

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL “Wizard Prangs”



## A Summary of RAF Cranwell Aircraft Accidents

With Extra Information Provided by Paul McMillan

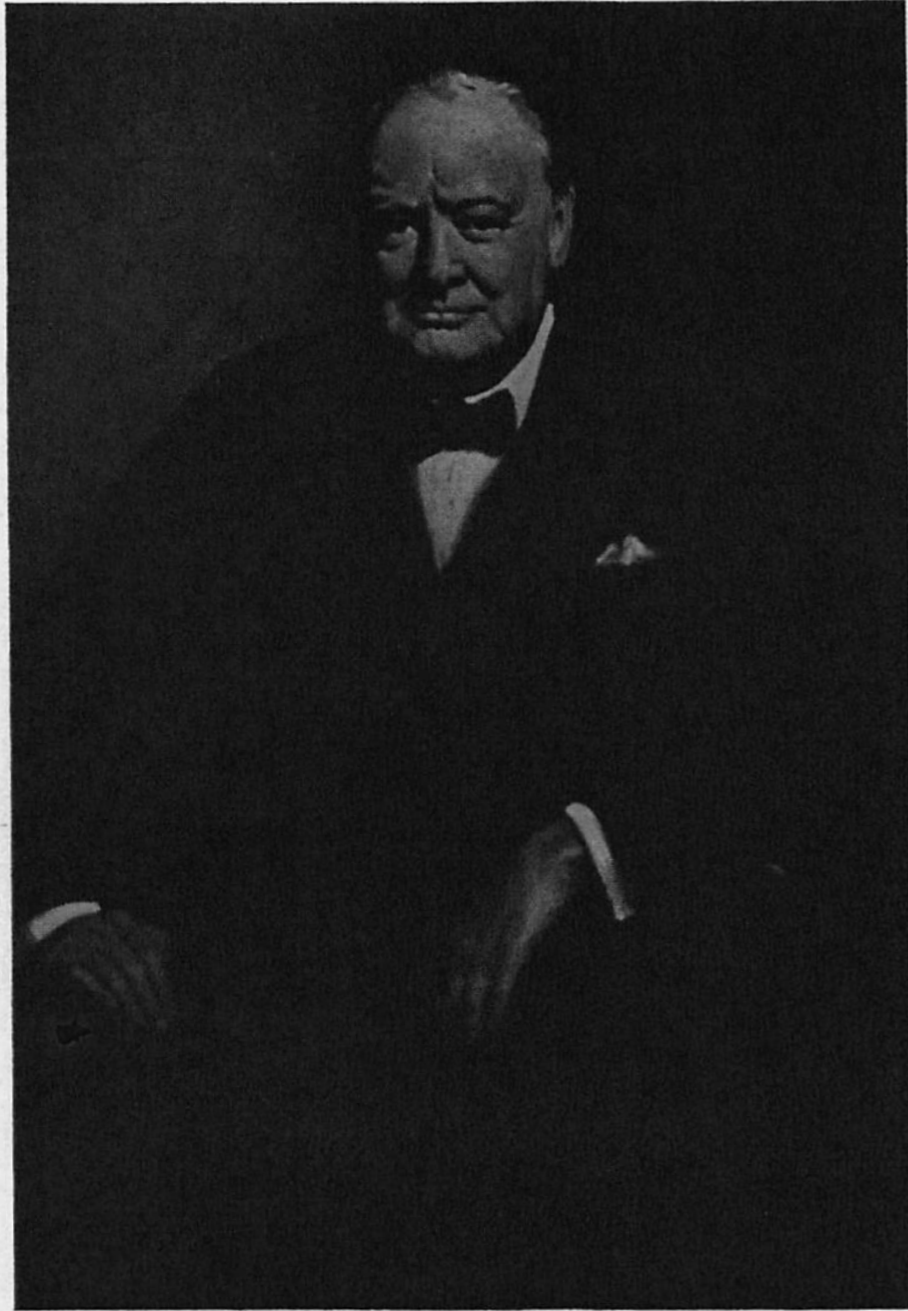
# **With Respect to Those Who Lost Their Lives Flying**

**Since Wilbur and Orville Wright made their first successful flights in 1903, the opportunity to take to the skies has captured the hearts and imagination of many, if perhaps not all. The 1920s and 1930s saw a rapid growth of flying clubs, as the opportunity to learn to fly came within the financial grasp of the general public, many of whom sought the exhilaration and reward of a new pastime that would extend their horizons both physically and mentally.**

**Learning from the Great War, others saw the potential and new dimension that air warfare could bring to the defence of our homelands. For the UK, great leaders such as Churchill, Smutz and Trenchard were inspired to form a new, strategically independent air force, the Royal Air Force. Largely resourced by the “weekend flyer” enthusiasts who later joined the RAF VR, the RAF’s success in the Battle of Britain, for example, is a direct descendant of the enthusiasm for flight shown by so many young men in the 1930s.**

**But sometimes flying can “go wrong”. This album pays tribute to those who at least tried, even if it did at times “go wrong”. “Wizard Prangs” is an attempt to capture the enthusiasm and dedication shown by so many to master the art of flight, in most cases to provide a valuable contribution to our Service. With apologies to those who might find crumpled heaps of aircraft wreckage upsetting, spare a thought for those who persevered regardless of the perils they could face (and often did).**

# Summer 1965 - A Tribute to Airmen



Message to  
ROYAL AIR FORCE CADET COLLEGE MAGAZINE  
SEPTEMBER, 1920

Nothing that has ever happened in the world before has offered to man such an opportunity for individual personal prowess as the air fighting of the Great War. Fiction has never portrayed such extraordinary combats, such hairbreadth escapes, such absolute superiority to risk, such dazzling personal triumphs. The devotion and courage of the airman was no higher than that of his comrade on the land or on the sea ; nor were his trials or sufferings greater. But the battle to the death in the high air called forth a combination, for the purposes of war, of spirit, eye and hand more complete and more harmonious than any previously believed to be within the range of human nature.

It is to rival, and no doubt to excel, these feats of your forerunners in the Service that you are now training yourselves, and I, for one, look forward with confidence to the day when you who are now at the College will make the name of the Royal Air Force feared and respected throughout the world.”

