

Dedicated to the 76 airmen who flew in WW2 from

RAF REDHILL

who gave their lives in air combat

Ever since the end of WW2, Nutfield the home of RAF REDHILL had not had a War Memorial dedicated to the airmen who gave their lives flying from this Airstrip defending our way of life. Mike Garwood and his team of researchers from Nutfield History Group has put this right by finding out about the young airmen who flew from there and their fighter aircraft.

This research led to the design and supply of the Memorial Plaque, which was cast of Spitfire type aluminium in Australia.

The group gained Ministry of Defence approval for the use of the RAF crest and signed an official document to confirm the plaque would be mounted in a safe, secure and permanent location.



Listed as an official War Memorial by the Ministry of Defence.
The Plaque is now in Nutfield's Memorial Hall.



The unveiling of Memorial Plaque April 2017

by Air Commodore S Walton (*centre*) RAF QHP, MA, BSc, MBBS, MRCGP, DRCOG, DFFP, DAvMed, MRAeS
in the presence of attaches from
USA, France, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.



WW2 Spitfire from Biggin Hill with flypast after the ceremony.

Story behind the Research

Researching (*with National Archives*) the names of pilots who gave their lives in mortal combat flying from RAF Redhill, we found conflicting information that previously had not come to light.

The worst of these were dates that did not relate to each other and RAF Squadrons that were there and not recorded, and squadrons that took part in Battle of Britain actions that we did not have reference to.

Careful sorting of these facts and cross referencing them to each other, we were able to put together a small book 'This Hallowed Airstrip' to be presented when the Memorial Plaque was unveiled which, to the best of our knowledge, told us about the flying activities of RAF Redhill Squadrons in WW2.

'This Hallowed Airstrip' also sets out to tell the story of many happenings at Redhill Aerodrome which has now become a part of Nutfield's history and I hope that it will play a part in helping remember the listed 75 on the Memorial Plaque.

It must be noted: Most likely names of four airmen from No.402 Squadron and 452 Squadron on the Plaque who gave their lives were not recorded in order to protect their families back home from reprisals from the Gestapo. After the unveiling of the plaque the name of another pilot from 457 Squadron, who also gave his life, was discovered also not recorded, (given by a private source) taking the total to 76 Pilots, which is more than we first thought.

Book tribute to 75 airmen who died on WW2 sorties

Plaque to be unveiled by RBL members

YESTERYEAR was let loose, his family ran indoors and swiftly took shelter under the stairs. These days, the book is a household name. It was remarkable how they all felt in the company of the book. This was to be the Garwood's collection by accident and the Second World War years.

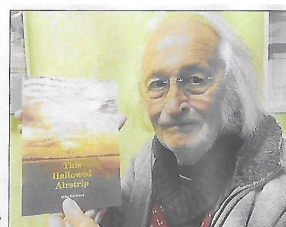
The book, just 100 pages, tells the story of the 75 airmen who died on sorties from RAF Redhill in the Second World War. It was written by Mike Garwood, a local historian and author of 'The Hallowed Airstrip'.

On a sunny day in September 2010, the book was unveiled at the Redhill Aerodrome. The unveiling was attended by a large number of dignitaries, including the Mayor of Redhill, Cllr. David Smith, and the Mayor of Surrey, Cllr. David Lam. The book was presented to the Mayor of Redhill by the Mayor of Surrey.

WIN COMMANDER B.F. Frouman from the No 602 Squadron was let loose, his family ran indoors and swiftly took shelter under the stairs. These days, the book is a household name. It was remarkable how they all felt in the company of the book. This was to be the Garwood's collection by accident and the Second World War years.

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AUTHOR: Mike Garwood with his new publication telling the story of Redhill Aerodrome.



SPECTACLE: A major event on Redhill Aerodrome on 10th Sept was the unveiling of a book which tells the story of the 75 airmen who died on sorties from the station during the Second World War.



BASED AT REDHILL: The book is based on the stories of the 75 airmen who died on sorties from the station during the Second World War.



NOT FORGOTTEN: An illustration of the planes in Redhill Aerodrome which were used by the 75 airmen who died on sorties from the station during the Second World War.



IN THE FUTURE: The book is based on the stories of the 75 airmen who died on sorties from the station during the Second World War.



