

References:-

1W/3050/3/P.1.

OFFICER COMMANDING,
No. 1 (Apprentice) Wing,
Royal Air Force,
Locking,
Weston-super-Mare,
Somerset.

1st. October, 1957.

Dear *Mr Kyle.*

You may recall that when your lad first arrived here, a letter was sent to you giving information about terms of service, leave arrangements, pay, etc., etc. In this letter various restrictions to which apprentices are subject, were detailed, one of which was the prohibition of driving motor cars and motor-cycles or riding pillion on a motor-cycle. Furthermore, the Apprentice Wing Standing Orders firmly lay down that possession of motor-cycles and motor cars is prohibited whilst apprentices are under our care. Of course, when an apprentice is at home on leave and under your care, we have no jurisdiction over him.

Despite repeated warnings, there are an increasing number of apprentices who are bringing motor-cycles back with them from leave and garaging these motor-cycles off the Station. You will appreciate that the only time that we can know when an apprentice is keeping a motor-cycle is when he has an accident or is observed by one of our staff outside the Camp riding the motor-cycle. Recently, two apprentices were sentenced to 21 days and 14 days detention respectively, for riding motor-cycles and wearing plain clothes and an N.C.O. Apprentice was stripped of his rank for the same offence.

We lay down this prohibition on the possession of motor-cycles for very good reasons. There is a very dangerous stretch of road in front of this Station and not so long ago, one of our apprentices was fatally injured whilst riding a motor-cycle which he had brought back from leave without our knowledge or permission. Statistics show that motor-cycles are the major cause of deaths and injury on the road. Not only are we concerned with the loss of training which results when an apprentice has an accident on a motor-cycle, but we are particularly anxious that no apprentice under our care should lose his life or be permanently maimed through riding a motor-cycle. There is a tendency for apprentices to purchase motor-cycles which are in an unroadworthy condition and they become a danger, not only to themselves, but to other users of the highway.

We have found in the past, that possession of a motor-cycle leads to other offences, such as breaking out of Camp, wearing of civilian clothes, etc., etc., and this has resulted in an accumulation of charges and punishments which can eventually lead to an apprentice being discharged from the Royal Air Force on disciplinary grounds. The Station Commander has stated that it is his firm intention in the future, to award increasingly heavy punishments to apprentices who flagrantly disobey orders by being in possession of and riding, motor-cycles. We are particularly concerned, as in some cases, we are not receiving the co-operation from parents that we asked for when their lad first arrived and in fact, it is known that apprentices are bringing back motor-cycles from leave with the connivance of parents.

You will appreciate that in addition to training apprentices to be fully qualified radio technicians, we are also training them to be the future non-commissioned officers and, in a number of cases, the future commissioned officers of the Royal Air Force. It is essential therefore, that whilst they are here, they learn to obey orders without question.

Mr A. G. Kyle.
80, Raglan Road,
Cape Hill,
B. 40

/The Station Commander...

The Station Commander is determined that the regulations regarding possession and riding of motor-cycles whilst apprentices are under our care, will be enforced. It is proposed, if necessary, to call in the Civil Police to assist us in locating unauthorised motor-cycles.

As you are aware, apprentices are not permitted to wear civilian clothes whilst they are here, either on or off the Station, yet in a number of cases, apprentices bring civilian clothes back from leave, with the obvious knowledge of parents.

What I have written above may not apply to you or your lad. If it does, I would ask you for your support in enforcing this prohibition on the driving of motor cycles and motor cars and the wearing of civilian clothes, by preventing your lad returning from leave with them. It is inevitable that an apprentice will be caught eventually and suffer needless punishment, which could have been avoided if parents would support us in enforcing this prohibition regarding the driving of motor-cycles and motor cars and the wearing of civilian clothes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Linard

(S. LINARD)
Wing Commander,
Officer Commanding,
No. 1 (Apprentice) Wing.