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

**Remember, it can happen to anyone!**



# Avro 504A (with A504C Fin/Rudder)

Avro 2930 crashed on landing at Redcar, 21/11/16 - courtesy Paul McMillan



# Early 1920s - DH9A Crash Cranwell



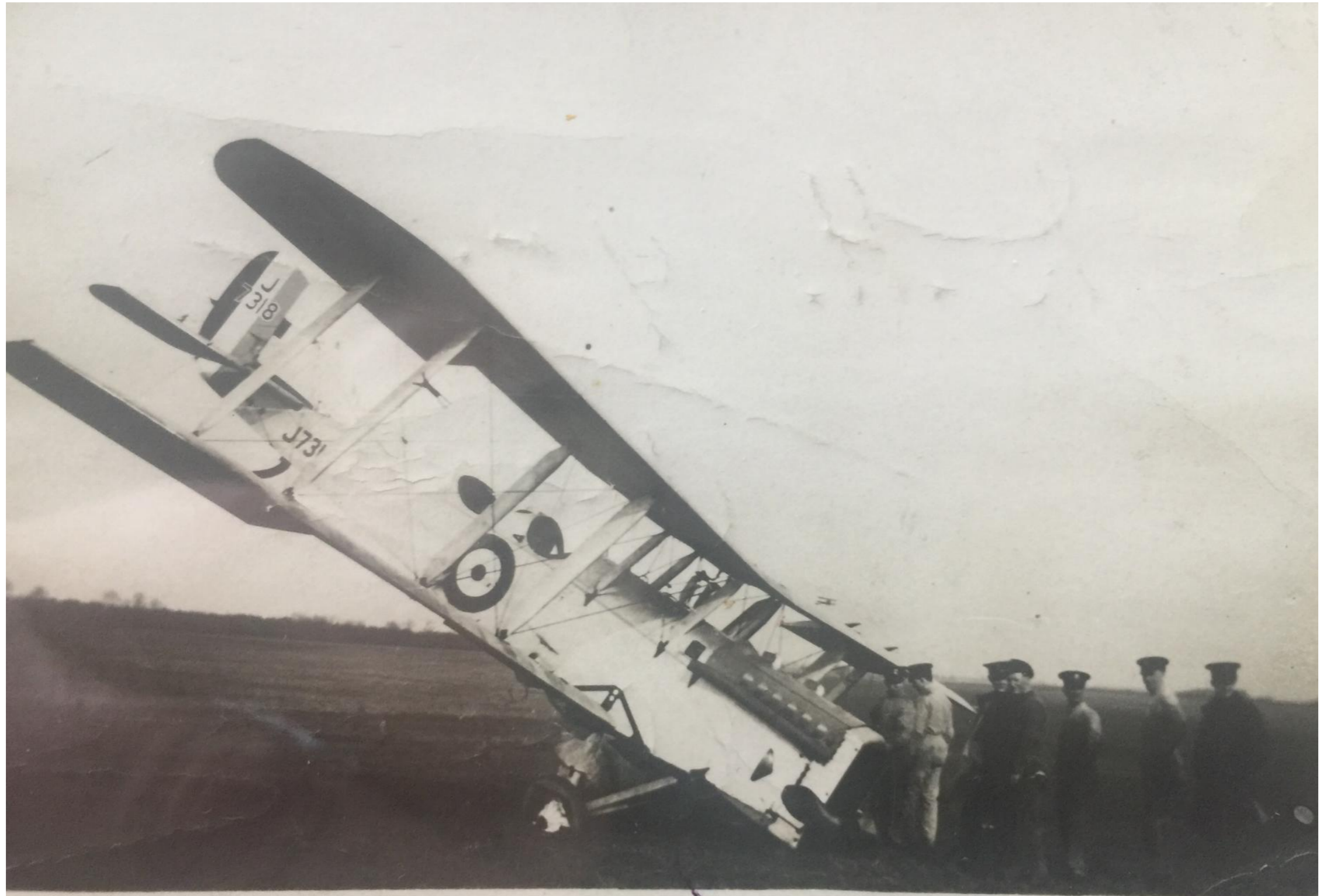
# July 1925 - Gloster Grebe II

Believed to be Grebe II J7380 of 29 Sqn - courtesy Paul McMillan



# 1926 - DH9a Crash Cranwell

Possibly J7318 hit by Snipe E6310 taking off; pilots survived; 8/6/26 - courtesy Paul McMillan





