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Thrill of First Solo Flight Experienced by R.C.A.F. Men At Malton Elementary School

(Following is the fifth of a series of stories on Royal Canadian Air Force training operations.)

(By JOHN BASSETT JR.)
(Staff Writer, The Globe and Mail.)

The thrilling moment when the Royal Canadian Air Force pilot-in-training first soars into the blue, alone at the controls of his sleek little plane, comes during his training period at No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School at Malton.

There for eight weeks the aircraftman is drilled in lectures on groundwork necessary for every good pilot, and is given an elementary flying course that develops him from a green, earth-bound student into a confident technician, past his first solo, and ready for intermediate training.

The course is divided into two parts—groundwork and air training. Physical training lectures, lectures on armament, navigation, aero engines, theory of flight, parachutes, airmanship and signals take up 150 hours of the complete training period and are all considered in the groundwork category.

Armament lectures include the mechanics of a gun and shooting on a range. Aero engine lectures teach the student about the power plant on which his life depends. Theory of flight includes the basic principles of flying, such as the law of gravity. Parachute training includes packing and inspection of the chutes, but no jumping.

But to the student by far the most exciting part of his training at the elementary school is the fifty hours he spends in the air. About half the time is occupied in dual instruction and the rest for solo flying.

Another pleasant milestone for the aircraftman at elementary school is his first raise in pay, in the form of flying allowance. He is also eligible for his first promotion, and

many of the men who arrive as aircraftmen leave as leading aircraftmen.

His flying progress is carefully noted, and if he fails a stiff 20-hour test, he is not allowed to finish out the full fifty hours, and his chance of winning his wings has gone. An average of from two to five students out of fifty fail their twenty-hour test.

It is at the Elementary School that the student's "temperamental suitability" for flying is assessed, and it is decided if he has enough spirit for service flying. A report is sent on to the intermediate school on these important points of the prospective pilot's natural equipment.

In his twenty-hour test the young flyer must show his ability in taxiing, taking off, landing, steep turns, gliding turns, sideslipping, spinning, climbing, loops, half-rolls, slow rolls and forced landings. He is also sent on a solo flight of about 100 miles.

Instrument flying is taught in the Link Trainer, in which he spends about five hours. This is not his first experience in the trainer, for at initial training school, he is given a taste of it. At elementary training school physical condition is one of the most important factors. The aircraftman is approaching the time when he will be called upon to fly and fight at high speeds, and his body must be in condition to stand the strain.

The chief function of the elementary school, which does the job done by private flying clubs in the early part of the war, is to teach the aircraftman how to handle the controls of a plane so it will function properly and to give him the foundation on which will be built the specialized knowledge of high speed flying and fighting. At elementary school his air sense and flying judgment are built up, and the green recruit of a few short

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air force

Trainer
schools
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