting and challenging opportunities whilst they are with us. A small percentage does enter into the forces, not necessarily the RAF. However a large proportion goes on to higher education or apprenticeships.

How else will I benefit? Apart from becoming more confident and self-reliant, the biggest benefits will be when your child starts thinking about future careers. Employers and higher education establishments are always looking at what else your child has achieved during their spare time. The fact they attend a well structured organisation such as the Air Training Corps gaining additional qualifications will put them head and shoulders above others. They will also make some of their best friends for life. Whichever direction your child decides to take, we aim to give them the best start in making them into well rounded young adults. It's truly a life-changing experience.

What happens if I am ill or cannot attend? It is essential that we keep an accurate record of attendance and absences at the Squadron, so we know where all cadets are at any time, and also that planned activities have enough cadets to make it worthwhile. Therefore we ask that if your son/daughter cannot attend either due to other commitments or illness, they put in an absence. This can either be done whilst they are at the Squadron or by telephoning at any time.

How do I keep up to date with events? There is a Squadron website available for you, as parents, to see what the cadets get involved in and also if your cadet needs any help whilst not at the Squadron.

What does the Squadron do about Remembrance Sunday? Each year a Remembrance Parade is held outside St. James's Church in Shirley, or St. Alphege Church in Solihull, and cadet forces are invited to attend. Participation in such ceremonies is a worthwhile experience and is an opportunity for the public and your family to see you parading in public. Upholding these traditions is an essential part of cadet life which ALL cadets are expected to attend



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