# 22 Oct 29 - Siskin IIIA “Chinese Three Pointer”

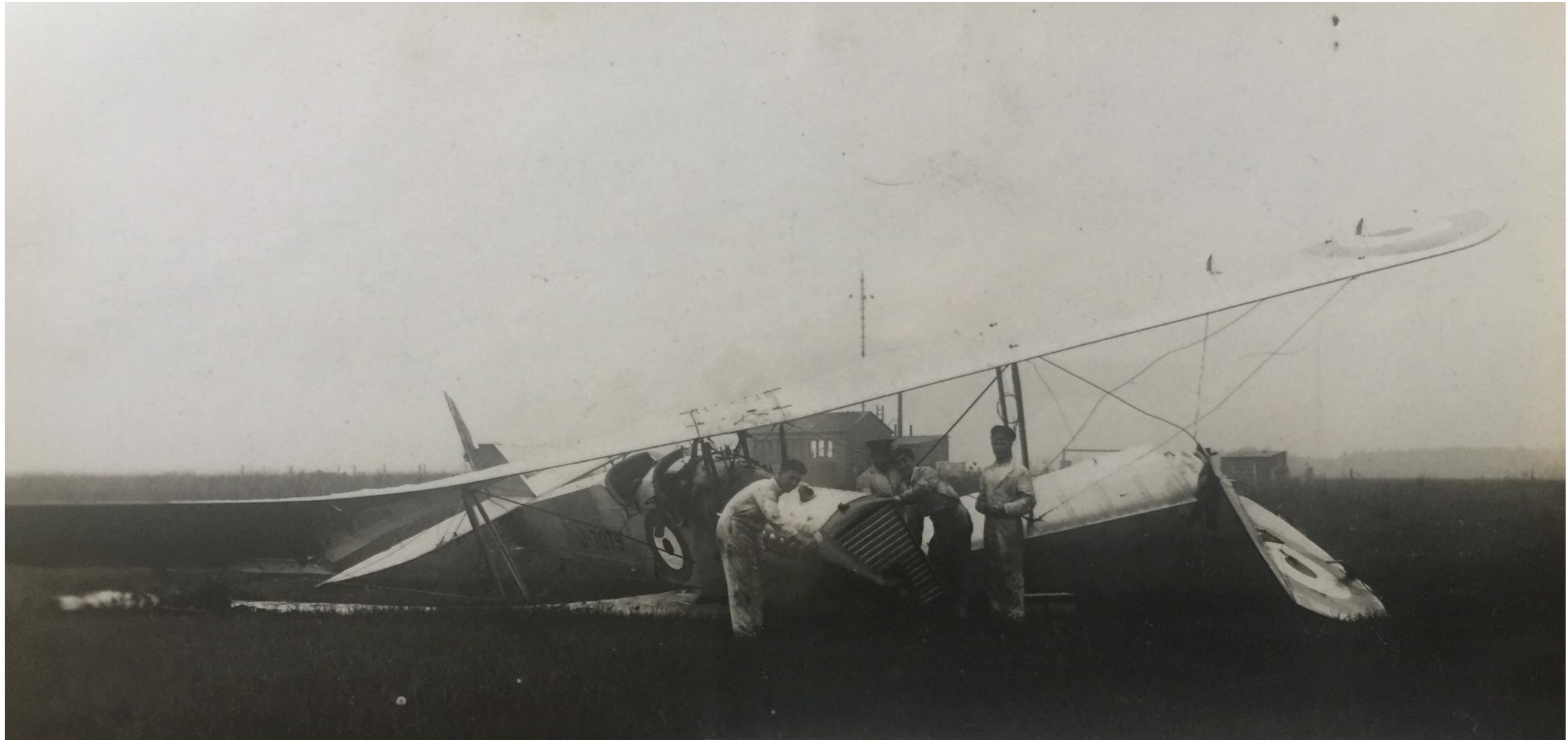
Date of crash - courtesy Paul McMillan



*Siskin IIIa crashed by Flight Cadet Clarkson. Landing with drift caused this type of prang - which was fairly common! Known in those days as a 'Chinese Three Pointer' - one wheel, one wing and the tail skid.*

# 1920s - Unknown Aircraft at Cranwell

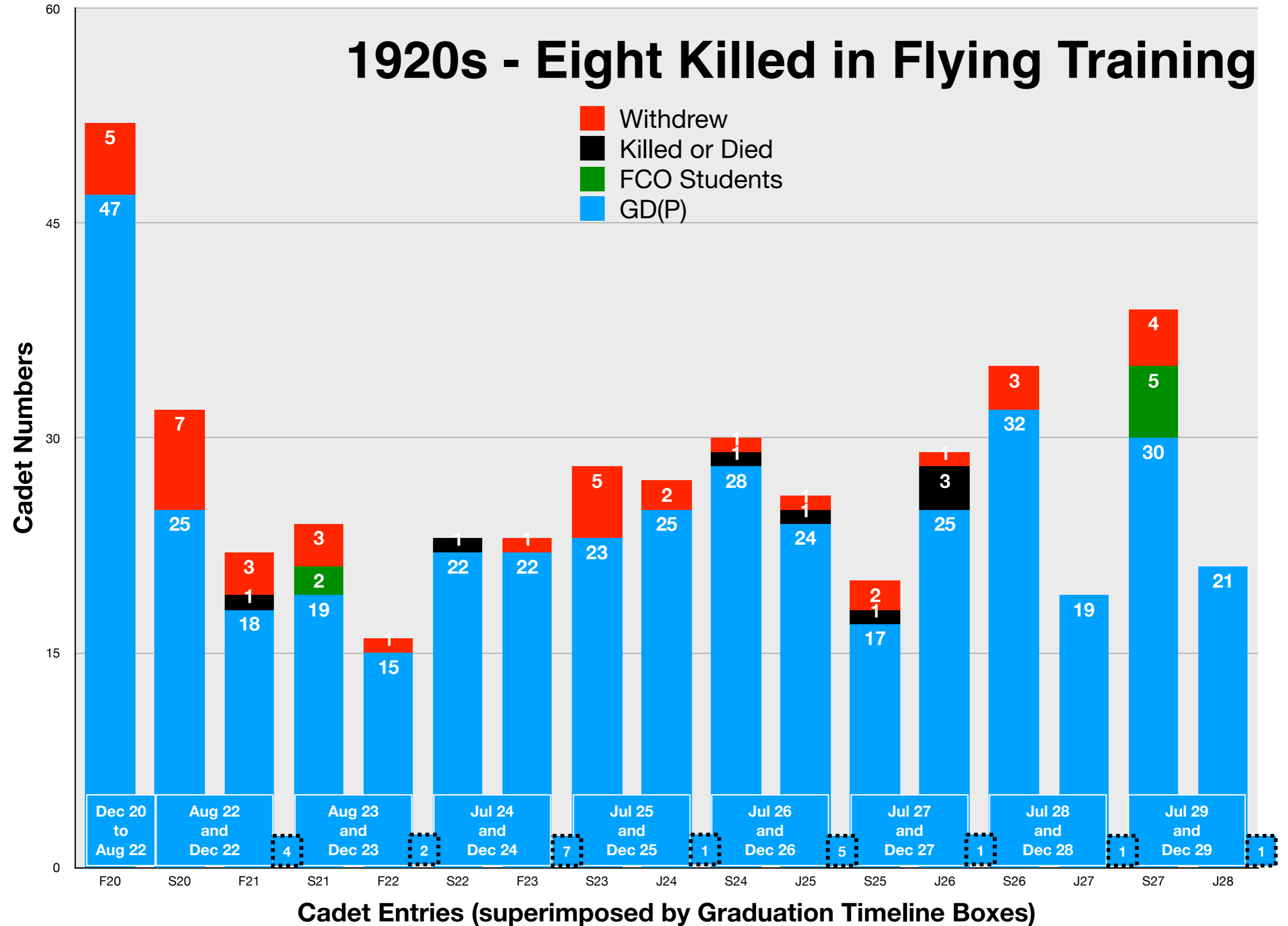
Believed to be DG9A J7050 which was at Cranwell till May 29- courtesy Paul McMillan



# Cadet Graduations in the 1920s

## 1920s - Eight Killed in Flying Training

- Withdrew
- Killed or Died
- FCO Students
- GD(P)



