

# **\*1222.—Fleet Air Arm—Air Gunners—Revised Conditions of Service—Qualifications and Advancement**

(N. 3318/39.—11.5.1939.)

Their Lordships having approved the institution of a new branch of naval ratings in the Fleet Air Arm, details of which are promulgated separately, the following particulars concerning the non-substantive rates of Air Gunners are notified for information and guidance.

2. Air Gunners will be employed on whole time duties in the Fleet Air Arm; employment connected with their specialist duties will be available throughout the normal period of naval service.

3. *Qualifications, Courses and standard of practical ability.*—(a) *Air Gunner 3rd class.* Open to Naval Airmen, First and Second class. Men below Leading rating of other branches of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines not holding a non-substantive rate may be permitted to volunteer for training when requirements permit.

Candidates for course for Air Gunner 3rd class must be volunteers with the following qualifications:—

- (i) Be not more than 22 years of age at the date of volunteering.
- (ii) Be passed medically fit, and be at least 5 feet 2 inches in height. To conform to the medical standards laid down in paragraph 4 and to undergo an annual medical examination.
- (iii) Have passed the Educational Test for Air Gunner as laid down in paragraph 5. Ratings who have passed E.T. 2 will not be required to take a further educational test.
- (iv) Be able to read and transmit at 10 words a minute on buzzer.
- (v) Be recommended.

Selected volunteers will undergo a course of about 32 weeks at Naval Establishments and Air Stations. The syllabus for this course will be as laid down for the existing Air Gunner's course.

On completion of the course successful candidates will be rated Acting Air Gunner 3rd class and paid as such, and will be drafted to an Aircraft Carrier where training in W/T operating will be continued. After six months, an Acting Gunner 3rd class will be confirmed provided he passes the final buzzer test, passing marks being:—

Transmitting, 85 per cent. at 18 words a minute.

Receiving, 95 per cent. at 20 words a minute.

If after 12 months' acting time an Air Gunner 3rd class cannot pass the final test, he will relinquish the non-substantive rate of Air Gunner.

(b) *Air Gunner 2nd Class.*—Open to Leading Airmen and Naval Airmen 1st Class with not less than 4 years' service as Air Gunner 3rd class.

There will be no special course for Air Gunner 2nd class but Air Gunners 3rd class with not less than 4 years' service as such and who are recommended will be permitted to take an examination at sea to qualify them as Air Gunner 2nd class. Details of this examination will be published in due course.

An Air Gunner 2nd class will be required to have good practical ability and the following knowledge:—

- (i) Good knowledge of all standard aircraft W/T gear, care and maintenance, and ability to trace faults and effect simple repairs.
- (ii) Complete knowledge of W/T organisation and procedure in so far as this applies to air work.
- (iii) Complete knowledge of coding required for air work.
- (iv) Good theoretical knowledge of aircraft W/T and high standard of electricity and magnetism.
- (v) To be fully qualified in all forms of air gunnery.
- (vi) To be qualified to give elementary instruction in Air Gunner's duties.



1222

(c) *Air Gunner 1st class*.—Open to C.P.O. Airmen, P.O. Airmen and Leading Airmen passed for Petty Officer with not less than 2 years' service as Air Gunner 2nd class.

Candidates for the rate of Air Gunner 1st class must be recommended and must complete successfully a higher course to acquire fuller theoretical knowledge of aircraft W/T than for Air Gunner 2nd class.

An Air Gunner 1st class will be required to have good practical ability and the following knowledge :—

- (i) Complete knowledge of W/T organisation and procedure in so far as this applies to air work.
- (ii) Slight knowledge of tool work needed in connection with upkeep of aircraft W/T apparatus.
- (iii) To be qualified to instruct in all branches of air W/T and gunnery.
- (iv) To be qualified to take responsibilities in regard to the duties involved in the handling and stowage of aircraft armament stores.

4. *Medical examination*.—The medical examination for the rating of Air Gunner 3rd class is to take place on volunteering and annually thereafter and the result noted on the Medical History Sheet.

The presence of nasal obstruction, hernia, severe varicose veins, varicocele or hæmorrhoids is to cause the rejection of the rating.

A history of any of the following is to disqualify :—

- Nervous breakdown.
- Severe headaches.
- Hay fever.
- Asthma (within 2 years of examination).
- Recurring or chronic bronchitis.
- Organic or functional heart conditions which have necessitated prolonged rest.
- Recent rheumatic fever.
- Malarial attacks (within 6 months of examination).
- Dysenteric attacks (within one year of examination).
- Sunstroke or heatstroke.
- Rib resection for empyema.
- Train sickness or swing sickness.

*Standard of Vision.*

- Distant—6/9, at least, with each eye tested separately.
- Near—Snellen, D.—0.6, with each eye tested separately.
- Full fields of vision (confrontation test).
- Colour vision—Grade I.
- Corrected goggles are to be worn by men whose vision can be improved to 6/6 or better, thereby.

*Standard of Hearing.*

- Ability to hear a forced whispered at 20 ft., each ear to be tested separately.

Air gunners who at the periodical tests are found to have vision or hearing below the standard laid down are not to be rejected provided their efficiency is maintained and the defect is not present to an extent which renders them subject to survey.

5. *Educational syllabus*.—The syllabus of the Educational Test for Air Gunner, 3rd class, will be as follows :—

Mathematics.—Logarithms ; simple algebra, use of squared paper ; use of drawing instruments ; simple mensuration.

Magnetism and Electricity.—Elementary properties of magnets ; simple ideas of the structure of matter ; cells ; direct current circuits ; electromagnetic induction ; elementary knowledge of dynamos ; generating of alternating E.M.F. ; cycle and frequency.

Essay and General knowledge.—A short essay ; simple questions on general knowledge, including current events.



6. *Advancement*.—Advancement to Air Gunner 2nd Class and to Air Gunner; 1st Class will be made in vacancies to meet requirements.

Existing Air Gunners who are recommended and who hold the undermentioned qualifications will be considered for immediate advancement as follows :—

To Air Gunner, 2nd Class.—4 years as Air Gunner (acting and confirmed) ;  
W/T III.

To Air Gunner, 1st Class.—6 years as Air Gunner (acting and confirmed)  
W/T II.

7. *Badges*.—The following non-substantive badges have been approved :—

Air Gunner, 3rd Class—Aeroplane.

Air Gunner, 2nd Class.—As for Air Gunner, 3rd Class, with star above.

Air Gunner, 1st Class.—As for Air Gunner, 3rd Class, with star above and star below.

(*A.F.O. 1221/39.*)

(*A.F.O. 1220/38 will be cancelled.*)

(*This Order will be reprinted for posting on Notice Boards.*)