

world war 2 uk airfields

World War 2 UK Airfields played a pivotal role in the Allied victory, serving as strategic hubs for military operations, training, reconnaissance, and bombing campaigns. During the tumultuous years of 1939 to 1945, the United Kingdom transformed its landscape with a vast network of airfields designed to support the Royal Air Force (RAF) and allied air forces. These airfields not only facilitated combat missions but also contributed significantly to the logistical and technological advancements of wartime aviation. Exploring the history, strategic importance, and legacy of World War 2 UK airfields offers valuable insight into the pivotal role aviation played in securing victory.

The Significance of UK Airfields During World War 2

The United Kingdom's geographical position made it a natural crossroads for air operations across Europe, North Africa, and beyond. As the primary base of operations for the RAF, UK airfields served multiple essential functions:

- **Defensive Air Cover:** Protecting the British Isles from German aerial attacks, especially during the Battle of Britain.
- **Offensive Operations:** Launching bombing raids over occupied Europe and Germany.
- **Training and Development:** Preparing new pilots, ground crew, and technicians for combat roles.
- **Logistical Support:** Facilitating supply chains, aircraft maintenance, and reconnaissance missions.

The development and expansion of these airfields were driven by the urgent need to establish air superiority and support the Allied war effort.

Types of World War 2 UK Airfields

UK airfields during World War 2 can be broadly categorized based on their purpose and design. Understanding these categories helps in appreciating their strategic roles.

Frontline Fighter and Bomber Bases

These were the primary operational hubs where combat aircraft took off and landed. Features included:

- Runways suitable for heavy bombers and fast fighters.
- Hardened aircraft shelters.
- Control towers and command centers.
- Ammunition and fuel storage facilities.

Examples include RAF Duxford and RAF Biggin Hill, which became famous for their roles in the Battle of Britain.

Training Airfields

Dedicated to training new pilots and crew members, these airfields had specialized facilities such as:

- Practice ranges.
- Air traffic control towers.
- Classroom and accommodation blocks.
- Less emphasis on heavy combat infrastructure.

Notable training bases included RAF Loughborough and RAF Cosford.

Satellite and Auxiliary Airfields

Smaller airstrips used to disperse aircraft, reduce congestion, and provide additional landing sites. These included:

- Emergency landing strips.
- Decoy airfields to mislead enemy reconnaissance.
- Support for main bases during peak operations.

Strategic Locations of UK Airfields

The placement of airfields across the UK was strategic, aiming to optimize coverage and operational reach.

Southern England

- Proximity to continental Europe allowed quick deployment for bombing campaigns.
- Major bases: RAF Biggin Hill, RAF Kenley, RAF Tangmere.
- Key for the Battle of Britain and early offensive operations.

Eastern and Southeastern UK

- Served as staging points for operations over occupied France and the Low Countries.
- Notable bases: RAF Debden, RAF North Weald.

Western and Northern UK

- Used for training and defense against potential German attacks from the north.
- Examples include RAF Leeming and RAF Lossiemouth.

Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Strategic for safeguarding Atlantic approaches.
- Hosted training and reconnaissance units.

Impact of World War 2 Airfields on the War Effort

The extensive network of UK airfields contributed significantly to various aspects of the war:

Air Superiority and the Battle of Britain

- Airfields like RAF Duxford and RAF Biggin Hill became iconic symbols of British resilience.
- Enabled continuous fighter patrols and rapid response to German raids.

Strategic Bombing Campaigns

- Facilitated long-range bombing missions over Germany and occupied territories.
- Supported the destruction of enemy infrastructure and military targets.

Training and Technological Advancement

- Trained thousands of pilots, many of whom later became aces and commanders.
- Served as testing grounds for new aircraft and tactics.

Intelligence and Reconnaissance

- Stations like RAF Chicksands supported signals intelligence.
- Aided in gathering crucial battlefield intelligence.

Notable UK Airfields from World War 2

Many airfields gained fame during the war due to their roles in pivotal battles and operations.

RAF Biggin Hill

- Located in Greater London, it was a frontline fighter base during the Battle of Britain.
- Known for its resilience and the bravery of its pilots.

RAF Duxford

- Served as a bomber and fighter base.
- Now a leading aviation museum preserving wartime history.

RAF Tangmere

- Played a key role in defending southern England.
- Hosted Spitfires and Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain.

RAF Scampton

- Base for the famous "dambusters" raids.
- Home to the Avro Lancaster bombers.

