

Not to be communicated to  
anyone outside HM Service  
without authority

DCI RN 160  
1988



## Defence Council Instructions

# Royal Navy

By Command of the Defence Council

*W. J. Gindan*

**DCIs are automatically  
cancelled after 1 year**

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
20 May 1988

---

### Special Issue

Fleet Air Arm — formation of the Aircraft Control Branch (U)

---



# 160/88 Fleet Air Arm — formation of the Aircraft Control Branch

[NMT/120/6/1: 7970MB]

1. The Admiralty Board have approved the formation of a Sideways entry Aircraft Control (AC) Branch within the Fleet Air Arm. Ratings of the AC Branch will undertake the Helicopter Control (HC) and Air Traffic Control (ATC) duties currently carried out by members of the Radar Sub-Branch and Naval Airman (Aircraft Handler) Branch holding the appropriate adqual.
2. There have long been insufficient numbers of properly qualified ratings for HC and ATC duties, and this has adversely affected manning, drafting and career development. The new Branch will remedy this situation and provide a firm basis upon which to develop and enhance the standards of aircraft control and airspace management in the Fleet.

## Entry to the branch

3. The AC Branch will be sourced by suitably qualified and recommended personnel of any non-technician branch at the Leading rate or AB level. Provisional entry will be by selection from volunteers who meet the entry criteria (ANNEX A). The training and career pattern are at ANNEX B. Volunteers will be required to complete successfully AC Branch grading (ANNEX C) and pass the Air Traffic Assistants Course (ATAC) at RAF Shawbury (ANNEX D). Final acceptance into the AC Branch will take place only when a full helicopter control qualification has been awarded. No requirements for a WRNS AC Category is foreseen at present.
4. Ratings already holding a valid HC, AATC or ATC adqual may apply to transfer to the AC Branch subject to age, experience and manning clearance. Arrangements are at ANNEX E.
5. Ratings will not be transferred compulsorily into the AC Branch. HC and ATC qualified RN ratings who choose not to transfer will continue in their present employment pattern while a requirement for their skills remains.
6. Ratings wishing to transfer must have five years to serve or be serving on an open engagement on the date of application. They must be under 26 years of age and meet the medical standard for Operations Branch (Radar) detailed in Appendix 1-4 of BR 1705A Handbook of Naval Medical Standards. AC Branch ratings will be required to give a minimum of three years' Return of Service after completing the HC course.
7. Applications to volunteer for the AC Branch are to be forwarded to the Flag Officer Naval Air Command, FONAC HQ, Yeovilton, copy to the Captain Naval Drafting, HMS *Centurion*, giving a preferred and alternative date for AC Branch grading. The application is to be accompanied by full service documents and completed S264A containing the Commanding Officer's firm recommendation for transfer and, in the case of ABs advancement to Leading rate. Initial scrutiny will be carried out by FONAC and, successful candidates detailed to attend AC Branch grading.



8. The Admiralty Board have approved a design for the AC Branch badge, which is at ANNEX F.

9. The work on the formation of the AC Branch has understandably created considerable interest in the Fleet and given rise to some conjecture as to the possible implications for those involved in aircraft control and airspace management. A presentation team will be available on request to visit ships and establishments to describe the introductory arrangements and answer individual questions. Details are at ANNEX G.

10. The following Rate titles and abbreviations have been approved.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Leading Aircraft Controller             | LAC    |
| Petty Officer Aircraft Controller       | POAC   |
| Chief Petty Officer Aircraft Controller | CPOAC  |
| Warrant Officer                         | WO(AC) |

11. Advance warning of these arrangements was given in MOD UK Navy signal KKB/WGB/WHB 151430Z Mar 88 which announced that the operative date would be the 24 Mar 88.

12. **Publications.** BR 1066 will be amended.

In the meantime, a copy of this instruction is to be retained within the covers of BR 1066, and is to be removed only when its contents have been incorporated in the text by the next routine amendments.

## ANNEX A

### Fleet Air Arm

#### Aircraft Control Branch — qualifications for entry

- Able rate with 15 months seniority or Leading rate of any non-technician branch.
- Under 26 years of age.
- NAMET 3/3.
- Medical category P2.
- Passed naval swimming test.
- Firm recommendation by CO of potential for advancement to Leading rate and suitability for transfer to the AC Branch.
- VG Conduct

#### Volunteer for Aircraft Control Branch

- Provisionally selected by FONAC.
- Passed Aircraft Control Grading (ACG).
- Five years to serve from date of application.



