

Five Men caught in "The FOD Position"! Read the startling details in NEWSDESK.

Photo: John Spreadbury

THE STATION MAGAZINE OF RAF GUTERSLOH

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To inform and entertain everyone who is involved with RAF Gutersloh.



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Aircraft noise is certainly one hell of a problem to everyone in the vicinity of an airfield. And not only to the civilians living nearby. We have our discomforts as well, probably worse because we are that much closer.

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It is true that by living on an airfield you do get used to it, after all the human body is very adaptable; and children are a lot tougher, and more adaptable and resilient, than most adults give them credit for.

The station is subjected to a lot of pressure from the local population, just like any other airfield, because of aircraft noise. Mostly, the local newspapers give fair treatment in reporting this matter; as was evidenced with the balanced Westfalen-Blatt article we reproduced last month in Zeitung. As the article said, "The RAF at Gutersloh are aware of the disturbance caused by aircraft". We also do all we can to keep the disturbance to a minimum, (after all, we have to live amongst them!) but we must meet our task of preparation for the air defence of this part of Germany.

Firstly, we do not allow aircraft to overfly the town of Gutersloh unless in emergency, although those making instrument approaches to runway 27 overfly the Northern edge they are high enough not to be a problem. Our instrument approach procedures are laid down in such a way as to avoid as many areas of population as possible, that some are overflown is an unavoidable choice of selecting the lesser of available evils, even so they are flying on limited power at reasonable heights. Aircraft making visual approaches to the airfield are steered, as much as possible, over thinly populated countryside. The biggest disturbance is caused by aircraft taking off or overshooting the runway: therefore those living in the immediate vicinity of the airfield - mostly ourselves - get the worst of it and this cannot be avoided.

The noise from aircraft flying in the visual circuit changes with the wind! When the wind is westerly we use runway 27, therefore people living from the north to the east of the airfield get the brunt of it (Niehorst, Blankenhagen and the extreme north west of of Gutersloh Town). When the wind is easterly, we use runway 09, the north and the west get it worst (Marienfeld, Greffen and Harsewinkel). Notice how the visual circuit is kept to the north, whichever runway is in use? This is to avoid all of the town of Gutersloh, Rheda, Herzebrock and Beelen (Gutersloh would get most of the noise if we were to allow lefthand circuits to runway 27).

Visual circuits, and practice emergency low level radar circuits (ie 1000 ft) are forbidden after 9 pm; except in real emergency. Practice instrument approaches by visiting aircraft are forbidden after midnight, even though disturbance from such approaches is minimal. Landings and take-offs are permitted after midnight; we are a 24 hour station with an operational role.

This area is part of the German low flying system and is criss-crossed with low flying routes. We have no control over noise made by other NATO jets which fly at 500 feet in this system - but we get the 'blame'. The station has also co-operated fully with the German Government by providing information on all approach and departure tracks of aircraft. This information will be used by the Government when siting new estates, schools, hospitals, etc.

We are aware of the problem. We are doing what we can. But I am sure that all local residents would rather have the RAF at Gutersloh than that other air force across the border!

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