# 1930s - List of Parachute Incidents at RAF Cranwell

Details donated - courtesy Paul McMillan

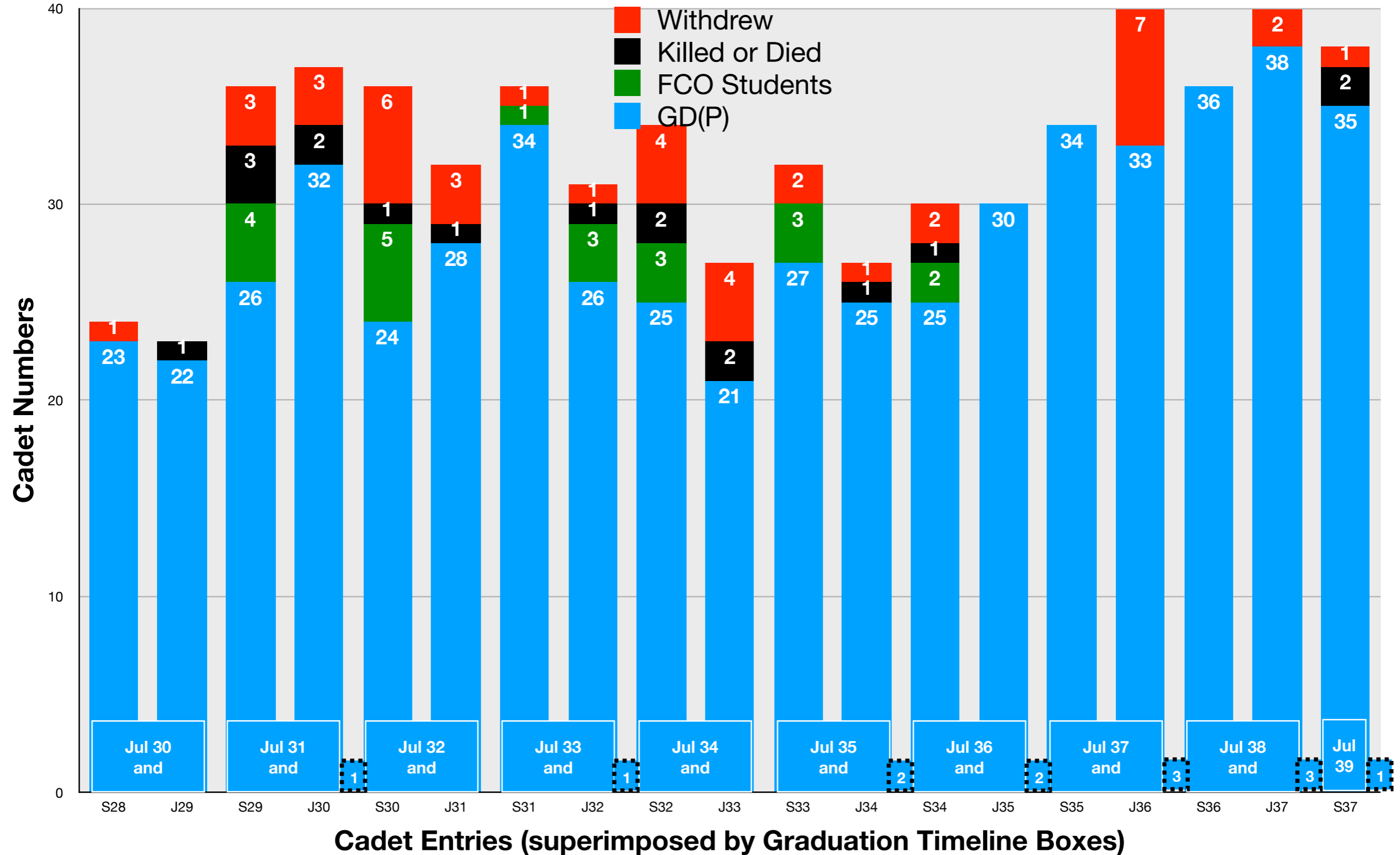
<b>Flight Cadet Involved</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Details</b>
Charles Eric <b>Littler</b>	10/4/30	Bristol Fighter	Baled out after attempted inverted spin. Altitude 2000 feet. Safe landing. Aircraft badly damaged crashing outside the airfield.
Jack <b>Bradley</b>	30/6/30	Armstrong Whitworth Siskin IIDC	Unauthorised aerobatics breaking up aircraft.
Aspy Merwan <b>Engineer</b>	20/2/33	Armstrong Whitworth Siskin J7176	Of the Indian Air Force attached to the RAF.
John Noel <b>Dowland-Ryan GC</b>	12/4/35	Bristol Bulldog IIA K2212	Near West Willoughby, Ancaster, Lincs.
William Innes Cosmo 'Charles' <b>Inness</b>	21/10/35	Bristol Bulldog IIA K2166	At Cranwell. Lincs.
Howard Frizelle 'Billy' <b>Burton</b>	7/10/36	Hawker Fury I	At Navenby, Lincs, collided with K5681 during a camera gun practice.
Michael <b>Savage</b>	17/5/38	Hawker Audax I K5124	At Hutton Buscel, near Scarborough, Yorks.

