

Station Badges: Copies of badges may be available from the Air Historical Branch.

Photographs: Please write to or fax the Royal Air Force Museum's Photographic Department if you would like to obtain photographs of RAF stations (these are primarily aerial photographs). You may also wish to contact the Imperial War Museum and the National Monuments Record Centre (part of English Heritage).

USAAF Stations: Information on airfields in the UK used by American air forces is given in two books by R A Freeman, published by *After the Battle: Airfields of the Eighth Then and Now* (1978); *UK Airfields of the Ninth Then and Now* (1994).

Civil Airfields: J F Hamlin, *Peaceful Fields: A Directory of Civil Airfields and Landing Grounds in the United Kingdom from 1919 to 1939. Vol. 1: The South* (GMS Enterprises, 1996).

Further Research

Please write to the Department of Research and Information Services if you require further advice on sources. The Royal Air Force Museum Library includes a selection of station magazines, from the First World War onwards, and our Archives hold other material relating to RAF stations, such as photographs and flying log books. The Museum of Army Flying and Fleet Air Arm Museum may also hold relevant information.

The National Monuments Record Centre have published detailed survey reports of some disused UK airfields.

Further information on many more sources, especially official records, is given in: S Fowler, P Elliott, R C Nesbit & C Goulter, *RAF Records in the PRO* (PRO Publications, 1994), which also covers RFC, RNAS and FAA records. TNA's website also gives advice on using records held there.

You may be interested in joining the Airfield Research Group, an association of aviation historians:
Ray Towler (General Secretary)
33A Earls Street, Thetford
Norfolk IP24 2AB
Telephone 01842 765399
Website: www.airfield-research-group.co.uk

Addresses

The National Archives

Ruskin Avenue
Kew
Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU
Tel: 020 8876 3444
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Air Historical Branch (RAF)

Building 824
RAF Northolt
West End Road
Ruislip
Middlesex HA4 6NG

Museum of Army Flying

Middle Wallop
Stockbridge
Hampshire
SO20 8DY
tel: 01980 674421
www.flying-museum.org.uk

The National Monuments Record Centre

Great Western Village
Kemble Drive
Swindon
Wiltshire SN2 2GZ
tel: 01793 414600
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Imperial War Museum

Lambeth Road
London
SE1 6HZ
tel: 020 7416 5000
www.iwm.org.uk

Fleet Air Arm Museum

Box D6
RNAS Yeovilton
Ilchester
Somerset BA22 8HT
tel: 01935 840565
www.fleetairarm.com

Department of Research & Information Services Information Sheet No.4 Royal Air Force Stations

This leaflet describes records covering stations (airfields and other bases) used by the RAF and its predecessors, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC: 1912–1918) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS: 1914–1918). The titles of books are given in italics. Most books mentioned here are in the Royal Air Force Museum's Library, and may also be held by The National Archives (TNA) (formerly the Public Record Office), the Imperial War Museum (Department of Printed Books) and other museums.

Researchers wishing to view material held in the Royal Air Force Museum's library and archives should make an appointment by telephone, fax or e-mail with the Department of Research and Information Services well in advance of their proposed visit. Enquiries should be made in writing (enclosing an SAE), mentioning any sources which have already been consulted.

Separate information sheets are available from the Department of Research and Information Services about other topics of research, such as RAF personnel records and aircraft or airfield histories.

**Department of Research & Information Services
Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon,
London NW9 5LL Tel: 020 8205 2266 Fax: 020 8200 1751**

**website: www.rafmuseum.org
e-mail: research@rafmuseum.org**

Published Sources

The Royal Air Force Museum Library holds many books about individual airfields, but some are no longer in print. Please write to the Department of Research and Information Services if you require further advice on these or other sources. Less information is available about those RAF stations which were not airfields.

The *Action Stations* series of books (all published by Patrick Stephens Ltd) gives brief histories of the major military airfields in the UK:

- *Vol. 1: Military Airfields of East Anglia*, M J F Bowyer (1979/1990)
- *Vol. 2: Military Airfields of Lincolnshire*, B Halpenny (1981/1991)
- *Vol. 3: Military Airfields of Wales and the North*, D J Smith (1981/1990)
- *Vol. 4: Military Airfields of Yorkshire*, B Halpenny (1982/1990)
- *Vol. 5: Military Airfields of the South-West*, C Ashworth (1990)
- *Vol. 6: Military Airfields of the Cotswolds and the Central Midlands*, M J F Bowyer, (1983/1990)
- *Vol. 7: Military Airfields of Scotland, the North-East and Northern Ireland*, D J Smith (1983/1989)
- *Vol. 8: Military Airfields of Greater London*, B Halpenny (1984/1993)
- *Vol. 9: Military Airfields of the Central South and South-East*, C Ashworth (1985/1990)
- *Vol. 10: Supplement and index*, B Quarrie (1987).