Post-War Legacy of UK Airfields

Many wartime airfields were decommissioned or repurposed after 1945. Their legacy endures through:

- Heritage sites and museums preserving wartime history.
- Some airfields still active as civilian airports (e.g., RAF Brize Norton, RAF Northolt).
- Archaeological remains and memorials commemorating those who served.

Several former airfields have been transformed into industrial parks, residential developments, or preserved as historical landmarks.

Preservation and Modern Use of WW2 UK Airfields

Today, enthusiasts and historians work to preserve the history of these airfields through:

- Establishing museums and visitor centers.
- Conducting archaeological excavations of wartime structures.
- Hosting airshows and commemorative events.

Some airfields, like Duxford and Hendon, are now part of the Imperial War Museum network, offering educational programs and exhibitions.

Conclusion

World War 2 UK airfields stand as a testament to Britain's resilience and ingenuity during one of history's most challenging periods. Their strategic locations, diverse functions, and storied histories underscore their importance in the Allied victory. Today, these sites serve as vital historical landmarks, educational resources, and memorials to the countless

men and women who served. The legacy of these wartime airfields continues to inspire future generations and preserve the memory of Britain's pivotal role in World War 2.

Keywords: UK airfields, World War 2 airfields UK, Royal Air Force bases, WWII UK military airfields, Battle of Britain airfields, British wartime aviation, historic UK airfields, WWII airfield sites in UK, RAF history, military aviation heritage

Frequently Asked Questions

What role did UK airfields play during World War II?

UK airfields were crucial for launching offensive operations, defending Britain from Luftwaffe attacks, and serving as bases for Allied air forces during World War II.

Which are some of the most famous World War II UK airfields?

Notable UK airfields include RAF Biggin Hill, RAF Duxford, RAF Fighter Command bases, and RAF Coningsby, all of which played significant roles during the war.

How did UK airfields contribute to the Battle of Britain?

UK airfields such as RAF Hornchurch and RAF Biggin Hill were vital as operational bases for fighter squadrons defending Britain against German aerial assaults.

Are there any preserved World War II UK airfields open to the public today?

Yes, several historic airfields like RAF Duxford and Biggin Hill have museums and visitor centers that showcase their wartime history.

What were the main types of aircraft operated from UK airfields during WWII?

UK airfields hosted aircraft such as the Supermarine Spitfire, Hawker Hurricane, and Lancaster bomber, which were essential for combat and reconnaissance missions.

How did the location of UK airfields influence their strategic importance?

Airfields near the coast and in southern England were strategically placed for quick deployment against German attacks and for launching bombing raids into Europe.

What was the impact of German sabotage on UK airfields during WWII?

German sabotage and bombing campaigns targeted UK airfields to disrupt Allied air operations, causing damage but also leading to improved defenses and repairs.

Have any UK airfields from WWII been redeveloped or repurposed since the war?

Yes, many former wartime airfields have been converted into civilian airports, industrial estates, or preserved as historic sites and museums.

How does the history of UK airfields during WWII influence current RAF operations?

The legacy of WWII airfields informs modern RAF infrastructure, heritage preservation, and the strategic importance of air defense in the UK.

Additional Resources

World War 2 UK Airfields played a pivotal role in shaping the outcome of the conflict and left a lasting legacy on military aviation history. During the Second World War, the United Kingdom rapidly expanded its airfield infrastructure to support the Allied war effort, establishing a vast network of bases for fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, and training operations. These airfields not only served as strategic hubs for offensive and defensive missions but also contributed significantly to technological advancements, pilot training, and logistical coordination. Today, many of these historic sites have been preserved as museums, memorials, or redeveloped for civilian use, offering insight into a critical period of military history and aviation development.

Historical Significance of UK Airfields During

World War 2

During WWII, the UK's air defense and offensive strategies depended heavily on a comprehensive network of airfields. Their significance can be summarized as follows:

- Protection of the UK mainland: The Battle of Britain (1940) demonstrated the importance of fighter airfields in defending against German Luftwaffe attacks.
- Launch points for offensive operations: Bomber Command and Coastal Command used these bases for strategic bombing campaigns over Europe and naval patrols.
- Training and pilot development: Many airfields became training centers for new pilots and crews.
- Logistical hubs: Airfields facilitated aircraft maintenance, supply distribution, and command coordination.

The rapid expansion and strategic placement of these airfields were crucial in establishing air superiority, which ultimately contributed to the Allied victory.

