



634 VOLUNTEER GLIDING SQUADRON

**GUIDE FOR VISITING AND
ESCORTING STAFF**

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Eligibility for Flying
3. Fitness to Fly
4. Attendance and Arrival
5. Loose Articles
6. Clothing
7. Messing
8. Mobile Telephones, Cameras, Personal Stereos, etc.
9. Briefings
10. Flying Allocation
11. Gliding Squadron Duty Executive and Duty Instructor
12. Your Responsibilities
13. Weather
14. Departure
15. Suggestions
16. Useful Telephone Numbers

1. INTRODUCTION

The following guide has been written for staff escorting cadets to 634 Volunteer Gliding Squadron (VGS) at MoD St Athan. It explains the main principles of our operation and the responsibilities that you have as an escorting squadron staff member. Undoubtedly, there will be other issues that are not covered so please do not hesitate to ask further questions as necessary.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR FLYING

To be eligible to fly, cadets must have been enrolled and in possession of their Form 3822, Record of Service book. *A cadet who arrives at the VGS without his F3822 will not be allowed to fly.* On arrival at the VGS a member of staff will check the F3822 to ensure that the Squadron CO has endorsed it and that parental consent has been given to fly. If they have not previously done so, cadets will be asked to carry out the "parachute pull test". All of the above must be satisfied before the cadet will be allowed to fly. Additionally, cadets weighing over 103 kilograms (clothed) will be unable to fly in the Vigilant aircraft, as there is a cockpit weight limit. If you are in any doubt about a cadet's weight, please check before you leave for St Athan, as it would be very disappointing for a cadet to turn up and not be allowed to fly. We will double-check all cadets' weights on calibrated scales at the Sqn, as we need accurate information to do the necessary pre-flight weight and balance calculations on the aircraft.

3. FITNESS TO FLY

Due to the marked pressure differentials which can be experienced with altitude, it can be dangerous for cadets to fly if they are suffering from colds or 'flu, as to do so can result in a ruptured eardrum or severe headaches and pain. Additionally, other illnesses, recent operations or disabilities should be discussed with OC 634 VGS before attending for flying. In some cases it may be necessary to obtain a doctor's report and send it via HQAC to the Command Flight Medical Officer (CFMO) at HQ Air Command (HQ Air), RAF High Wycombe for advice on suitability to fly. This can take several weeks so early communication is vital.

4. ATTENDANCE AND ARRIVAL

Your Squadron has been allocated a number of Gliding Induction Course (GIC) sorties. Failure to attend means that those sorties, which might have been allocated to another squadron, are lost. It is imperative, therefore, that you advise the Wing Gliding Liaison Officer (WGLO) without delay, should your squadron be unable to meet its commitment or be unable to attend for any reason. The more notice you give to the WGLO, the greater chance he has of finding a replacement squadron. Escorting staff and cadets are to arrive at the VGS HQ by no later than 1030 hours. This will give you time to telephone the VGS first thing in the morning to confirm that gliding will take place during the day, helping you to avoid a wasted journey if the weather is unsuitable. If you expect to be late, please advise the Duty Instructor (DI) so that he can programme the morning's flying activities accordingly. On arrival please report to the DI or a member of staff.

5. LOOSE ARTICLES

Accidents or damage can occur if loose articles are carried in the aircraft cockpit. Cadets and other flying passengers will be required to ensure that they are not carrying any loose articles. Cash, keys, pens etc. should be left in their bags in the Sqn HQ. Hair grips, ear rings or studs, necklaces and bracelets are not to be worn in or around the aircraft.

6. CLOTHING

Cadets and uniformed staff should attend St Athan in working uniform and CIs in smart casual dress. All aircrew are required to wear fire-retardant coveralls and flying gloves in the Vigilant and these will be issued to the cadets on arrival. (Visitors will have to sign for the clothing and it will need to be signed back in after flying.) They should change into them before briefing, taking care to remove loose articles from pockets of trousers, etc. worn under the flying suits. Suitable sunglasses are always advisable and should be brought with you. The airfield is a very exposed place so please ensure the following:

Winter. The airfield can be wet and very cold. Cadets should therefore wear warm clothing in layers. These layers can then be increased or decreased as necessary.

Summer. The airfield can be hot and dry. Light cotton clothes, which offer protection from the sun, are best. Sun block creams and a suitable protective hat are also desirable. Baseball caps with large peaks are not permitted to be worn when flying.

Boots and shoes with a deep tread must not be worn in the aircraft cockpit. Loose floppy tongues in training shoes will be required to be tucked inside the shoe and securely fastened. There should not be loops, buckles or other appendages to footwear, which could snag on the rudder pedals or other controls when entering or exiting the cockpit, particularly in an emergency. Escorting adults should check their cadets' footwear is suitable before leaving their departure point in the morning. Cadets wearing inappropriate footwear will not be permitted to fly.