## Air Traffic Assistants Course (ATAC)

- a. Passed Air Traffic Assistants Course.
- b. Eight months service in a Naval Air Station.
- c. Recommended for HC Course.

## HC Course

- a. Passed HC Course.
- b. VG Conduct.

## Acting Leading Aircraft Controller

### ANNEX B

#### Training and Career Pattern

1. AC grading will take place at RNSHC Portland and consist of a two week package containing basic Air Traffic Control and Warfare procedures. Full details are at ANNEX C. Each candidate will undergo a series of tests culminating with the AC Branch trainability test. The relevant section of the History Sheet for all candidates will be completed as follows:
  - a. Passed AC Branch grading.
  - b. Unsuitable for AC Branch.
2. Following successful grading, ratings will undertake the three week ATAC Course at the Central Air Traffic Control School, RAF Shawbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (see ANNEX D). Upon successful completion, candidates will be drafted to a complement billet at a Naval Air Station for up to eight months to carry out control tower duties prior to commencing the Helicopter Control Course at RNSHC Portland. This period will enable non Fleet Air Arm ratings to familiarize themselves with naval aviation. Non Ops branch ratings will be provided with an introduction to AIO and the Ops Room.
3. The Helicopter Control Course will be the Professional Qualifying Course for Leading Aircraft Controller (LAC). The course aims to qualify each student as an HC NATO grade C or D depending upon the number of hours live control achieved during the course. Successful students will be formally transferred to the AC Branch as Acting Leading Aircraft Controllers (ALAC) (Scale B) from the last day of the course. Full tactical and system training will take place at HMS Dryad prior to first sea draft in an HC billet. Confirmation after 12 months in the acting rate will be in accordance with BR 1066 Chapter 3 and Article 0414.
4. After approximately 18 months of his first sea draft, the rating may expect to be through drafted to a different class of ship. This will serve to improve drafting flexibility and broaden the AC ratings experience in the Fleet. The LAC will be required to complete a taskbook and pass a written Provisional Examination (PE) for POAC. Shore service as an LAC will involve control tower duties but this is not a prerequisite for advancement to POAC.



5. LACs who successfully complete the PE will be awarded Scale A pay and join the roster for POAC. Upon nomination for the POAC Professional Qualifying Course (PQC), ratings will attend the 17 week Joint Air Traffic Control Course (JATCC) at RAF Shawbury (ANNEX J). Successful students will proceed to validation at a Naval Air Station in an ATC billet. Advancement to APOAC will be in accordance with BR1066 Chapter 3. Confirmation as a POAC will be dependent upon successful validation in Aerodrome Control and Precision Approach Radar (PAR). Those failing the POAC PQC or subsequent initial validation, will be reverted to LAC (Scale B) and be required to complete the taskbook and PE again. Further attempts at the PQC will be at the discretion of FONAC.

6. **Fighter Controllers.** Suitably qualified and recommended senior rates may volunteer for the Fighter Controller course at RNSFC Yeovilton. Such opportunities will be limited and numbers dictated solely by the requirements of the Service. Selection will be on merit by FONAC.

7. Promotion beyond POAC will be in accordance with BR1066. The qualifications for advancement are at ANNEX J and will be incorporated into BR1066.

8. In addition to the Upper Yardman scheme, promotion opportunities from the lower deck will be in accordance with BR1066 Chapter 9.

## ANNEX C

### Aircraft Control Branch Grading

1. AC Branch grading (ACG) takes place at RNSHC Portland and lasts for two weeks. It aims to introduce the principles of aircraft control and airspace management and to establish an applicant's potential ability as a controller. Each student will undertake a series of practical tests culminating with the AC Branch trainability test which combines elements of the current HC aptitude test, ATC aptitude test and Fighter Control aptitude test. Table 1 promulgates AC grading dates for 1988.

2. During the transition period, ratings already holding a current HC qualification will not be required to take the full two weeks grading but will attend the three day short AC grading (SACG). Table 2 gives Short AC grading dates for 1988.