# 1936 - Avro Tutor Cranwell

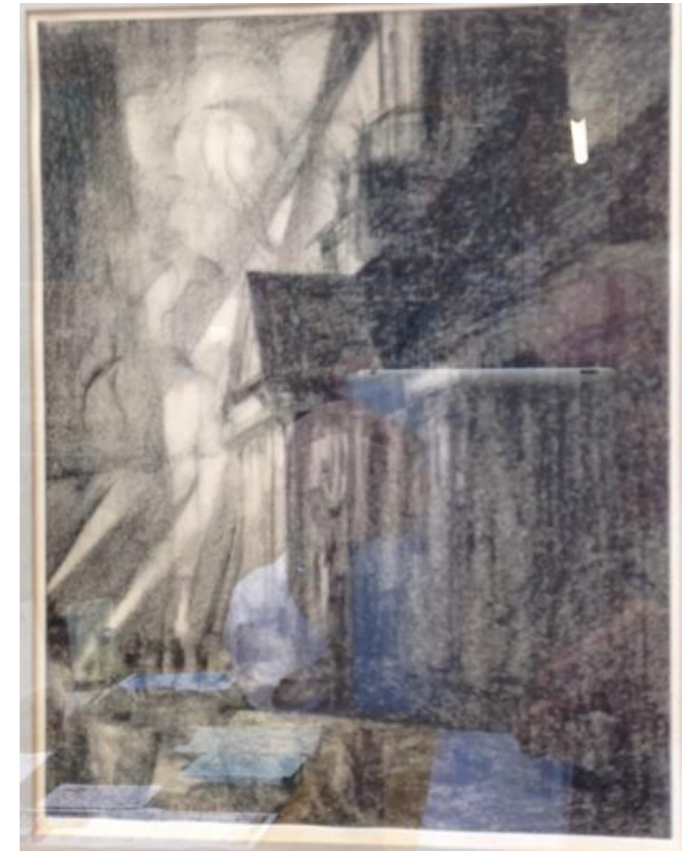


# 1930s - Seventeen Killed in Flying Training

## Cadet Graduations in the 1930s



# 1942 - Whitley Bomber "lands" on College Hall

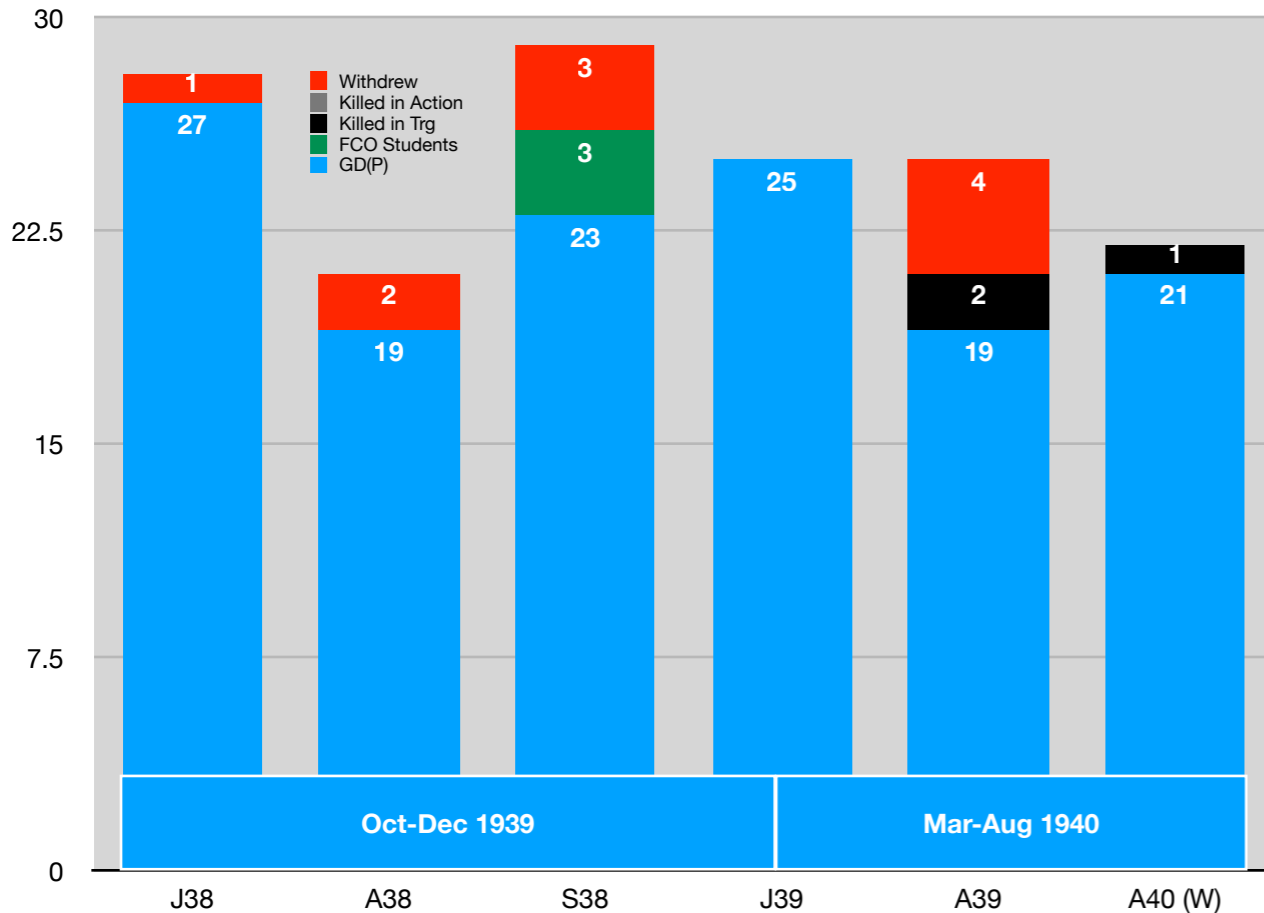


The Whitley Bomber which crashed at Cranwell on 18 March 1942 caused the only damage to College Hall throughout the war period. The three crew members of the aircraft were sadly killed in the accident, but the personnel who would have been sleeping in the building later that night were spared injury as they were at the cinema at the time of the crash. The pictures show the incident itself and the various stages of repair to the College buildings. The brass engine plate recovered from the wreckage of the aircraft is also displayed.



# Immediate Pre & Post War Year - Three Killed in Training

**Cadet Graduations in the Early 1940s  
(Merged with Early SFTS Courses (1-4))**



**Cadet Entries (superimposed by Graduation Timeline)**

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
CRANWELL	28.5.39.		Empire Air Day. Station open to the general public, and flying display given.	
	30.5.39.		Recruits Training Wing closed down, and was transferred to No. 3 R.A.F. Depot, Padgate, Leam.	
	31.5.39.		School of Clerks Accounting moved from Lymington to Cranwell.	
	1.6.39.		Lieutenant-Colonel E.C. Mookler ceases to be employed as Assistant Adjutant, on transfer to the Army.	
	14.6.39.		Station Sports Day held in the Stadium, to select teams for the R.A.F. Championships at Uxbridge.	
	16.6.39.		Lieutenant T.A. Tindle took over the duties of Assistant Adjutant vice Lieutenant Col E.C. Mookler.	C.P. 36/39.
	1.7.39.		Group Captain H.V. Strugnell, MC., assumed Command of R.A.F. Station, Cranwell w.e.f. 1.7.39. vice Air Commodore D. Barrie, AFC., posted as Officer in Charge Records.	C.P. 22/39.
	15.7.39.		Flight Lieutenant G.W. Black took over the duties of Station Adjutant vice Squadron Leader J.H. Harris, who took over the duties of Squadron Leader Administrative.	
	18.7.39.		Acting Flight Lieutenant H.M.C. Harwood promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant w.e.f. 14.4.39.	C.P. 22/39.
	24.7.39.		Squadron Leader W.J.H. Linley posted to R.A.F. Station, Hemswell.	
	4.8.39.		Reverend J.M. Wright granted a Short Service Commission w.e.f. 4.8.39.	C.P. 24/39.
	25.8.39.		Wing Commander A.G.N. Bellfield assumed the duties of Senior Accountant Officer vice Wing Commander E.J. Groat w.e.f. 25.8.39. Wing Commander L.P.A. Hooper assumed the duties of Senior Equipment Officer vice Wing Commander A.H. Allan w.e.f. 25.8.39.	

Flight Lieutenant, Adjutant,  
R.A.F. STATION, CRANWELL.