DOO'S CREW MATE: A member of the 31st Coastal Squadron with a crewed dog which carried messages in a number of sorties from the station during the Second World War.



OTHER GLANCES AT THE PAST



131 YEARS AGO

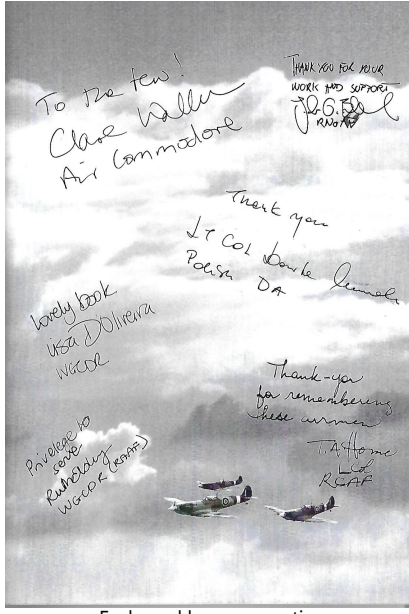
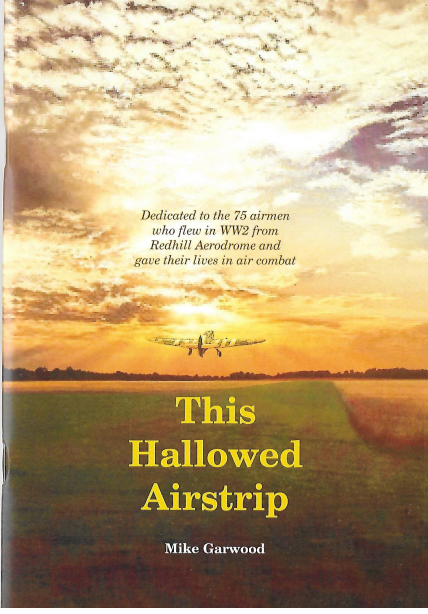


28 YEARS AGO



NOT OFF THE PRESS: The book is based on the stories of the 75 airmen who died on sorties from the station during the Second World War.

