

= Central Flying School RAAF =

Central Flying School ( CFS ) is a Royal Australian Air Force ( RAAF ) training unit , located at RAAF Base East Sale , Victoria . It operates the Pilatus PC @-@ 9 turboprop trainer . The school is responsible for training flight instructors , setting flying standards , and auditing flying practices . It is also home to the " Roulettes " aerobatic team . CFS was the first military aviation unit to be formed in Australia , in 1913 , when its role was to provide basic flying training . Its current form dates from World War II , when it was re @-@ established to train flying instructors for the Empire Air Training Scheme ( EATS ) .

CFS was inaugurated at Point Cook , Victoria , in March 1913 , and trained over 150 pilots of the Australian Flying Corps during World War I. It was disbanded in December 1919 , and the newly formed RAAF 's No. 1 Flying Training School took on its function in 1921 . Re @-@ formed under EATS at Point Cook in April 1940 , CFS relocated to New South Wales the following month , based first at Camden , then at Tamworth from April 1942 , and finally at Parkes from January 1944 . It returned to Point Cook in September 1944 . By the end of World War II , the school had produced more than 3 @,@ 600 instructors . It transferred to East Sale in November 1947 .

Since 1962 , CFS has been responsible for three aerobatic display teams . The first , " The Red Sales " , flew De Havilland Vampire jet aircraft . A second team , " The Telstars " , was formed in 1963 , also flying Vampires . The Telstars disbanded in 1968 , just after taking delivery of new Macchi MB326H jets , when the RAAF curtailed display flying . The Roulettes formed in 1970 , flying the Macchi , and continued to operate the type until 1990 , when the team finished converting to the PC @-@ 9 . As well as the Roulettes , CFS is responsible for the display work of the Air Force Balloons .

= = History = =

= = = Origins and World War I = = =

In December 1911 , the Australian Department of Defence advertised in the United Kingdom for " two competent mechanists and aviators " to establish a flying corps and school . The following year , Henry Petre , an Englishman , and Eric Harrison , an Australian , were selected and commissioned as lieutenants in the Australian Military Forces . Petre arrived in Australia in January 1913 ; his first job was to choose a site for the proposed Central Flying School ( CFS ) , which he was to command . Rejecting the government 's preferred location near the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in Canberra , he selected 297 hectares at Point Cook , Victoria , to become , as George Odgers described it , the " birthplace of Australian military aviation " . Petre and Harrison established CFS over the following year with four mechanics , three other staff , and five aircraft including two Deperdussin monoplanes , two Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2 biplanes , and a Bristol Boxkite for initial training . Harrison made the unit 's first flight in the Boxkite on 1 March 1914 , while Petre , flying a Deperdussin later that day , registered its first accident when he crashed after snaring his tailplane in telephone wires . Its coterie of personnel by now referred to as the Australian Flying Corps ( AFC ) , CFS commenced its first flying course on 17 August 1914 , two weeks after the outbreak of World War I. The four students included Captain Thomas White and Lieutenants Richard Williams , George Merz , and David Manwell . Williams , who became the first to graduate , recalled the school as a " ragtime show " consisting of a paddock , tents , and one large structure : a shed for the Boxkite .

A further eleven courses were run during the war years , graduating 152 pilots to a basic flying standard . Many of these students would go on to play a prominent role in the future Royal Australian Air Force ( RAAF ) , including Bill Anderson , Harry Cobby , Adrian Cole , Frank McNamara , Lawrence Wackett , and Henry Wrigley . The AFC 's first unit to see active service , the Mesopotamian Half Flight , was raised under Petre 's command and departed for the Middle East in April 1915 ; Petre 's fellow pilots included CFS graduates White and Merz . Harrison took over the