7. MESSING

There are no messing facilities available for GIC cadets. *Sufficient food and drink must be brought for the day.* Coffee and tea making facilities are provided in the HQ and visitors may help themselves to these at any time, free of charge.

8. MOBILE TELEPHONES, CAMERAS, PERSONAL STEREOS, ETC.

Mobile telephones are not to be used on the airfield for safety and security reasons. Visitors may use mobile telephones in the VGS HQ buildings only. Cameras may be used on the

airfield but advice should be sought from the DI beforehand. Personal stereos, iPods, etc. are not to be used on the airfield at any time for flight safety and personal safety reasons.

9. BRIEFINGS

Prior to getting involved in the flying operations the VGS Duty Pilot will brief visitors regarding Health and Safety issues, and on the activities of the day. A short video will be shown which explains the Vigilant operation and flight safety issues. It is important that escorting staff also attend this brief as it will advise them on what is expected of their cadets during the day's activities.

10. FLYING ALLOCATION

HQAC have set the flying priorities in the following order:

1. Mandatory check flights and essential Staff Continuation Training (SCT) necessary for instructors and pilots to retain currency and competency;
2. Cadet dual training (GIC, GS and AGT);
3. Other staff training;
4. All other gliding.

SCT has the highest priority because without trained pilots there would be no flying. The VGS will always endeavour to complete the task set for the day and it is very unlikely that cadets will not be flown. If possible, escorting staff will be offered a flight, if they are eligible to fly.

11. GLIDING SQUADRON DUTY EXECUTIVE (GSDE) AND DUTY INSTRUCTOR (DI)

The Gliding Squadron Duty Executive (GSDE) is either the Commanding Officer, when he is present and not flying, or a senior instructor nominated by him as his representative for the day. The GSDE is responsible for the daily administrative running of the VGS and represents it in liaison with MoD St Athan and other organisations.

The DI is a nominated senior instructor who controls airfield operations when the St Athan Air Traffic Control tower is not manned. He is responsible for the safe and efficient conduct of flying operations. Irrespective of rank, the DI has legal authority over other staff (visiting or otherwise) at all times whilst on the airfield. If you have any queries about the day's operation, the DI should be able to answer them. If the DI is not in the HQ building when you arrive at St Athan, it would be helpful for you to call him on the telephone in the staff crew room on ext. 6265 to announce your arrival and to discuss any particular cadet requirements. If, at any time during the day you wish to discuss anything, please feel free to call the DI on the phone. We will endeavour to keep you informed of progress with the flying programme, but sometimes we may be short of duty staff and those who are present will often be busy out on the dispersal or elsewhere, so may not be available to advise you.

12. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The staff at the VGS have responsibilities for safety and the efficient fulfilment of flying operations. To assist with the smooth running of the operation you will be expected to monitor and look after your cadets, ensuring their good behaviour and that they carry out any tasks that they are set. Escorting staff may be asked to help the cadets don and doff parachutes, check they are not carrying loose articles, monitor their preparedness for flying and help with other duties as requested by the DI. Any medical problems arising during the period of duty must be brought to the attention of the DI without delay.

13. WEATHER

As part of the flying operations the meteorological report (met) is obtained from Air Command Met Office at RAF Lyneham. During the day the VGS may receive updates. It is the DI's responsibility to decide, with the aid of the met report, if the weather is suitable for flying. If the weather looks bad before you leave home it doesn't necessarily mean that it will be bad at MoD St Athan as weather patterns can be very localised. If you are concerned about the weather you may, of course, telephone the VGS in order to get our views, but please do not let this delay your arrival. The Wing Gliding Liaison Officer will advise you by no later than the evening prior, if flying has been cancelled due to other factors. Even during periods of inclement weather the VGS staff have many tasks to carry out, but every effort will be made to keep your cadets occupied. On the odd occasion that the weather appears as if it is going to be bad all day, a decision to stand down is usually made shortly after lunch time. Although OC 634 VGS may stand squadrons down from flying during winter months if the weather is unsuitable or outside limits, or for other operational reasons from time to time, the flying operation will never be cancelled on the strength of a poor weather forecast as forecasters have been known to be wrong. (Remember Michael Fish, "No madam, there will definitely not be a hurricane tonight!")

14. DEPARTURE

If you need to depart the airfield at a particular time please communicate this to the DI when you arrive. However, you should plan for a full day at St Athan, as completion of the GIC task will be dependant on the weather, other tasking, aircraft serviceability states and pilot availability.

