

## RESTRICTED

### PART 1 : SECTION 1

#### CHAPTER 1

## CAPTAINCY

### Introduction

1. Air Ministry Flying Orders 66 to 69 establish the authority and define the responsibilities of the captain of an aircraft. The best captain is one who possesses, to the fullest measure, the qualities discussed below and who is constantly striving to improve his value to the Service.

2. After reading the above A.M.F.Os. it will be appreciated that one member of the crew will always be appointed as captain of the aircraft, and that he may be of any aircrew category. The responsibilities of the captain are also defined in broad terms. A discussion of these responsibilities, and how the qualities required of an aircraft captain may be recognized and developed, is set out below.

### Leadership

3. The aircraft captain is the leader of his crew. In him, as in any other leader, should be found and expressed the quality of leadership. The existence of this quality has long been recognized by the human race. Not only is leadership inevitable to man's history—it is necessary to the making of it. Without leadership, no enterprise of any importance has ever been carried through with success. Seemingly hopeless causes have been won through the example, personal influence, and determination of some great leader.

4. In particular, every operation of war needs single-minded direction of purpose if it is to achieve success ; nowhere is this more important than in the operation of aircraft. Every organization must have a head. Even so small a unit as the crew of an aircraft is an organization ; and so it too must have a head—the captain of the aircraft.

### The Necessity for an Aircraft Captain

5. At all times there must be one person in supreme charge who, however well his crew are doing their jobs, is the one to take over supreme charge in sudden emergency. He may have to drive, he may have to persuade—but at all times he has to lead.

### The Qualities of a Good Captain

6. In order to assume the responsibilities of being the leader, the aircraft captain must have and develop the following personal qualities :—

- (a) Skill and experience.
- (b) Moral character, which includes :—
  - (i) Personality.
  - (ii) Tenacity.
  - (iii) Loyalty.
  - (iv) Sense of responsibility.
  - (v) Personal influence.
  - (vi) Courage.
  - (vii) Initiative.
- (c) Physical and mental fitness.

### Skill and Experience

7. In order to use most effectively the aircraft which he is to control, the aircraft captain must himself attain a high degree of personal skill. He must endeavour to gain as much knowledge as possible from each flight he undertakes, both by personal analysis and by discussion with aircrew of known ability and experience. In this way he will obtain a wealth of experience with which he will be able to anticipate difficult situations and deal with them successfully. It is only with experience that a captain can really appreciate the limitations of his equipment, aircraft, and crews, and judge when to take risks and when not to.

### Personality

8. Personality is difficult to define ; it is generally understood to mean the distinction of personal character—the means whereby one individual is distinguished from another. Personal integrity is essential to a good personality ; it is a quality which promotes trust, and trusting is half way to following. The integrity of a captain must always be beyond reproach or question ; he should be an example to his crew in his unselfishness and devotion to duty. He should be patient and cheerful under all conditions, however trying or irksome. Sometimes it might be necessary for him to adjust his personality in order to achieve complete harmony among his crew ; but in so doing he should avoid any tendency to familiarity.

RESTRICTED

## RESTRICTED

A.P. 129, VOL. 2, PART 1, SECT. 1, CHAP. 1

### Tenacity

9. One of the chief requirements for good leadership is mental stamina—the ability to think and act clearly in an emergency. It also includes the ability to allay the personal anxieties of others, and above all to see an operation through to its successful conclusion in spite of disheartening, or even apparently overwhelming, odds. This quality, which calls for the utmost determination, combined with implicit faith in direction from superiors, contributes largely to the make-up of a successful captain.

### Loyalty

10. An aircraft captain must be as loyal to those below him as he is to those in authority above him. He must show absolute loyalty to his Service, his country, and his cause. There can be no half measures of loyalty.