Types of WWII UK Airfields

The UK's wartime airfield infrastructure was diverse, designed to meet different operational needs:

Fighter Airfields

- Focused on defending Britain during the Battle of Britain and subsequent phases.
- Equipped with shorter runways suitable for fighters like the Spitfire and Hurricane.
- Often located along the southern and eastern coasts for rapid deployment.

Bomber Airfields

- Larger runways and more extensive facilities to accommodate heavy bombers such as the Lancaster, Halifax, and Stirling.
- Positioned strategically to enable raids over continental Europe.
- Included extensive hangar complexes and munitions storage.

Training Airfields

- Smaller airfields used for initial pilot training and refresher courses.
- Hosted aircraft such as Tiger Moths and other trainer planes.
- Critical for maintaining a steady flow of trained personnel.

Coastal and Naval Airfields

- Located near ports and strategic maritime zones.
- Hosted aircraft involved in anti-submarine warfare, reconnaissance, and convoy protection.
- Examples include RAF Porthcawl and RAF Lossiemouth.

Notable UK WWII Airfields

Many airfields from WWII have become iconic symbols of Britain's wartime resilience and innovation. Here are some of the most notable ones:

RAF Biggin Hill

- One of the most famous fighter stations during the Battle of Britain.
- Served as a key command and fighter base for defending London.
- Features a well-preserved control tower and museum.

RAF Duxford

- Originally built in the 1910s, expanded during WWII.
- Served as a fighter and bomber base.
- Now a major aviation museum with historical aircraft and exhibits.

RAF Lossiemouth

- Located in Scotland, played a vital role in maritime patrol and fighter operations.
- Continues to operate today, maintaining its historical significance.

RAF Lakenheath

- Used during WWII for fighter operations.
- Currently hosts US Air Force units, but its WWII history remains prominent.

RAF Valley

- Served as a training and operational base.
- Known for its role in training RAF pilots.

Post-War Legacy and Preservation

After WWII, many UK airfields faced decommissioning or repurposing due to technological advancements and changing military needs. Nonetheless, their legacy persists:

- Heritage sites and museums: Several, such as the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Coningsby and the Imperial War Museum Duxford, preserve aircraft and history.
- Airfield conversions: Some former WWII airfields have been transformed into civilian airports, industrial parks, or residential areas.
- Military use: A number remain active military bases, maintaining their operational roles.
- Historic significance: Many sites are protected as heritage landmarks, commemorating those who served.

Features and Infrastructure of WWII UK Airfields

The design and features of WWII UK airfields were tailored to their roles:

- Runways: Usually made of concrete or compacted gravel; shorter for fighters, longer for bombers.
- Hangars: Large, reinforced structures to house aircraft; some constructed with innovative features like blast walls.
- Control towers: Elevated towers for air traffic control, often iconic and now heritage landmarks.
- Perimeter defenses: Fences, anti-aircraft gun positions, and searchlights.
- Support facilities: Barracks, workshops, fuel storage, and mess halls.

Challenges Faced in Construction and Operation

Building and maintaining these airfields during wartime posed numerous

challenges:

- Rapid construction demands: Speed was critical, often leading to hastily built infrastructure.
- Resource constraints: Limited materials and labor during wartime affected construction quality.
- Vulnerability to attack: Airfields were prime targets for enemy raids, necessitating defenses.
- Environmental factors: Weather conditions in the UK, such as rain and fog, complicated operations.

Despite these challenges, the UK successfully established a resilient network of airfields crucial to the Allied victory.

Modern-Day Relevance and Tourism

Today, many WWII UK airfields have transformed into sites of historical interest:

- Museums and exhibitions: Visitors can explore aircraft, memorabilia, and learn about wartime operations.
- Airshows and commemorations: Annual events celebrate aviation history and honor veterans.
- Educational programs: Schools and organizations use these sites for educational outreach.
- Filming locations: Some airfields serve as filming sites for movies and documentaries about WWII.

These efforts ensure that the legacy of these airfields endures, inspiring future generations with stories of bravery, innovation, and resilience.

Conclusion

World War 2 UK Airfields represent a remarkable chapter in military and aviation history. Their strategic placement, technological innovations, and operational roles were instrumental in defending Britain and supporting offensive campaigns across Europe. The legacy of these airfields extends beyond their wartime contributions, influencing modern aviation infrastructure, military strategy, and heritage preservation. As many of these sites continue to serve as museums, memorials, and operational bases, they stand as enduring symbols of the UK's wartime resilience and ingenuity, offering invaluable insights into one of history's most pivotal conflicts.