3. Applicants for transfer to the AC branch should include a preferred and alternative date.

Table 1 — AC Grading Dates

| ACG No. | Date      | ACG No. | Date      |
|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1       |           | 3       | 21 Nov 88 |
| 2       | 11 Jul 88 | 4       | 23 Jan 89 |
|         | 18 Sep 88 |         |           |



Table 2 — Short AC grading

| ACG No. | Date      | ACG No. | Date      |
|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1       | 30 May 88 | 4       | 05 Dec 88 |
| 2       | 04 Jul 88 | 5       | 27 Feb 89 |
| 3       | 17 Oct 88 |         |           |

## ANNEX D

### The Air Traffic Assistants Course

1. The three week Air Traffic Assistants Course will take place at the Joint Air Traffic Control School at RAF Shawbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. Planned throughput will be 36 students per year, maximum six students per class.
2. The aim of the course is to produce Royal Navy Air Traffic Control Assistants with sufficient knowledge and skill to achieve operational performance standard at their first unit after undergoing a period of on-the-job training.
3. The course will consist of two weeks classroom and 1 week simulator training. A simple breakdown of the course is:

### The Air Traffic Assistants Course

| Subject               | Classroom (hours) | Practical (hours) | Total (hours) |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Air Traffic Control   | 45                | 15                | 60            |
| Navigation            | 2                 | 1                 | 3             |
| Meteorology           | 3                 | —                 | 3             |
| Signals               | 8                 | 3                 | 11            |
| Simulator Exercises   | —                 | 24                | 24            |
| Examinations          | 2                 | 1                 | 3             |
| Flight Safety         | 3                 | —                 | 3             |
| Course Administration | 5                 | 2                 | 7             |
|                       | 68                | 46                | 114           |

## ANNEX E

### Transition Arrangements

1. The AC Branch is expected to take at least five years to grow to full strength. During the transition period, the following arrangements will apply.
2. Ratings already holding a full HC, ATC or AATC adqual are eligible to volunteer to transfer to the AC Branch. Each application will be judged on its own merit by FONAC. Full acceptance into the AC branch will occur only when a rating has qualified and validated in both HC and ATC duties. It is stressed that not all personnel holding HC or ATC adquals will automatically qualify for the AC Branch.



## Helicopter Controllers

3. CPO(OPS)(R) and PO(R) wishing to transfer may apply to do so subject to age, experience and manning clearance.
4. Applications for transfer to the AC Branch are to be made to the Flag Officer Naval Air Command, FONAC HQ, Yeovilton, copy to the Captain Naval Drafting, HMS *Centurion*, giving a preferred and alternative date for AC Branch grading. The application is to be accompanied by full Service documents and completed S264A containing the Commanding Officer's recommendation for transfer. Initial scrutiny will be carried out by FONAC and successful candidates detailed to attend AC Branch grading.
5. HCs passing AC grading will rejoin their ship to await drafting action as follows:
  - a. *Rating Not Passed PE for PO(R)*. At the next break in normal drafting cycle, applicants will be drafted to the ATAC and if successful, control tower duties at a Naval Air Station. After six months in control tower duties, at the discretion of FONAC, ratings may be formally accepted into the AC Branch as an LAC (ALAC if not already a confirmed Leading Rate) to await sea draft. Those not accepted at this stage will remain in their source branch.
  - b. *Ratings passed WPE for PO(R)*. At the next break in normal drafting cycle, applicants will be drafted additional to a Naval Air Station to await nomination for the JATCC. Having successfully completed the POAC PQC, ratings will be drafted to a complement billet in a Naval Air Station for validation. Upon successful validation, ratings will be formally accepted into the AC Branch as a POAC. (APOAC if not already a confirmed Petty Officer). Those failing to validate in the ATC role may be required to remain in their source branch.

## Air Traffic Controllers

6. CPO(AH), POA(AH) and LA(AH) wishing to transfer may apply subject to age, experience and manning clearance.
7. Applications to transfer to the AC branch should be made in accordance with para 4.
8. AH ratings who successfully complete AC grading will return to their previous employment to await the following drafting action:
  - a. At the next break in normal drafting cycle, ratings will be drafted to the School of Maritime Operations to complete an action Information Organisation (AIO) and warfare acquaint in order to gain sufficient Ops Room knowledge to undertake the HC course.
  - b. On completion of AIO training, they will undertake the full HC qualifying course at the RNSHC Portland. They will also receive full tactical and system training at HMS *Dryad* prior to first sea draft.