school 's leadership in Petre 's absence . The facilities were improved , and by the end of 1915 , according to Wackett , they boasted " a good engineering workshop " , " cottages for the married staff " and " a very comfortable officers mess " . A year later , three AFC squadrons had been formed at Point Cook for service in the Middle East and France : Nos. 1 , 3 and 4 Squadrons . In September 1918 the school , now made up of No. 1 Home Training Squadron , No. 1 Home Training Depot , and an aircraft repair section , became part of the Australian Imperial Force . Harrison was posted overseas in October and Major William Sheldon , former commanding officer of Nos. 2 and 4 Squadrons , was placed in charge of CFS . Little training took place in the year following the November 1918 Armistice ; staff mainly did " odd jobs " such as making survey flights and promoting government bonds . CFS 's units were disbanded in December 1919 and the school taken over by the short @-@ lived Australian Air Corps , formed on 1 January 1920 . In 1921 , CFS 's function was assumed by No. 1 Flying Training School ( No. 1 FTS ) , a unit of the newly formed RAAF .

= = = World War II = = =

RAAF flying training was heavily reorganised soon after the outbreak of World War II in response to Australia 's participation in the Empire Air Training Scheme ( EATS ) . Elementary Flying Training Schools were formed , to provide basic flight instruction to cadets , while more advanced pilot instruction was to take place at Service Flying Training Schools . The most pressing need , however , was for flying instructors ; the RAAF had only sixteen , and at least 1 @,@ 000 were needed to meet Australia 's obligations under EATS . To train these instructors , the Instructors ' Training Squadron at No. 1 FTS was detached to form the nucleus of a new Central Flying School on 29 April 1940 . Described as the " nerve @-@ centre of the Empire Air Training Scheme in Australia " , it was commanded by Squadron Leader E.C. Bates , RAF , former chief flying instructor at No. 1 FTS . CFS relocated from Point Cook to RAAF Station Camden , New South Wales , on 14 May .

Formerly the privately owned Macquarie Grove Aerodrome , Camden was a new air base , and the school 's facilities cost £ 53 @,@ 000 to construct . On establishment , its personnel numbered 470 officers and airmen , and its complement of aircraft included twenty @-@ three Tiger Moths , nine CAC Wirraways , and fourteen Avro Ansons . Among the staff were former civil pilots and instructors , as well as career Air Force officers . Graduates from Camden included Bill Newton , later awarded the Victoria Cross for bombing raids in New Guinea , and Jerry Pentland , a World War I fighter ace with twenty @-@ three victories , who went on to become perhaps the oldest RAAF pilot on active duty . The outbreak of the Pacific War led to an influx of United States Army Air Forces units to Australian bases , including Camden . To make way , CFS moved to Tamworth , New South Wales , during March and April 1942 . Tamworth was not considered a suitable airfield for the school 's Wirraways , Ansons and Airspeed Oxfords , and a further relocation was deemed necessary , this time to RAAF Station Parkes , New South Wales , on 18 January 1944 . Later that year , CFS moved once more , returning on 19 September to Point Cook . There it gained an aviation medicine section , which in 1956 was detached to form the RAAF School of Aviation Medicine ( later the RAAF Institute of Aviation Medicine ) . CFS remained at Point Cook for the rest of the war , by which time it had graduated some 3 @,@ 600 instructors .

= = = Post @-@ war era = = =

The immediate aftermath of the Pacific War saw large @-@ scale demobilisation of RAAF personnel , along with the disposal of equipment and disbandment of units . CFS was allocated resources to ensure the maintenance of Air Force flying standards , but took on no new students . The school relocated from Point Cook to RAAF Station East Sale ( now RAAF Base East Sale ) , Victoria , during November and December 1947 ; its aircraft included seven Tiger Moths , nine Wirraways , three Oxfords , two C @-@ 47 Dakotas , one P @-@ 51 Mustang , and one Avro Lincoln . It then returned to the job of training instructors , graduating its first post @-@ war course in June 1948 . Newspapers reporting on its move to East Sale called CFS the RAAF 's " university of the air " . Official RAAF historian Alan Stephens described the school as " the Air Force 's most important