Whether as historical landmarks or as active military facilities, the WWII UK airfields remain a testament to the extraordinary efforts of those who built and operated them.

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world war 2 uk airfields: RAF and USAAF Airfields in the UK During the Second World War Geoff Mills, Daniel Knowles, 2022-03-31 Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the United Kingdom was described as one vast aircraft carrier anchored off the coast of Europe. During a seven year period 500 airfields were constructed to serve the needs first of the RAF and later the USAAF as they carried the war to German-occupied Europe. The airfields that were constructed took many different forms from training airfields and Advanced Landing Grounds to grass fighter airstrips and vast complexes used to accommodate heavy bombers. This book charts the history of each Second World War airfield in and around the UK providing a unique insight in to the construction, operational life and post-war history of each airfield. Alongside detailing the history of each airfield, this work comprehensively records the details of each unit that operated from airfields around the UK. The information provided in this meticulously researched book is supported by a wealth of 690 photographs providing an illustration into the life of each wartime station.

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world war 2 uk airfields: Air Battles Before D-Day Joseph T. Molyson Jr., 2025-06-03 From the skies above Europe to the beaches of Normandy, the Allied air campaign of 1943-44 orchestrated one of history's most decisive military victories. In this groundbreaking analysis, retired Air Force Colonel Joseph T. Molyson reveals how a year of strategic bombing and aerial warfare created the conditions necessary for D-Day's success. Drawing on his thirty years of military intelligence experience, Molyson pieces together the complex puzzle of amphibious planning, airborne operations, and inter-Allied coordination that culminated in Operation Overlord. Key revelations include: How the Allied victory in the Battle of the Atlantic enabled the crucial flow of American resources The strategic bombing campaign's dual role in weakening both German industry and Luftwaffe capabilities The intricate coordination between British night raids and American daylight bombing missions Previously overlooked connections between air superiority and the success of the D-Day landings Perfect for military history enthusiasts and World War II scholars alike, this meticulously researched account offers fresh insights into the aerial strategy that changed the course of history.

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world war 2 uk airfields: *Southern and West Country Airfields of the D-Day Invasion Air Force* Peter Jacobs, 2013-03-19 As part of the Aviation Heritage Trail series, the airfields and interest in this book are concentrated in a particular area in this case West Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and Cornwall. The South and South-west of England emerged from six years of war with a rich diversity of RAF bomber and fighter airfields used by the 2nd Tactical Air Force, both before and after the D-Day landings. Much of this proud legacy is now threatening to disappear. However, the tourist can combine visits to an abundance of disused and active airfields, country houses and museums with countless attractions, imaginative locations, broad land, and coastal hideaways that have no equal. The airfields and other places of interest include Hartford Bridge, Lasham, Westhamptonett, Merston, Odiham, Holmsley South, Funtington, Hurn, Ford, Tangmere, Ibsley, Perranporth, Thruxton, Thorney Island, Appledram, Selesy, Needs Oar Point, Zeals, Lee-on-Solent and Bognor Regis. This book looks at the history and personalities associated with each base, what remains today and explores the favorite local wartime haunts where aircrew and ground crew would have sought well-deserved entertainment and relaxation. Other museums and places that are relevant will also be described and general directions on how to get them included.

world war 2 uk airfields: *The Environmental Legacy of Military Operations* Judy Ehlen, Russell S. Harmon, 2001-01-01 U.S. military lands are part of the public trust and the level of awareness of sustainability and land-use issues has risen significantly in recent years. Ehlen (U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center) and Harmon (U.S. Army Research Office) present 14 articles that look at the use of engineering geology principles and their applications to both military operations and environmental issues, although military operations and the environment are not always treated together. Topics include battlefield terrain evaluation, predicting fracture systems in enemy underground facilities, the geoenvironmental legacy of the Rock of Gibraltar military engineering, and erosion trends at Fort Leonard Wood. Annotation c. Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com)

world war 2 uk airfields: *Second World War Lives* James Goulty, 2012-10-24 The Second World War was a momentous event in twentieth-century history and it is a fascinating period for family historians to explore. Numerous records are available to researchers whose relatives served in the war, and James Goulty's book is an accessible guide on how to locate and understand these sources - and get the most out of them. Using evidence gleaned from a range of sources archives, official records, books, libraries, oral history and the internet he reconstructs the wartime records of

