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PART 2 : SECTION 1

CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR FLIGHT

Introduction

1. The successful completion of any flight depends largely on the thoroughness of the preparations made by the captain and crew before take-off. The captain is finally responsible for these preparations and it is his duty to see that his crew are prepared for the intended flight. Before flight, the pilot must be certain that :—

- (a) He understands perfectly the object of the sortie, and has done everything necessary to achieve the object.
- (b) His personal fitness is such that he will carry out the sortie correctly and safely.
- (c) The relevant order books have been read and understood.
- (d) He has received the appropriate briefings for the flight.
- (e) All passengers have been briefed for the flight and know their emergency drills.
- (f) He has sufficient knowledge of his aircraft.
- (g) His flying clothing and safety equipment is complete and in good repair.
- (h) The flight has been properly authorized, and the Form 700 checked and signed.

Personal Fitness

2. The common use of high-speed, high-altitude aircraft increases the need for all flying personnel to be constantly aware of their health. Maintenance of the required standard of health has a large influence on the alertness and determination required to obtain the best from high-performance aircraft ; the safety of the aircraft and its crew can be jeopardized by an unfit pilot. The necessary standard of fitness can only be achieved and maintained by moderation and regular exercise.

Flying Order Book

3. Air Ministry Flying Orders, Command and Group Air Staff Instructions, and the Station Flying Order Book should be read by all personnel before flying solo from an airfield for the first time. These books should be read periodically to keep abreast of new orders.

BRIEFING

Flight Planning and Air Traffic Control

4. A flight outside the local area requires a briefing to cover the navigation of the route and any restrictions in the area through which the flight is planned. The briefing often takes the form of "self briefing" by the individual concerned, from information at his disposal in the Flight Planning Section.

Meteorology

5. The nature of the flight will govern the amount of meteorological information required, but in general no flight should be undertaken without obtaining information about the weather en route and at the landing and alternate airfields.

6. Before finally deciding to fly, the conditions expected on the flight should be related to the experience of the crew, the rating of the pilot, the equipment available in the aircraft, and the facilities available for instrument approaches at the destination.

7. If meteorological facilities are not available at the departure aerodrome the information should be obtained from the nearest airfield with such facilities.

Passengers

8. The aircraft captain is responsible for seeing that his passengers are fully briefed before the flight begins. The items to be covered during a briefing of this kind will vary with the circumstances but the captain should be satisfied that passengers understand :—

- (a) That the captain of the aircraft is in command of the aircraft and all persons in it, irrespective of rank, whilst in flight.
- (b) The use of the safety straps, and the crash and ditching positions.
- (c) The manipulation of the escape hatches, and the dinghy position to take up for a ditching.
- (d) How to fit oxygen masks and operate the oxygen flow controls if oxygen is to be used.
- (e) How to fit and operate parachutes, if they are carried, and the correct exits to be used.
- (f) The no smoking or naked lights rule when applicable.

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A.P. 129, VOL. 2, PART 2, SECT. 1, CHAP. 4

OTHER PREPARATIONS

Knowledge of Aircraft

9. Pilot's Notes contain details of operating data and aircraft limitations. It is essential that a pilot should have a thorough knowledge of the Pilot's Notes for the type he is to fly. Further information about the aircraft, its systems, and ancillaries may be gained from Volume 1 of the Aircraft Handbook.

Flying Clothing

10. Royal Air Force personnel on flying duties are issued, on loan, with the necessary flying clothing and safety equipment. This equipment should at all times be well cared for and returned for periodical inspection. Serviceability checks should be done by the user before each flight. The use of overalls and gloves when flying is important to give some protection against flash burns and to protect the uniform.

11. The type and amount of safety equipment carried will depend on the type of aircraft and its role. Except in approved transport aircraft parachutes will normally be carried and should always be checked for serviceability; parachute harnesses should be worn in the air. When flying over or near water all crew members should wear life jackets (A.M.F.O. 369/4 refers). Although Trans-

port Command aircraft, when carrying passengers, do not normally carry parachutes, dinghies and life jackets for all passengers are carried for flights over water.

12. **Dinghy Emergency Deflating.** Whenever the dinghy pack forms part of the seat it is advisable to carry, in an easily accessible pocket, some form of sharp instrument that can be used to puncture a dinghy that inflates unexpectedly.

Authorization of Flights

13. All flights should be correctly authorized in accordance with Air Ministry Flying Orders Nos. 46 to 52 (see Chap. 5).

Form 700

14. Form 700 should be carefully checked immediately before proceeding to the aircraft, and the serviceability and fuel state noted before signing. The completion of this form by the pilot implies his acceptance of the aircraft in the state recorded therein (see Chap. 5).

Conclusion

15. The detailed preparations necessary before flight are numerous and varied. A definite sequence should be established and adhered to, so that the minimum effort is involved and nothing is overlooked before flight.

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