

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to 636 VGS

You have been nominated by your squadron commander as a trainee on a Gliding Scholarship (GS) course, undergoing Royal Air Force flying training. You will find it hard but enjoyable work that is controlled by rules and standard operating procedures, all designed to ensure a safe operation. You are asked to play your part by doing what is asked of you. Please read the following joining instructions, in particular attention is to be paid to your travel arrangements, the payment of **£45** on arrival and the attached kit list. We hope you have an enjoyable and successful course with us.

Reporting

You are to report (in uniform) to the Squadron Duty Officer by **18:00** hours on **Friday 31ST July 09**. If you find you have a problem attending on the Friday or are running late, please contact the VGS ASAP, to allow alternative arrangements to be made. You should eat before arrival, or bring a packed meal with you, as an evening meal will not be provided on the first night.

All cadets should be in possession of a Record of Service Book with Personal Details, Parent/Guardians Consent to fly and Fitness to Undergo Gliding Training sections correctly signed. For Gliding Scholarship courses, you **MUST** also be in possession of a medical form from your doctor stating that you are fit to fly solo.

The last day of the course is **Sunday 9th August 09**.

Absence from the Course

Gliding training takes **priority over "ALL other Air Cadet activities"**. As such you will be expected to attend for the **FULL duration of the continuous gliding course** to ensure that full opportunity may be made of the weather and aircraft availability. If you cannot do this due to any personal conflicting issues (e.g. holidays etc) it causes a major problem with flying continuity and also wastes a lot of other peoples time. So you should consider this before confirming your place on the course. Other dates may be better suited for you and by letting another cadet attend instead you would avoid wasting scarce resources. If in doubt contact your Squadron O.C. Your Wing Headquarters or No 636 VGS as soon as possible.

Routing

636 VGS flies from Swansea Airport, which is located in the Gower Peninsula, on the A4118 road and is approximately six miles west of Swansea City Centre. The VGS Headquarters buildings are the first set of buildings as you enter the Airport.

By Road

- For those travelling from the West of Swansea, the best route is to follow the M4 to junction 47. Take the A483 towards Swansea for approximately 3 miles, until you reach Fforestfach

Cross (Marquis Arms Pub) and turn right. Follow the road signs for Swansea Airport/Gower. These should take you through the areas of Sketty and Killay and then onto Fairwood Common.

- For those travelling from the East of Swansea, follow the M4 to junction 42. Take the A483 to Swansea, followed by the A4067 coast road passing Swansea City Centre. Follow the road signs for Swansea Airport/Gower. These should take you past Singleton Hospital and then through the areas of Sketty and Killay, and then onto Fairwood Common.

By Rail or Bus

The nearest railway and coach stations are at Swansea. There are regular services to Swansea from both West Wales and on the main line London to Swansea route. However the local bus service from Swansea to the Airport is infrequent and is not recommended. Cadets who wish to travel by public transport must contact the Gliding Squadron Commanding Officer **at least** seven days before the start of the course, so that onward travel may be arranged.

First Day

The Trainee Crew room, the accommodation block and caravan will be your home when you are not flying, so please take care of these areas. Also make time to read through this document and other posters on the walls. You will receive a Health and Safety briefing very shortly after you have arrived. Make sure you make yourself aware of all safety procedures. Should the fire alarm sound (***a continuous ringing bell***) proceed to the Fire Assembly Point located across the road from the HQ buildings.

Subsequent Days

The starting time is at 0830 hrs each day. The working day is usually from then until the last landing, which can be up to 1900 hrs or sunset, whichever occurs first, and is dependant on the day's weather. A cleaning period follows where you will be expected to assist in accommodation and aircraft cleaning on a rota under the supervision of the Squadron Duty Officer, after which trainees are free to stand down or depart. If leaving that day, you are welcome to use the telephones to contact parents etc. to let them know exactly when you will be finishing. On arrival at 636 VGS please ensure you hand your "Record of Service Book" to the Duty Instructor. He will ensure your name is added to the flying list.

Failure to do this could mean you miss out on the flying!!

Messing and Accommodation

During continuous courses, three meals a day will be provided (except for the arrival and departure days where there will be no evening meal). **A charge of £40** will be made for food from all of the course members and will be collected at the beginning of the course. Where possible, some of this money will be refunded at the end of the course. In addition a **£5 deposit charge** will be made for

your room locker key.

Any cheques should be made payable to 636 Gliding Squadron.

Sleeping accommodation is in dormitory rooms and you must bring your own sheets or sleeping bag and also pillowcases. There are limited entertainment facilities, which include television and video, so you should come equipped to entertain yourself in the evenings. Please ensure that all your baggage and belongings are clearly marked with your name. You will be notified of any changes.

For reasons of Flight Safety, cadets, regardless of their age, are to ensure they have adequate sleep and are not to drink any alcohol for the duration of the course, either on or off the Airport.

Physical Limitations

Cadets should be aware that there are certain weight and height limitations when flying in the Vigilant motor glider:

- Minimum weight dressed for gliding is 42 kgs.
- Maximum weight dressed for gliding is 100 kgs
- Maximum sitting height 922 mm

YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO FLY IF YOU ARE OUTSIDE THESE LIMITS.

The Course

We run both Gliding Scholarship (GS) and Advanced Gliding (AGT) courses (Although AGT is usually reserved for Flight Staff Cadets (FSCs). Both involve concentrated ground school activities. Details of the syllabus are covered in the Trainees Guide, which you will also be given. The instruction takes place in several ways:

- Ground lectures provide the basic theory behind the airborne practical of the exercises that you will carry out. It is often given to a group of trainees. **You are encouraged to ask questions at any point during the lecture.** If, at any point you do not understand something, please ask.
- Pre-flight briefs are done just before each flight. They clarify the aim of the flight, point out any special airmanship aspects, check your understanding of the exercise teaching points and give you a final opportunity to ask questions.
- Post flight debriefs are done at the end of each flight. You will discuss with your instructor how you performed and what you will be doing next.