### Responsibility

11. A captain should always foster a sense of responsibility among his crew. He should make each member realize the importance of his task in relation to the resultant effort of the whole crew, and the duty that all owe to each other to perform their tasks to the best of their ability. By fostering this sense of responsibility and co-operation, a captain cannot fail to get the maximum support from his crew. For his part, however, he should take a keen interest in the duties of each crew member and know the capabilities of individuals and their capacity for work under pressure. He should tactfully investigate private worries or irritations if it is obvious that these are affecting the efficiency of any crew member.

### Personal Influence

12. Personal influence is the ability to inspire to further efforts at a time when the crew, or individual, if left to themselves, would give up or turn back. A few quiet words of encouragement can work wonders. The personal influence of a good captain will always result in his crew giving him the best that lies in their power.

### Courage

13. Courage is of many kinds. It is more difficult for a person deprived of comradeship to display steadfastness, endurance, and tenacity than for a member of a group. The two main kinds of courage are mental or moral courage and physical courage. Courage does not consist

of not being afraid, and there is a good deal of difference between the meanings of the words courage, bravery, and fearlessness. In reality if you are not afraid you cannot show courage—for courage really consists of an effort of the will to overcome fear. It is the ability to stick to a job to the very end despite injury or approaching death.

### Initiative

14. Initiative is closely linked with the ability to plan and the ability to deal with emergencies. It is a quality which enables a captain to originate a course of action without prior reference to superiors, in order to meet certain unexpected circumstances. It consists of refusing to be defeated by events or circumstances for which no orders have been issued.

15. During their service careers, flying personnel of the Royal Air Force may, at some time or other, be compelled to make a forced landing in jungle, desert, or on the seas; at such times the ability to fend for themselves, thus ensuring survival, is invaluable. Initiative may be said to be the ability to combine and utilize common sense, foresight, and imagination, under difficult conditions.

### Physical and Mental Fitness

16. Basically, flying efficiency depends on the physical and mental fitness of flying personnel of all aircrew categories. Apart from setting an example himself in this matter, the captain should see that the mental and physical fitness of his crew does not in any way impair its flying efficiency. He should discourage excessive indulgence in alcohol and late nights, but direct the energies of his crew to sport and physical exercise. The ever-increasing speed, altitude, and range of aircraft make physical fitness of prime importance.

### Training

17. A good captain realizes the importance and value of continual training, as it is only by this that the required high standard of efficiency is maintained. Training never stops—every flight, however monotonous, should be regarded as training—and post-flight discussion should be encouraged with a view to augmenting knowledge and experience. Every opportunity should be taken to do collective, as well as individual, crew training. Training against emergencies of all descriptions is of paramount importance and cannot be overstressed.

RESTRICTED

## RESTRICTED

### CAPTAINCY

18. Emergency procedures are laid down for each type of aircraft, but these are of little value unless practised regularly. A captain should see that he and his crew are fully conversant with all emergency drills, and not wait until an actual emergency arises before learning the folly of unpreparedness. Although this may entail some spare-time training it should not deter him from ensuring that his crew carry out the appropriate procedures to his satisfaction. At any time the fate of his crew may depend on the speed and efficiency with which they carry out their emergency drills in real earnest.

#### Other Qualities

19. Other qualities include intelligence, the

readiness to accept responsibility, and the ability to make decisions.

#### Conclusion

20. Although the chief requirements for good captaincy have been dealt with in the preceding paragraphs, there are many other points to which the captain should give his attention ; not the least of these being the personal smartness of himself and crew at all times. The captain has a most responsible job, often calling for considerable courage and powers of endurance and concentration, as well as hard work, patience, and tact. In his hands are placed the lives of his crew and the safety of his aircraft. A genuine desire to be a good captain, fully appreciating all that this entails, goes a long way towards the achievement of such an aim.

RESTRICTED

This file was downloaded  
from the RTFM Library.

Link: [www.scottbouch.com/rtfm](http://www.scottbouch.com/rtfm)

Please see site for usage terms,  
and more aircraft documents.