Great interest was shown in book when it made the Press & BBC Radio

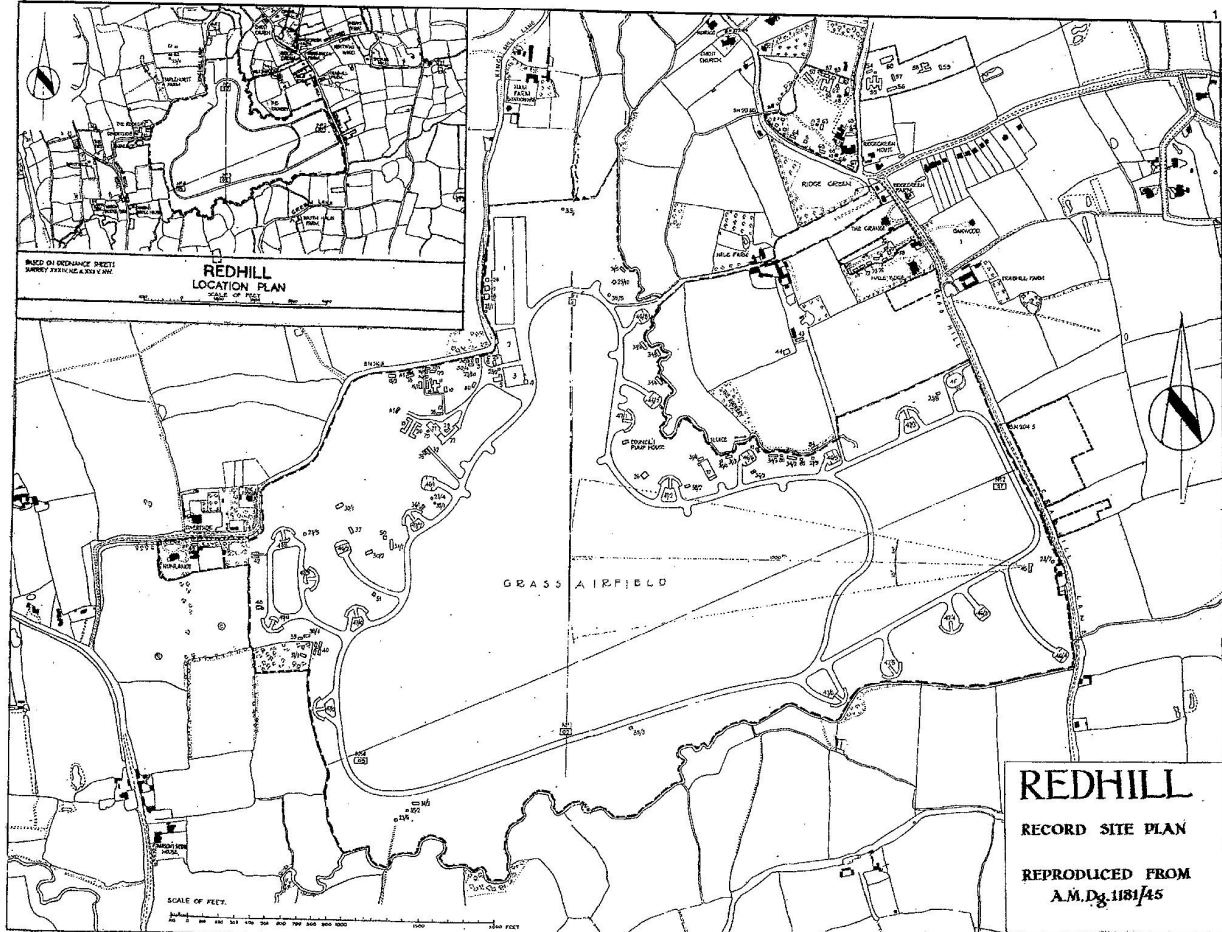


Endorsed by seven nations

The Ministry of Defence reviewed 'This Hallowed Airstrip' book which was published by NHG and written and researched to accompany the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque.

RAF Redhill Site Plan of Redhill Aerodrome in WW2

RAF Redhill, a satellite of Kenley (Fighter Sector), was under the command of Air Vice-Marshal KW Hayr, Air Officer Commanding of 11 Group and the day to day running at RAF Redhill was by a Station Warrant Officer with HQ at Hamme Farm dating back to 1593 (*now known as Hamme House*) the original home of the Lords of the Manor of Nutfield for most of the 17th Century. At that time farmers harrowed their fields which eventually became 'This Harrowed Airstrip'.



RAF station H/ Q



(4) RAF control tower



(47) Fighter aircraft pens



(AG) anti-aircraft guns

ABOVE: SITE PLAN OF RAF REDHILL FIGHTER STATION IN WW2

RAF Station HQ (*Hamme Farm*).
Top of site plan to right of location plan.

(4) The control tower for the station.

(47) Twelve fighter aircraft pens

(AG) Eight anti-aircraft guns positions.

© Plan of RAF Redhill supplied by Air Historical Branch of the RAF

At one point RAF Redhill had as many as eight squadrons stationed there in the war at the same time, and as many as 33 squadrons used it as a base for refuelling to give a greater range to their fighter planes.

To give some idea of the number of aircraft this was, it would be interesting to know how many aircraft were in a squadron. Documents indicate this was supposed to be 27 aircraft starting 10 January 1941, but no unit had this strength until early 1942 due to limited aircraft production.

Based on this information there would have been a mighty lot of aircraft stationed there. The noise of the Merlin engines alone would have had a great presence when Spitfire flights took off, to be 'First of the Few'.

It was stated that over TWO HUNDRED planes were there at the time of the invasion of France.

It is said
***'RAF Redhill played a significant part
in the Battle of Britain'.***



**'Never in the field of human conflict was
so much owed by so many to so few'.**

Winston Churchill

RAF No.16 Squadron - Westland Lysander. June 1940

RNZAF No.485 Squadron. Spitfire Mk I. June 1940 to October 1941

**Sgt GOODWIN, Sgt HENDRY, P/O KNIGHT, Sgt MANEY, P/O MIDDLETON, Sgt MILLER,
Sgt PAGET, Sgt PORTER, Sgt RUSSELL, P/O STEWART*