a revealing and representative group of ordinary men and women: a signaler, an infantryman, a doctor, an artillery officer, a woman serving with anti aircraft units, a commando, a Royal Navy bomb disposal officer, RAF fighter and bomber pilots, and others. He describes their wartime careers and experiences and demonstrates how they fitted into contemporary military organizations and operations. He looks at their backgrounds, their wartime training and duties, their front line service, and the conditions they endured. In each case he shows how the research was conducted and explains how the lives of such individuals can be explored highlighting methods that can be used and sources that can be consulted. James Goultys informative book will be essential reading and reference for anyone who wants to find out about the Second World War and is keen to understand the part an ancestor played in it.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Invasion Airfields* Winston Ramsey, 2017-08-30 In his 1945 report to the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff on the success of Operation 'Overlord', the Supreme Commander General Eisenhower wrote that on the morning of June 9 I was able to announce that for the first time since 1940, Allied air forces were operating from France, and that within three weeks of D-Day, 31 Allied squadrons were operating from the beach-head bases. In their forecasts for the first three months following D-Day, the planners plotted the number of the advanced landing grounds that would be required in Normandy to support the Allied air forces up to September 1944. Using maps and aerial photographs, individual sites were surveyed and plans drawn up so that when each location was captured, either US Aviation Engineers, the Royal Engineers or RAF Airfield Construction Wings, could move in without delay to begin work to build them. This book tells the story of every airfield that became operational by D+90, explaining the methods used to construct them and the units that flew from them. The vast majority of the temporary airstrips have now been returned to the farmland from which they came, but by using engineers' plans from the period and modern aerial photographs, we have portrayed the sites in true After the Battle fashion: as they were then and as they are today.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Arctic Convoys 1942* Mark Lardas, 2022-09-15 A new history of the most crucial few months of the Arctic Convoys, when Germany's air power forced the Allies to retreat to the cover of winter. Between spring and autumn 1942, Germany was winning the battle of the Arctic Convoys. Half of PQ-15 was sunk in May, PQ-17 was virtually obliterated in July, and in September 30 percent of PQ-18 was sunk. The Allies were forced to suspend the convoys until December, when the long Arctic nights would shield them. Mark Lardas argues that in 1942, it was Luftwaffe air power that made the difference. With convoys sailing in endless daylight, German strike aircraft now equipped and trained for torpedo attacks, and bases in northern Norway available, the Luftwaffe could wreak havoc. Three-quarters of the losses of PQ-18 were due to air attacks. But in November, the Luftwaffe was redeployed south to challenge the Allied landings in North Africa, and the advantage was lost. Despite that, the Allies never again sailed an Arctic convoy in the summer months. Fully illustrated with archive photos, striking new artwork, maps and diagrams, this is the remarkable history of the Luftwaffe's last strategic victory of World War II.

world war 2 uk airfields: Remarkable Women of the Second World War Victoria Panton Bacon, 2022-06-16 They were told to hold the fort. They did far more than that. When the Second World War broke out, the task of keeping society afloat fell on the shoulders of the women left behind. Women the world over stepped into boots they'd never worn before - becoming engineers, labourers and intelligence experts. Their houses were razed to the ground, they fled their enemy-occupied countries and they picked up guns to defend their homes, but their stories are rarely told. Remarkable Women of the Second World War is a collection of twelve of these stories, all carefully gathered and retold by Victoria Panton Bacon. These are the stories of Galina Russian navigator who flew on the front line for the Red Army alongside the feared Night Witches; Ena, an ATA engineer who didn't think much of the Spitfires and Hurricanes she worked on; and Lee, a Jewish girl who fled Frankfurt and arrived in Coventry on a Kindertransport train. These women weren't remarkable because of high rank or status, but because of their grit, resilience and determination. These are the tales of ordinary women who did extraordinary things.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Six Air Forces Over the Atlantic* Joseph T. Molyson Jr., 2024-04-16