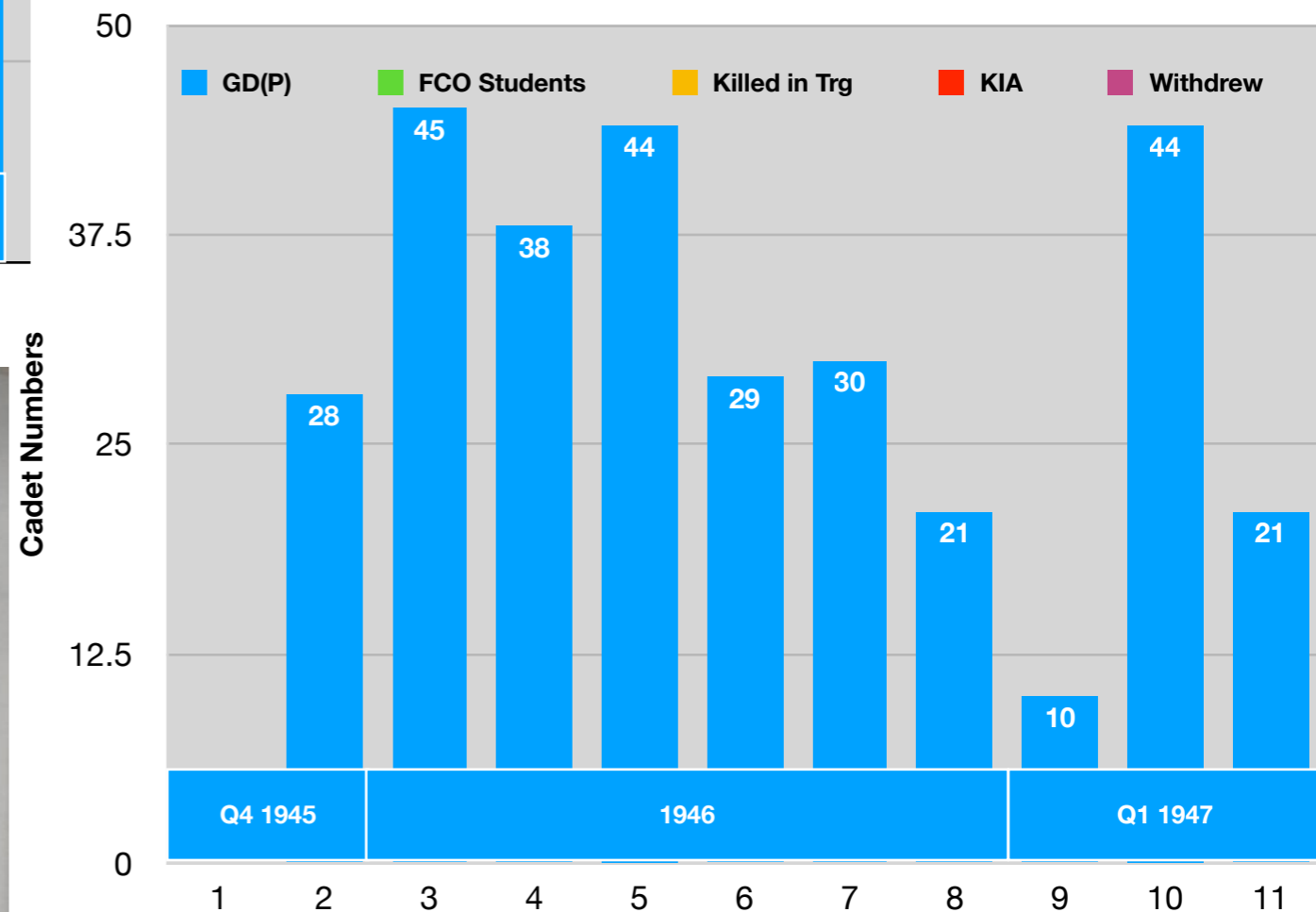
R.A.F. Form 540  
See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I. Para. 2340 and War Manual Pt. II, Chapter XX., and more in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK  
of (Unit or Formation) NO. 17 S.F.T.S., SPITALGATE. No. of pages 12

SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events
SPITALGATE	MAY	45	
	1		No. 17 S.F.T.S. left Cranwell and moved to Spitalgate, Grantham.
	5		Half Day unfit flying.
	6		Half Day unfit flying.
	8		Victory in Europe Day. Parades of whole Station at 09.00 hours and a broadcast given by Station Commander. Remainder of day observed as a holiday and extended to 14.00 hours on 9th May, 1945. No. 17 Refresher Course terminated. No. 19 Refresher Course commenced.
	14		Canadian personnel on Unit left for repatriation. Half Day unfit flying.