R Aux AF No.600 Squadron - Bristol Blenheim. September 1940

RAF No.116 Squadron- Airspeed Oxford & Avro Anson. September 1940

RAF No.219 Squadron - Bristol Blenheim, Bristol Beaufighter. October 1940

**P/O BARON, Sgt GARDINER, Sgt SHEPPARD, P/O WORDSELL*

No.111 Squadron - Lysander (formerly 440 Squadron)

**Sgt/P BERYSON*

No.1 Squadron- Hawker Hurricane. 2 May 1941 – 1 February 1942

**P/O BEHAL, Sgt NASSVETTER, F/O ROBINSON*

RAF No.258 Squadron - Hurricane. 1 June – 15 June 1941

**P/O EVEREST*

RAF No.452 Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 21 October 1941 – 17 March 1942

**Sgt EMERY, Sgt GEISSMANN, Sgt HAMILTON, Sgt SHRADER*

Two pilots whose names were withheld

R Aux AF No.602 Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 14 January & 13 May – 17 July 1942

**Sgt. AAREBROT, Sgt BECKLEY, W/C FINUCANE DFO DFC & 2 BARS,
P/O INNES-JONES, F/Lt MAJOR, Sgt MORRELL, P/O TAIT, F/Sgt WILLIS*

R Aux A F No.603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron

14 January – 4 March 1942 & 13 May – 17 July 1942

RAAF No.457 Squadron - Spitfire Vb. 23 March – 31 May 1942

**Gp/Capt BEAMISH DSO& BAR DFC. Sgt BLOOMFIED, Sgt BURGESS, Sgt EDWARDS,
Sgt HALLIDAY, P/O HALSE, F/Lt NORTH, Sgt PARBERRY, P/O RUSSELL, Sgt SMITH*

No.402 Squadron - Spitfire Vb. 22 June – 6 September 1942

**Two pilots whose names were withheld*

308 Polish Squadron (RAF). Spitfire Vb. 6 July 1942

**P/O KAWCZYNSKI*

RAAF No.401 Squadron – Spitfire IX. May - August 1943

**F/O DELBRIDGE*

No.303 Polish Fighter Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 15 August - 20 August 1942
P/O DAMM

No.350 Squadron – Spitfire. 15 July - 23 September 1942
***Sgt JACOBIN, P/O MARCHAL, P/O MENU**

No.504 Squadron - Spitfire. 14 August - 19 September 1943

No.312 Czech Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 1 July - 8 July 1942

No.310 Czech Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 4 days August 1942

Free French No.340 Squadron – Spitfire Vb. 7 days in August 1942
***Lt CHORON, Comdt DE SCITIVAUX, W/C ROBINSON**

RAAF No.611 Squadron – Spitfire Mk IX. 1 August - 23 September 1942
***P/O FRIDAY, Sgt WALKER**

No.66 Squadron – Spitfire XI. 10 August - 13 August 1943

No.131 Squadron - Spitfire. 16 August – 17 September 1943
***F/Sgt ANDREWS, P/O BATEMAN, Lt BURT**

No.231 Squadron - North American Mustang. 16 August 1943 - 15 January 1944

RCAF No.416 Squadron – Spitfire IX. August 1942 - February 1943
***Sgt MCLEOD**

RCAF No.412 Squadron - Spitfire Vb. June 1942 – January 1943
**Sgt MILLS, S/Ldr MORRISON, Sgt PAGAN,
P/O PEARCE, Sgt SPENCE, P/O YOUNG**

RAAF No.421-Squadron – Spitfire Vb. March – May 1943
***C/O ARCHER DFC, *F/Sgt KINNAIRD, P/O MYERS, F/O ROGERS**

HQ No.126 Airfield. (Renamed No.126 (Fighter) Wing) 4 July - 6 August 1943,
Spitfire Squadrons No. 401, 411 and 412 RCAF
***S/Ldr BALL, F/Lt BANFIELD, F/Lt JOHNSTONE, F/O SPAETZEL**

HQ No.17 Wing. 4 July - 6 August 1943
Spitfire squadron No. 402 RCAF

RCAF No.414 Squadron – Mustang MkI. 15 October – 2 November 1943
***F/O LEWIS**

RCAF No.400 Squadron – Mustang MkI. December 1943

RAF No.116 Squadron - Avro Anson. 5 September 1944 - May 1945

No.287 Squadron – Tempest Vs. 1 January 1945
***F/Sgt REDSTON**

No.6 Canadian Casualty Air Evacuation Unit – Dakota. 1 February on

***WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.**
The fighter Pilots who gave their lives flying from RAF Redhill

Source of the above squadrons and pilots names:
National Archives (Kew) AIR23/667, AIR27, AIR26 and Air29

Just six of the many Interesting RAF Redhill stories, discovered while researching the names for the plaque.

