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PERSONNEL LICENSING

AIR CREW PILOTS

RECOGNITION OF MILITARY EXPERIENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE PILOTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this AIC is to:

- a) highlight to the aviation industry the legal provisions governing the accreditation of military flying experience obtained in the South African Air Force (SAAF);
- b) provide specific administrative and technical guidance on the accreditation process; and
- c) advise the aviation industry of identified shortcomings regarding the accreditation process.

2. Background

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) makes allowance for the accreditation of military experience and provides broad technical guidelines in this regard. However, it simultaneously advises caution during the accreditation process because of the dissimilar operational philosophies underpinning military and civilian aviation respectively. Broadly speaking, a controlled and formal accreditation process is recommended to ensure that the transition to a civilian licence does not compromise flight standards. This has been transposed into the South African Civil Aviation Regulations, 2011 ("Regulations").

3. South African accreditation of military flying experience

The legal framework for the general crediting of flight time and other experience towards a Part 61 licence or rating is set out in Subpart 61.01.9 of the Regulations.

Regulation 61.01.9 (23) and its associated Technical Standards makes specific provision for crediting of the training and experience gained in the SAAF towards a South African civilian pilot licence(s) or rating(s).

Since military experience is obtained outside of the legal framework of Part 61, a request for recognition of such experience must be made in writing to the SACAA through an application in accordance with Regulation 61.01.9 (23) and its associated Technical Standards. Should an applicant comply with the requirements for accreditation, the SACAA will issue an accreditation letter.

Without approval, military experience is not recognised, as provided for in the following Regulation:

“ 61.01.9 Crediting of flight time and theoretical knowledge (own emphasis) ”

(2) A person acting as pilot of an aircraft while not complying with any requirement of this Part applicable to that person may not credit that flight time for any purpose.”

The SACAA wishes to bring to the attention of the aviation industry that submission of non-accredited military experience is contrary to the provision of the Regulations. It is furthermore emphasised that no flight examiner or Aviation Training Organisation (ATO) is authorised to accredit military experience, as the SACAA is responsible for accrediting military experience in terms of Regulation 61.01.9 (23) and its associated Technical Standards.

4. Applications and administration

Pilots who are interested in obtaining accreditation for their military experience and training should consult the Regulations for the requirements of the documentary evidence required for such an application. Prospective applicants should be aware of the following:

- a) application letters should be signed and dated and clearly specify the licence(s) and rating(s) requested;*
- b) documents should be certified (including certification date);*
- c) all documents should be clear, readable and identifiable;*
- d) submissions should be made in writing (electronic or in hard copy) to the Personnel Licensing (PEL) department, accompanied by the prescribed fee in terms of Part 187 of the Regulations and directed to the Manager: Examinations. Contact details are provided on the “Enquiry Details” page of the PEL departmental web page on the SACAA website;*
- e) the application date shall be deemed to be the date on which all the documents prescribed in the Regulations are submitted;*
- f) technical staff of the PEL department will liaise with an applicant as necessary during the accreditation process;*
- g) successful applicants will be assigned a civilian pilot licence number and issued with an accreditation letter. The letter will stipulate the full extent of accreditation and is required before the applicant enters any required examination or skills test. No licence application will be processed by the SACAA without such letter; and*
- h) once any licence has been issued based on military accreditation, the licence-holder must comply with all periodic recency and licensing requirements on civilian-registered aircraft.*

5. Technical requirements

SAAF pilots intending to apply for accreditation should note that every application is individually reviewed by the SACAA technical personnel in terms of, amongst others, Regulation 61.01.9 (23) and associated Technical Standards and that the following aspects are taken into consideration:

- a) that the applicant is employed by the SAAF and is on active flying duty at the time of the application;*
- b) the Regulations make provision for additional conditions that may be imposed on applicants should this be considered necessary in the interest of aviation safety. These conditions shall be complied with by an applicant for the issuing of a credit and can relate to examinations, testing, training and additional supporting documents;*
- c) where a skills test is required, it shall be conducted by a DFE;*
- d) a SAAF pilot that was previously accredited for military experience is allowed to apply for additional accreditation in future, for example obtaining a higher licence or the addition of a rating; and*

- e) where the application for successive accreditation is towards a higher licence, no credit will be granted for theoretical knowledge examinations, except that the Air Law subject may be waived if the existing Part 61 licence is valid.

6. Observed shortcomings

The SACAA has become aware of shortcomings associated with applications for military accreditation, which include:

- a) poor quality of supporting documentation;
- b) incomplete application documents supplied over an extended period of time; and
- c) incorrect or outdated documentation.

Candidates applying for military accreditation should obtain formal accreditation before proceeding with the following:

- a) enrolling for examinations and testing;
- b) undergoing skills tests with examiners;

Examiners should ensure that:

- c) candidates were accredited by the SACAA for their military experience prior to conducting any skills test;
- d) all mandatory aspects of the skills tests are completed, including the navigation component;
- e) skills tests are conducted under the auspices of an ATO;
- f) skills tests are conducted on non-military aircraft; and
- g) the correct aircraft registration numbers are entered on skills test forms.

Candidates, flight instructors and examiners should note that contraventions of the Regulations and associated Technical Standards relating to military accreditation, training and testing may result in enforcement action in terms of Part 185 of the Regulations.

7. Concluding notes

Applicants are reminded that the PEL department not only contributes to the SACAA mandate of being a world-class civil aviation regulator, but also has the responsibility of overseeing ICAO Annex 1 requirements within the Republic of South Africa.

The South African Civil Aviation Authority is aware of the valuable experience that is acquired by military pilots. Prospective applicants are encouraged to liaise with technical staff or management of the PEL department in case of any uncertainty in respect of military experience accreditation.



DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION