



GUTERSLOH'S NEW TERMINAL BUILDING OPENED

SOME 18 months after the closure of the old movements buildings, the new air terminal at RAF Gutersloh opened last December. Intended for use by Service personnel and their dependents in the north of West Germany, this purpose-built, 33,500 sq ft building has every modern amenity with which to speed passengers on their way to their units or to anywhere in the world that duty may take them.

When air trooping began in earnest back in the sixties, Gutersloh, because of its strategic position, was a natural choice for use as a permanent airhead. Temporary movements buildings were erected which, like so many impermanent structures, soon took on a more permanent standing. However, they also suffered from the hazards that beset most temporary installations with leaking roofs and a draughty and noisy working environment.

By 1973 it was obvious that something had to be done and the Property Services Agency (PSA) condemned the building as being beyond repair. Plans were drawn up and approved for a permanent building capable of processing in excess of the 225,000 passengers a year that the unit presently handles.

PSA were also faced with the problem that a need had arisen for widening the Gutersloh taxiways and extending the ramp so that much larger aircraft could be accommodated in an emergency. It was decided to kill two birds with one stone and to complete all this much-needed building work at one go, as well as resurfacing the main runway.

Although Gutersloh's Harriers and Wessex can operate quite effectively from the grass, larger fixed-wing aircraft cannot and, for a period of 18 months, the air trooping responsibility was split between the German Air Force base at Wunstorf and Munster-Osnabruck civil airfield.

This presented considerable

problems which were partly overcome by operating a two-watch system that imposed the least possible travelling on personnel but the staff were relieved to finally get their own modern offices and other amenities.

Gutersloh now has a terminal building similar to that of many regional airports in the UK or Europe. It is also of modern design, having, on a slightly more military fashion than its commercial contemporaries, catering facilities, a duty free shop, monetary exchange, bookstall, information and check-in desks. There are comfortable arrival and departure areas for travellers and their friends and relatives and the building also includes a well appointed VIP lounge.

The facilities can easily cope with passengers from a Boeing 737 or BAC One Eleven at the same time and, in an emergency, could deal with much larger aircraft such as Boeing 747s or TriStars. This has already been tested with 350 troops arriving in a British Airways Jumbo soon after the terminal opened.

Gutersloh's new terminal is the first to be opened in the Royal Air Force since the purpose-built facilities at Brize Norton were made available in the late sixties. The need for a permanent building was of prime importance to the efficiency and service that the RAF prides itself on providing for its customers and it will doubtless become well known to many during the coming years.