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest campaign of World War II, lasting the entirety of the war in Europe from September 1939 to May 1945. It was also one of the war's most complex campaigns, involving strategy, operations, tactics, logistics, politics, diplomacy, and alliances. During the war's first two years, the United States was drawn deeper into partnership with Great Britain, and closer toward conflict with Germany, in the waters of the North Atlantic. Franklin Roosevelt realized this theater's importance: "I believe the outcome of this struggle is going to be decided in the Atlantic." And so American, British, and Canadian forces battled Germans at sea and in the air to protect the flow of first materiel and then men from the United States to the United Kingdom. The sea part has been well covered: how German U-boats and other warships hunted Allied convoys and how the Allies ultimately turned the tide. Not so much the air war. In *Six Air Forces over the Atlantic*, Joseph Molyson tells the story of the Battle of the Atlantic from the perspective of the air forces—and airmen—who waged it from the skies above the icy waters of the North Atlantic. He blends big-picture attention to strategy and tactics with dramatic episodes of air-to-air and air-to-sea combat, including the engagement in which a British light bomber captured a German U-boat near Iceland. He details the close eye Franklin Roosevelt kept on the campaign, the effect B-24 Liberator bombers had, and the rise of the Royal Air Force Coastal Command as a true U-boat-busting force. The result was victory in the Atlantic, as well as a significant contribution to victory in World War II.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Postcards from the Front 1914-1919* Kate J. Cole, 2016-05-15

Postcards from the Front 1914-1919 captures the essence of this medium in a unique and fascinating way, bringing to life the pathos, the trauma and the mud and the blood of Flanders and France as the embattled Tommies wrote home to their loved ones.

world war 2 uk airfields: *The Other Few* Larry Donnelly, 2004 This title pays tribute to the achievements of Bomber and Coastal Command pilots who made such a vital contribution to the war, but whose efforts have gone largely unrecorded.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Valiant Units of the Cold War* Andrew Brookes, 2012-08-20 The RAF's first Cold War strategic bomber, the Vickers Valiant, was procured as an insurance measure in case either the Vulcan or Victor was found to have a serious flaw. The Valiant was the equivalent of the US B-47 Stratojet, and it blazed the trail for the British airborne nuclear deterrent as the aircraft enjoyed a far more active service career than later V-bombers. It was the launch platform for all British free fall nuclear weapons tests both in the Pacific and in central Australia, it took part in the Suez campaign in 1956 and it was the only V-bomber to drop (conventional) weapons in anger until the Falklands operation in 1982. The Valiant was modified to serve in the electronic warfare, strategic reconnaissance and airborne tanker role, but it had to be grounded in early 1965 when the aircraft succumbed to metal fatigue. Featuring photographs throughout, as well as detailed profile artwork, this volume explores the entire history of this aircraft.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Churchill's Eagles* Richard Mead, 2024-06-30 An in-depth overview of the role of the Royal Air Force's leaders during World War II. The RAF did not come of age until the Second World War. The role of its forerunners in the Great War, the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service, although important, was peripheral to that of the ground forces. The founding father of the RAF, Lord Trenchard, was determined that it should become a fully-fledged third service, equal in status to the Royal Navy and British Army, and this he succeeded in doing between the wars, firstly by setting up the RAF College at Cranwell, and Staff College at Andover, and secondly by providing a cost-effective policeman of the more rebellious parts of the British Empire. By 1939 the RAF had grown substantially, but, of the three best aircraft of the coming War, only the Supermarine Spitfire was in service, as neither the Avro Lancaster nor the De Havilland Mosquito would be available until early 1942. Aircraft, however, were not enough. It was the leaders of the RAF, the subjects of this book, who would take the battle to the enemy and who, after six long years, would prevail.

world war 2 uk airfields: *Cheerio and Best Wishes* Ralph H. Schneck, Donald R. Schneck, 2013 This is the true story of a young boy from Posey County, Indiana, who had a dream to fly. The

outbreak of World War II enabled him to fulfill that dream. *Cheerio and Best Wishes* is told entirely through the letters he wrote to his family and friends. Detailed narrative and commentary provide explanation and background information. One hundred thirty-eight letters are presented in this book. It is highly unusual to find this many letters from one person, curated by his family and recently rediscovered by his son, along with carefully created photograph albums. The story starts in rural southern Indiana and follows the young volunteer as he goes westward to California and New Mexico to be trained to fly bombers. From the United States, he travels via South America and North Africa to England and deploys with the Eighth Air Force. The accounts of his journeys and experiences are detailed, ranging from entertaining to spine-tingling. Moments of high drama intermingle with the mundane nature of war. Together the letters and pictures in this book (the originals are now preserved for posterity in the Purdue University Flight Archives) offer a comprehensive and cohesive story of how US airmen were prepared and trained for war, and detail the daily experience of a bomber pilot flying missions over Germany. The letters of one young flyer reflect the experience of thousands of Americans who volunteered to go to war in the 1940s. His experiences were those of a generation.

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