peacetime unit ", going on to state that " CFS 's pre @-@ eminence derived from its role as the Air Force 's arbiter of pure flying standards , a responsibility it met by training instructors , examining and rating squadron instructors , conducting quality control tests at flying training schools , and auditing flying practices generally across the RAAF . Any fall in standards at CFS could in time be expected adversely to affect standards across the entire Air Force . " Conversely , Stephens continued , the professionalism inculcated at the school flowed through to all flying units . By 1951 , the average student taking the six @-@ month instructors ' course was reported as being a flight lieutenant aged twenty @-@ seven , with 1 @,@ 000 hours flying experience . Wing Commander Charles Read , who later became Chief of the Air Staff , served as commanding officer of CFS from August 1952 to May 1954 . In May 1953 , the school commenced jet instructor training with dual @-@ control De Havilland Vampires . The CAC Winjeel entered service in 1955 , to replace the Tiger Moth as the Air Force 's basic trainer , and began operating at CFS the following year . In March 1957 , the school took on the responsibility of training the RAAF 's air traffic controllers ; this continued until May 1981 , when the RAAF School of Air Traffic Control was formed as an autonomous unit at East Sale .

CFS formed its first aerobatic team , called " The Red Sales " , in 1962 . The team consisted of four instructors flying Vampire trainers . On 15 August , they were practising a low @-@ level routine when they flew into a hill at 500 miles per hour ( 800 km / h ) , killing all four pilots and two passengers . Determined to overcome the shock of the accident , the commanding officer of CFS , Wing Commander H.C. Plenty , quickly formed a new aerobatic team called the " The Telstars " , led by himself . Also flying Vampires , the team made its first public display in February 1963 , six months after the Red Sales disaster . In 1965 , Plenty 's successor as commanding officer , Wing Commander T.J.T. Meldrum , joined an RAAF team charged with selecting a jet trainer to replace both the Winjeel and the Vampire . Led by Air Commodore Brian Eaton , the team chose the Italian Macchi MB @-@ 326H as it met all requirements , could be licence @-@ built by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation in Australia , and was relatively inexpensive . The Telstars began flying the Macchi in February 1968 , but the RAAF cut back on display flying shortly afterwards , and the team disbanded in April . A new aerobatic team flying Macchis , the " Roulettes " , was formed at CFS in August 1970 , in preparation for the RAAF 's fiftieth anniversary celebrations commencing in March 1971 .

The introduction of the Macchi permitted a brief flirtation with " all @-@ through jet training " starting in 1969 , as it was expected to reduce the time necessary to turn out high @-@ quality pilots , and CFS had begun preparing to train instructors for this purpose in 1967 . All @-@ through jet training was dropped in 1971 , subsequently being labelled " an expensive way of finding out that some pupils lacked the aptitude to become military pilots " . Winjeels continued to operate at CFS until replaced by the CT @-@ 4 Airtrainer in August 1975 . For the next fifteen years , the main types used for instructor training were the CT @-@ 4 and the Macchi . CFS also flew Dakotas for twin @-@ engined instructor courses until March 1980 ; they were further used to train pilots of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force . The school was presented with the Queen 's Colour by Governor @-@ General Sir Zelman Cowen in September 1978 . In December 1987 , CFS took delivery of its first Pilatus PC @-@ 9 turboprop trainer , to replace the Macchi for advanced flying instructor training . The Roulettes converted to the PC @-@ 9 in 1989 ? 90 . The CT @-@ 4 was phased out at the school in favour of the PC @-@ 9 in December 1991 .

As of 2012 , CFS continued to operate the PC @-@ 9 for pilot instructor training at East Sale , under the control of the Air Force Training Group 's Air Training Wing , and to administer flying standards across the RAAF . Practising and performing with the Roulettes , which celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2010 , remains a secondary task for team members after their instructional duties . As well as the Roulettes ' displays , the school is responsible for the training and public relations work of the Air Force Balloons , which are co @-@ located with No. 28 Squadron at HMAS Harman in Canberra . In their role supporting RAAF recruitment and public awareness , the two hot @-@ air balloons are often employed in rural areas as an economical alternative to displays by the Roulettes or other aircraft .