**19 FTS Trainees 1945-47**

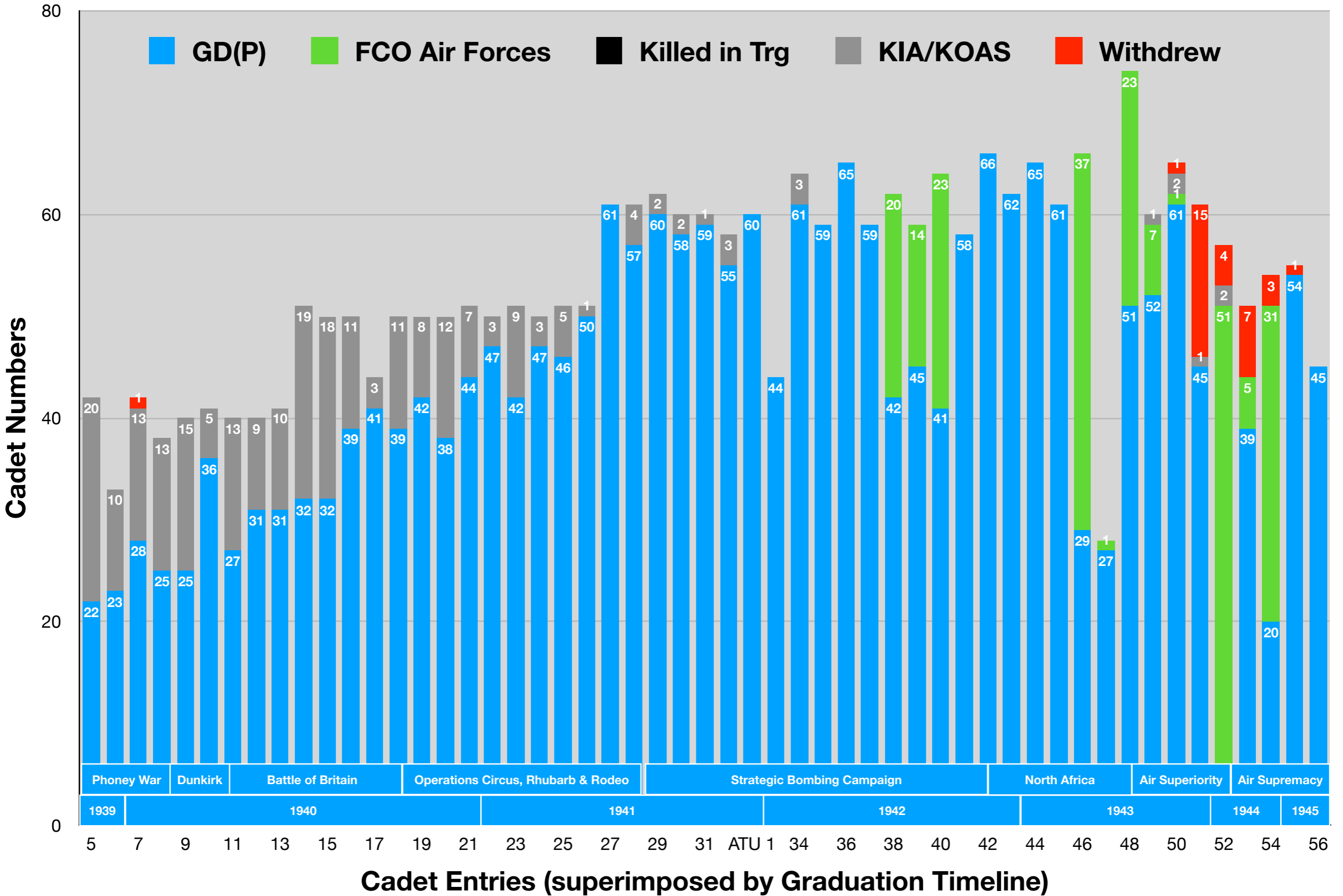


**Cadet Entries (superimposed by Graduation Timeline)**



# War Year Training Statistics

SFTS Trainees 1939 - 1945



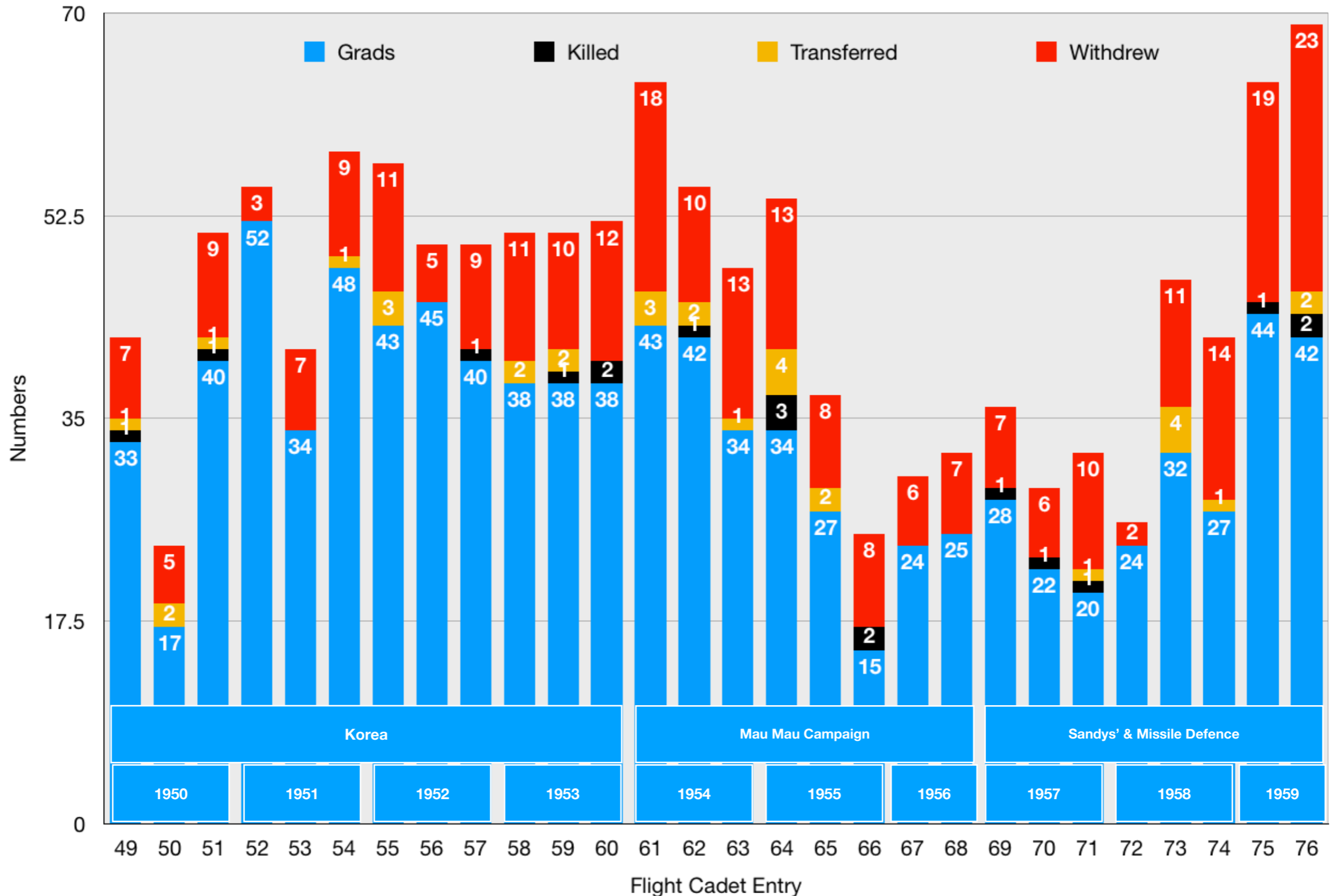
# 1950 - Harvard T2B



6 January 1950 *FX305*. a North American Harvard T.2B of the Royal Air Force College crashed during aerobatics new Coleby Hall, Lincolnshire, one killed.