9. On successful completion of the HC Course and achieving 20 hours live control as an HC grade C, Acting PO (AH) and below will be transferred to the AC Branch in their existing rate and seniority. Confirmed PO (AH) who elect to transfer and who have not completed the JATCC will transfer in the Acting Rate and be confirmed when they meet the advancement criteria for POAC. Acting CPO (AH) and above who have not completed JATCC will be ineligible to apply for transfer. The normal requirement for ALAC to complete the LRLC and similarly for ACPOAC to complete the POLC will also apply. Ratings who fail the HC course will remain as Aircraft Handlers.

## ANNEX F

### The AC Branch badge

The Admiralty Board have approved the design of the AC Branch badge illustrated below. It will be worn on class 1 and class 2 uniform in accordance with BR 81 — RN and RM Uniform Regulations.



## ANNEX G

### *The AC Branch Presentation Team*

The team consisting of the AC Branch Project Officer, a WO(OFS)(E) and a WO(AH) have commenced a programme of presentations. Additional presentations or briefings may be booked through the RNSHC (Portland 3448).

## ANNEX H

### The Joint Air Traffic Control Course

1. The Joint Air Traffic Control Course is open to senior rates and officers of all three services. It is run by the Royal Air Force and takes place at RAF Shawbury near Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

2. This course will be the POAC PQC with a planned throughput of 12 students per year. Naval personnel will be administered divisionally by the Naval Liaison Officer (NLO) who serves as an instructor on the staff.



3. The course is 17 weeks long and has a high proportion of practical simulator time during which students undergo continuous assessment based on a one to one student instructor ratio.

### Outline of the Course

| Week      | Subject                         | Prac % | Th'y % |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|
| 1 and 2   | Classroom Intro and theory.     |        | 100    |
| 3 and 4   | Classroom and Basic Aerodromes  | 50     | 50     |
| 5 and 6   | Classroom and Direction Finding | 50     | 50     |
| 7         | Radar Theory.                   |        | 100    |
| 8 to 10   | Classroom and Initial Radar.    | 50     | 50     |
| 11 and 12 | Aero, DF and Initial Radar.     | 100    |        |
| 13 to 15  | Tower and Advanced Simulator    | 100    |        |
| 16 and 17 | Live Aero, Tower and Adv. Sim.  | 100    |        |

### ANNEX J

#### Qualifications for advancement

##### Acting Leading Aircraft Controller

- One year's service in Acting Leading Rate.
- Recommended for confirmation.
- Completed Leading Rates Leadership Course.

##### Leading Aircraft Controller

- Complete Taskbook for POAC.
- Recommended for Written Provisional Examination.
- Passed PE for POAC (Basic date).

##### Join roster for Petty Officer Aircraft Controller

- Two years service as a LAC including acting time.
- 6-monthly merit reports required from basic date.
- B13 issued by drafting authority.
- Recommended for advancement.
- VG Conduct.

##### Acting Petty Officer Aircraft Controller

- 12 months service as an Acting Petty Officer (AC).
- Passed Professional Qualifying Course (JATCC).
- Recommended for confirmation.
- Hold ATC validations in Aerodrome Control and Precision Approach Radar.



### Petty Officer Aircraft Controller

- a. Annual reports from date of advancement to Acting Petty Officer.
- b. Minimum three years seniority as Petty Officer including acting time.
- c. Hold ATC radar validations in Approach and Director.
- d. Less than 22 years reckonable service (Unless serving on 20E).
- e. Completed Petty Officers Leadership Course.
- f. Recommended for promotion.
- g. Selected by Board.
- h. Promotion notification issued by drafting authority.
- j. VG Conduct.

### Chief Petty Officer Aircraft Controller

- a. Annual reports required from date of promotion.
- b. Minimum three years service as a Chief Petty Officer Aircraft Controller.
- c. Less than 22 years reckonable service (Unless serving on 20E).
- d. Educationally Qualified (Art 0409).
- e. Selected by board.
- f. Re-engage on 20E.
- g. Promotion notification issued by drafting authority.
- h. Recommended for promotion.
- j. VG Conduct.

### Warrant Officer