- Ground exams that cover all aspects of the course will be taken at the end. The minimum pass mark is 75%. (Multiple choice Questions)

The Gliding Scholarship

The course consists of up to 8 hrs of flying syllabus completed extended to 10 hrs if you meet solo criteria. Once you have completed the syllabus you will be eligible for the award of GS Blue Wings (The primary aim of the GS). Those who achieve the required standard may finish the course by flying a single solo circuit, with the award of GS Silver Wings.

Many Trainees can feel airsick at some stage during their flying training. It is nothing to be ashamed of. If you do feel unwell tell your instructor and they will return to the airfield. Do not continue in the hope you will feel better, usually you will only get worse and your flying will deteriorate. There are a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of airsickness. Such as:

- Eat something before flying. Flying on an empty stomach increases the chances of feeling sick.
- Eat sensibly. Chocolate bars and cans of coke are not advisable before a flight.
- Keep looking out of the cockpit. Trainees who spend too long looking at the instruments often get sick.

If you continue to feel airsick, consult your doctor or local chemist regarding medicines available.

Inclement Weather

Should you not be able to fly due to bad weather, you should use the time wisely, such as revision or homework. PC's are available if needed. Also there are a small selection of DVD's/videos available for use. You can also bring your own indoor leisure activities if you wish.

Telephones

636 VGS does not have any public telephones. There is however a phone situated in the Admin Office. This telephone is to use only for contacting parents etc near the end of the day, giving them times to collect you. Trainees may bring mobile phones, but they may only be used at the end of the day, and must be switched off at all other times. **Mobile phones must not be used within the active operations area of the airfield.**

636 VGS has special permission to use the 'Duty Mobile Phone', held by the Duty Instructor during flying activities.

Award of Wings and Certificates

Gliding wings plus Gliding Scholarship and AGT certificates will be awarded by the Gliding Squadron on successful completion of the course.

General Information

Behaviour

636 VGS is an active flying unit within the Royal Air Force, and the staff should be paid the normal compliments and courtesies. The unit is located on a civilian airport and you will be seen by the general public. Remember your behaviour will reflect upon your Squadron.

Clothing

You should report in uniform on the first day. Subsequently berets must be worn on arrival and departure, with the flying uniform which we will issue. In addition to your cadet uniform items that you will need are listed in Annex A:

Remember to bring **sunglasses**, even in the winter, as we still get sunny days.

Fitness to Fly

If at any time you feel unwell and think you are unfit to fly for any reason, inform your instructor. In particular if you have a head cold or have recently had a cold, your instructor needs to know.

Loose Articles

Before flying check all pockets for loose articles, including pens, coins etc. You must never take loose articles with you to the aircraft, as they may become free and end up jamming the aircrafts controls. This includes jewellery items such as earrings and hair items such as grips.

Parachute Brief

You will be briefed on this procedure on your first day, however if you are uncertain about any points – **ask your instructor or any member of staff.**

Safety Considerations

Any airfield is a potentially dangerous place. You must keep your wits about you and behave sensibly at all times. In particular:

- Always treat propellers as live. Keep clear of them and give them at least a metre arc.
- Never approach from directly in front of aircraft, approach from the side and get into the cockpit from the left hand side.
- Never leave the canopy doors open, even in the lightest of winds, as they can slam shut causing the glass to break. This is very expensive and will put the aircraft unserviceable for several months.
- When walking across the dispersal keep out of the way of taxiing aircraft.
- Always listen to instructions from Squadron staff, including Flight Staff Cadets, regardless of rank.
They know the safety issues affecting this unit.

Conclusion

Providing you put into practice the safety advice contained in this booklet, and work hard you will complete the course. Ultimately, the course should be fun. The Officer Commanding and staff of 636 VGS hope you enjoy the course and hope that you find your experience and achievement at 636 VGS memorable and relevant in future life.

VGS Address and Contact Telephone Numbers

636 Volunteer Gliding Squadron

Swansea Airport

Fairwood Common

Swansea

SA2 7JU

HQ Telephone and Fax: 01792 205313

VGS Mobile 07768 936456

Sqn Ldr Phil Davies (Officer Commanding 636 VGS)

ANNEX A – REQUIRED ITEMS FOR COURSES

Admin

- Cadets Record of Service Book correctly filled in by your Squadron for medical and parents consent to fly.
- GS and AGT course cadets need a Medical Form (6424) signed by your Doctor stating that you are fit to fly solo.
- Joining Instructions for the course.
- £45 for both food contribution (£40) & the deposit for the locker key (£5)
- Travel arrangements made for the return journey home.

Clothing/Personal items

- Normal uniform is required including Beret. Coveralls are not required as flying clothing will be issued on arrival.
- Warm clothing for working on the airfield.
- Wet weather clothing as it can get cold and very wet on an airfield!
- Waterproof footwear for the airfield. Heavy boots and/or footwear with deep treads (eg DMS boots) are not permitted in the gliders.
- Change of clothes for evenings.
- Sufficient underwear and ankle length socks for the duration of the course!
- Personal washing kit including towel.
- Sunglasses.
- Sunhat or cold weather hat as appropriate.

- Gloves.
- Sleeping bag or sheets and a pillow.
- Torch.
- Any personal medication you may require – you must advise your instructor and the Course Admin Officer of any medical problems and of any medication you take.
- Although opportunities to leave the airfield may be limited, you should bring a small amount of spending money with you.