T Fairbairn, *Action Stations Overseas* (Patrick Stephens Ltd, 1991) covers the most well known RAF bases outside the UK.

Another series of books giving histories of individual airfields has been published by Countryside Books:

- G Smith, *Dorset Airfields in the Second World War* (1999)
- G Smith, *Essex Airfields in the Second World War* (1997)
- G Smith, *Hampshire Airfields in the Second World War* (1997)
- G Smith, *Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Airfields in the Second World War* (1999)
- R Brooks, *Kent Airfields in the Second World War* (1998)
- G Smith, *Lincolnshire Airfields in the Second World War* (1997)
- G Smith, *Norfolk Airfields in the Second World War* (1994)
- G Smith, *Northamptonshire Airfields In the Second World War* (1998).

- G Smith, *Suffolk Airfields in the Second World War* (1995)
 - L Pilkington, *Surrey Airfields in the Second World War* (1997)
 - R Brooks, *Sussex Airfields in the Second World War* (1993)
 - P Otter, *Yorkshire Airfields in the Second World War* (1998)
- More recent volumes include regions such as the Thames Valley; Wiltshire; Lancashire; Cumbria and the Isle of Wight.

C G Jefford, *RAF Squadrons* (Airlife, 1988) includes maps showing the locations of major airfields throughout the world at which RFC, RNAS and RAF squadrons have been based, and lists the squadrons which served at each airfield.

R Sturtivant & T Ballance, *The Squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm* (Air-Britain, 1994) includes information on Fleet Air Arm (FAA) shore stations from the 1920s, as does: B Warlow, *Shore establishments of the Royal Navy* (Maritime Books, 1992).

Station Records

Operations Record Books (ORBs or RAF Forms 540 & 541) as war diaries were called from the 1920s, were compiled by all units, including stations. The quality and amount of information contained in ORBs can vary, depending for example on the thoroughness of the compiling officer.

Surviving ORBs which are over 30 years old are open to the public and are at TNA. Station ORBs are in class AIR 28. Further information on stations may be contained in the ORBs of other units, which were based at the station in question: RAF and Commonwealth squadrons (AIR 27), RAF Regiment squadrons (AIR 29), South African Air Force units (AIR 54), Wings (AIR 26), Groups (AIR 25), Commands (AIR 24), Other RAF units: OTUs etc. (AIR 29), FAA squadrons: Second World War (ADM 207), Army Air Corps squadrons: from 1957 (WO 295).

ORBs which are less than thirty years old are held by the Air Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence. Bona fide researchers may apply to the Branch for the release of information from such books.

Other information on airfields held by TNA includes: material in AIR 1 (First World War); AIR 10/4038-4039 and AIR 20/7585-7586 (Second World War).

Directories

In 1918 a survey of RAF stations in the British Isles was carried out and a directory issued in 6 volumes. The Royal Air Force Museum holds only Vol. 5, which covers Marine Operations Stations (i.e. seaplanes and flying boats, land-based maritime aircraft and airships) but a full set is held at TNA (Vols. 1-2 are in class AIR 1/452/15/312/26; Vols. 3-6 in AIR 1/453/15/312/26). These volumes include a plan of each station and brief notes on its function, personnel strength, weather record and accommodation.

A similar directory was issued during the Second World War as *Secret Document (SD) 310: Royal Air Force Airfields and Flying Boat Bases in the United Kingdom, Iceland and Gibraltar*. During the inter-war years the monthly Air Force Lists gave brief details of stations and the locations of units. By 1940 this information had been removed, but a new monthly directory had been introduced: *SD 161: Location of Units in the Royal Air Force*. Copies are held by TNA and the Royal Air Force Museum. Information on airfields outside the UK can be found in the aerial route books compiled in the 1930s and 1940s by the Air Ministry for pilots making overseas flights; a selection of these are held by the Royal Air Force Museum.

Site and Buildings Plans

A good source of information about airfield buildings is: P Francis, *British Military Airfield Architecture from Airships to the Present Day* (Patrick Stephens Ltd, 1996).

The Royal Air Force Museum holds over 2000 'Record Site Plan' drawings, mainly of RAF airfields in the UK and overseas, but also some of other stations such as radar sites, dating from the 1930s onwards.

These were originally compiled by the Air Ministry Works Directorate, and show the layout of the site, identifying each building. Sometimes the key to the plan gives the standard RAF drawing numbers of the buildings used. The Museum also holds copies of some of these buildings plans. Copies of these plans can usually be supplied.