15. SUGGESTIONS

Although every effort will be made by the staff and cadets of 634 VGS to make your visit to the Sqn an enjoyable one, it is recognised that things do not always go according to plan, and it may be that you feel we could improve our systems or procedures. We are always receptive to recommendations and we keep a visitors' comments book in the cadets' crew room for you to make your comments as appropriate. You should also make a comment in the appropriate box on the green attendance form, which you bring with you. However, if you feel that you need to complain about something, please speak to the DI, at the earliest opportunity, and he will do what he can to help. If your complaint is of a more serious nature, you should write to the WGLO, who will take it up on your behalf with the VGS Commanding Officer.

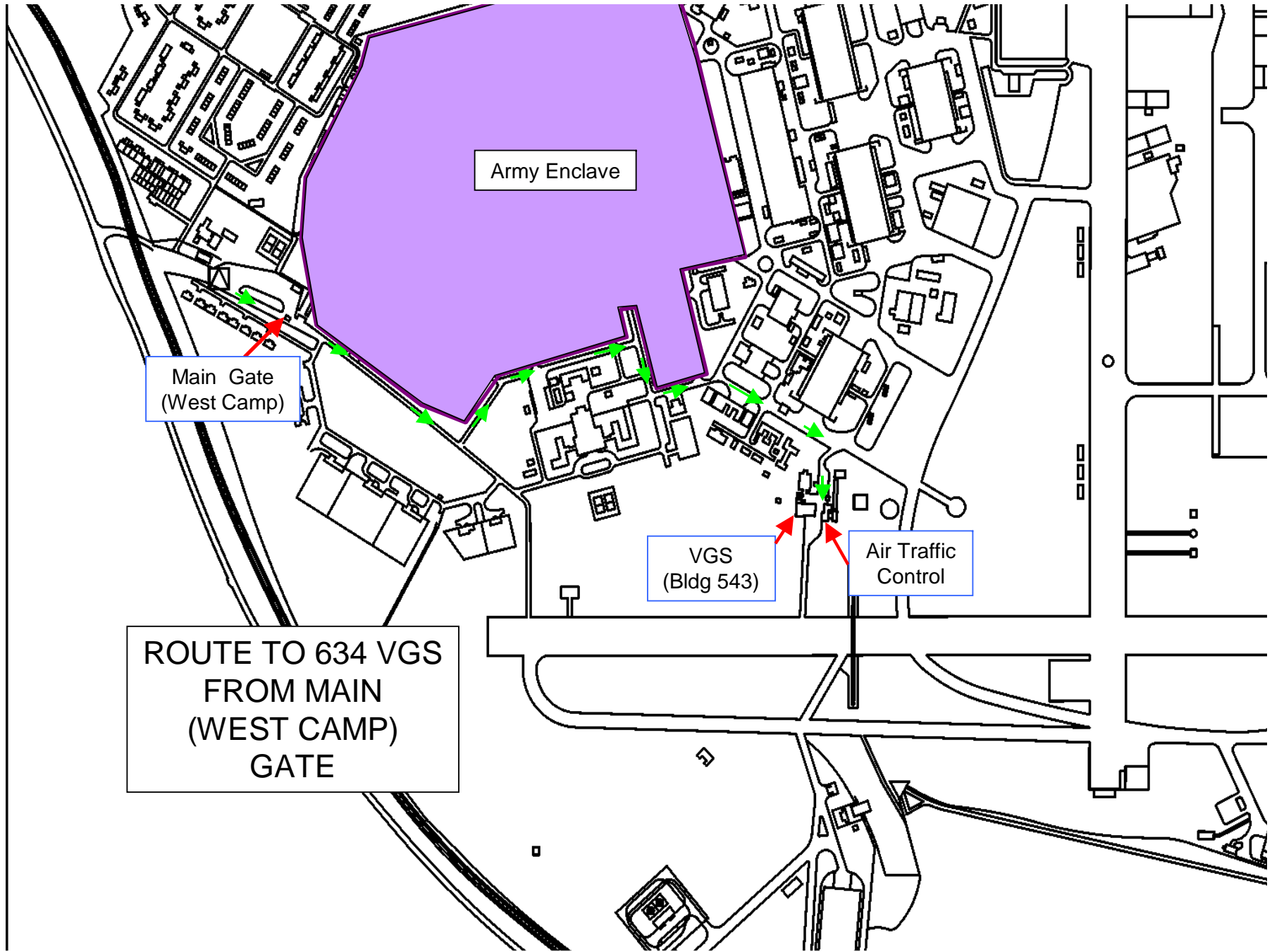
16. USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

634 VGS HQ	(OC)	01446 798047
	(Fax)	01446 798054
	(Mobile)	07776 227348

E D Griffith

E D GRIFFITH
Sqn Ldr RAFVR(T)
OC 634 VGS

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ROUTE TO 634 VGS FROM EAST CAMP GATE