# 1950s - Eighteen Killed in Training

## Flight Cadet Outputs



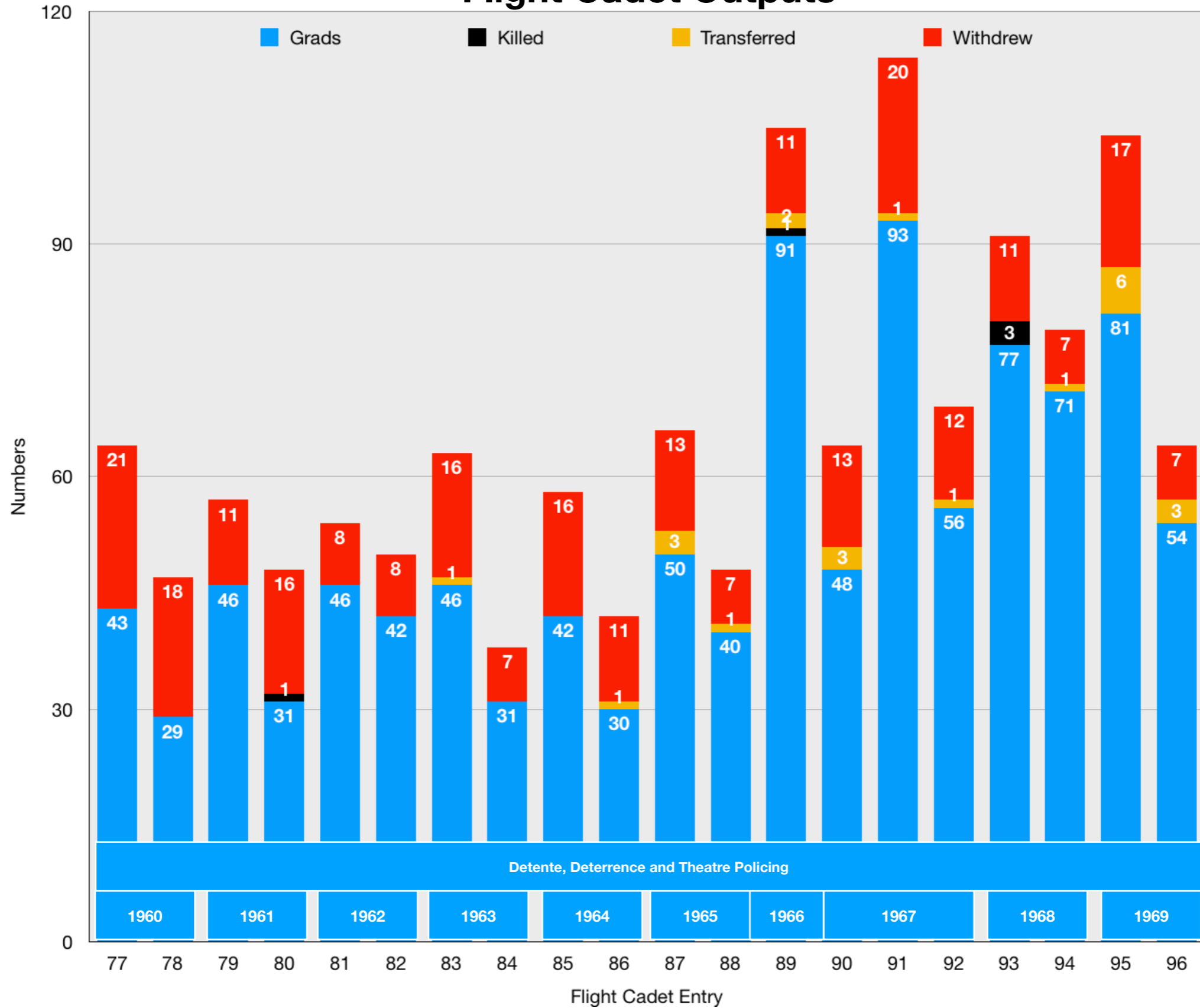
# 1960 - Percival Provost T1



31 May 1960 - *XF901* Percival Provost T.1, Royal Air Force College, stalled during a forced landing following an engine failure, one killed.

# 1960s - Five Killed in Training

## Flight Cadet Outputs

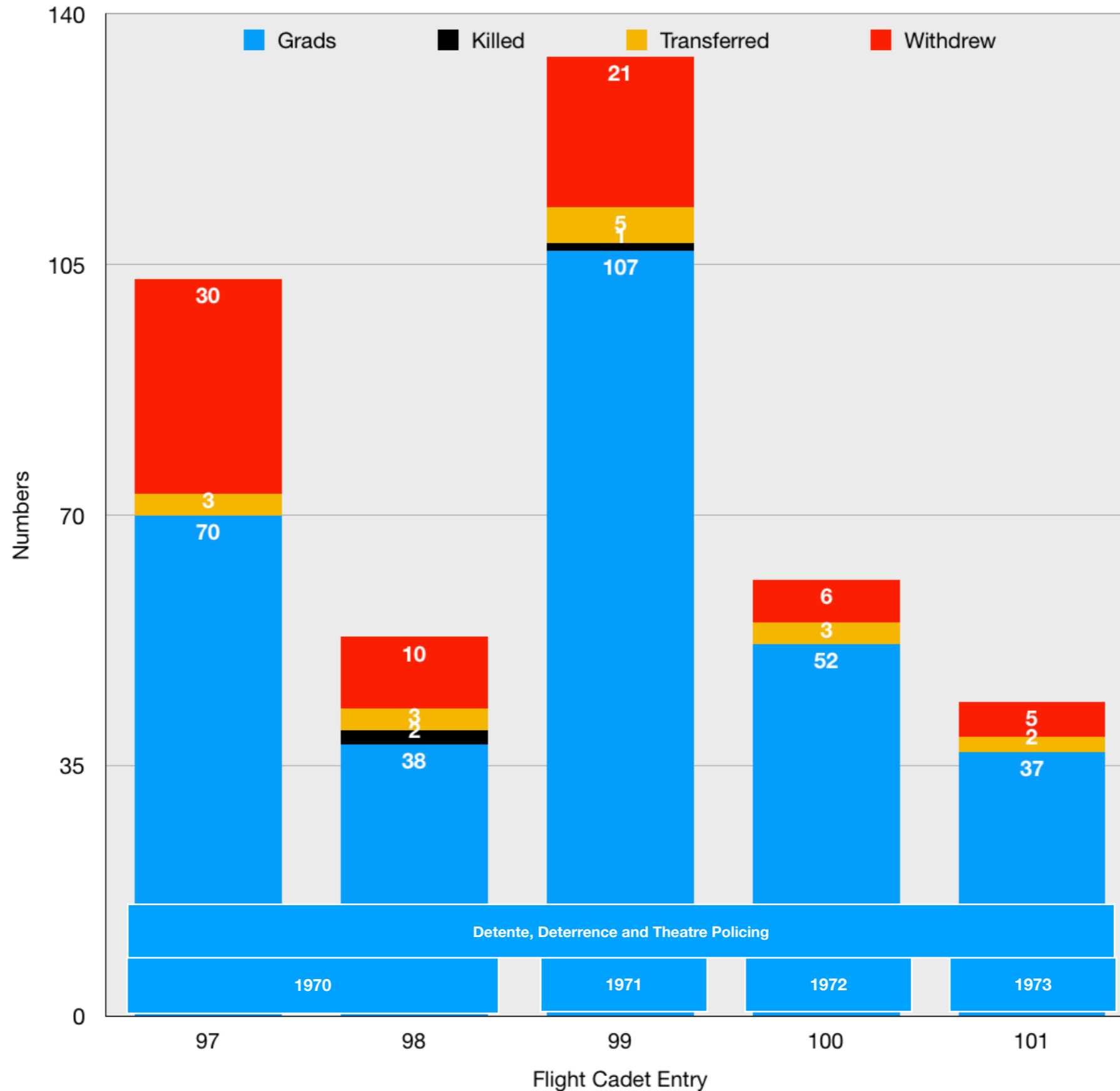


# 1970 - Jet Provost T4



30 April 1970 - *XP556* a Hunting Jet Provost T.4 of the Royal Air Force College flew into ground while on approach to RAF Cranwell, England, one killed.

# 1970s Flight Cadet Era Ends - Two Killed in Training



# 2013 - Tutor Aircraft Crash Lands Near Cranwell