The loss of one arm did not stop Squadron Leader MacLachlan



Hawker Hurricane 11As 'JX T' at Redhill

RAF No.1 Hurricane Squadron moved to Redhill, a satellite station of RAF Kenley, from Tangmere, during 1941, when it engaged in fighter sweeps and carried out bomber escort duties. In 1942, it started 'Rhubarb' and night flying when the first of its Hurricane 11As arrived.

This heralded a period of change for the Squadron whose strength now included both Czechs and Poles, the emphasis increasingly focusing on night flying.



MacLachlan with his painting
of his lost arm on his Hurricane

Squadron Leader MacLachlan DSO, DFC & Two Bars (1 April 1919 – 31 July 1943) was a Royal Air Force flying ace of the Second World War, who lost his arm in combat.

On 3 November 1941 MacLachlan was promoted to Squadron Leader and was given command of No.1 Squadron at Redhill Aerodrome, equipped with the Hawker Hurricane Mk IIc for night intruder operations over western Europe.

He was assigned his personal aircraft, Hurricane BD983/JX-Q. He painted an emblem showing a left arm with a cannon shell passing through it and the fingers giving the V sign.

Squadron Leader, James Archibald Findlay MacLachlan was fitted with a new arm at the Queen Mary's Hospital. He explained to the doctors that he required an arm that would allow him to fly a Hurricane.

They designed a limb that allowed him to operate the throttle while taking the control column and firing button with his right hand. They spent hours studying the cockpit layout.

The medical staff produced an arm with four spring-loaded pins, like fingers, which enabled him to use the controls on the port side of the cockpit. They secured his left arm to the levers of the throttle quadrant with throttle, propeller pitch control, supercharger and mixture control. The landing gear controls were located on the right side.

The artificial arm had to interact with the control column while the gear was being retracted or lowered. His new arm proved sufficient and in September 1941 he flew as many hours in Hurricanes as possible, though not without incident.

On 7 September 1941 he nearly collided with a Bristol Blenheim in low cloud. Nevertheless, he was cleared for operational flying on 15 October.



No.1 Squadron Hurricane 11As. MacLachlan's personal aircraft, Hurricane BD983/JX-Q. painted night fighter black.

The squadron spent the winter of 1941–2 in intensive night fighter training with searchlight and ground control station. In February 1942 he attended the Searchlight School at Shrivenham. In his absence he missed the Channel Dash and subsequent air battle during which the squadron lost two pilots.

The squadron scored its first success on 1 April, his 21st birthday, when Karel Kuttelwascher, with whom he often flew, destroyed two Ju 88s. MacLachlan found locating German aircraft in the dark difficult, though he himself claimed a locomotive damaged on the night and left two of its wagons destroyed.



Spitfire of 602 Squadron LO-C with RAF Redhill in background

Wing Commander BE Finucane **A record second to none: 32 aircraft shot down**

RAAF No.602 Squadron-Spitfire Vb. The Squadron, like 603 Squadron, spent the early part of the war and Battle of Britain on defensive duties in Scotland but, in August 1940, it moved south to join the Battle to RAF Redhill from 14 January to 4 March 1942, under the command of Wing Commander BE Finucane DSO, DFC & 2 Bars.



Wing Commander BE Finucane

602 Squadron then moved over to RAF Kenley, returning to Redhill from 13 to 17 May under the command of Wing Commander BE Finucane DSO, DFC & 2 Bars.

Sadly, Finucane took off from Redhill on 15 July with his flight for a mission over France.

His Spitfire Vb was damaged by groundfire. Finucane attempted to fly back to England across the English Channel, but was forced to ditch into the sea and vanished.

His record was second to none: 32 aircraft shot down, including Me109s, Fw190s and Me110s.

A new CO was appointed while at Redhill, Squadron Leader PM Brothers DFC. In July the Squadron returned to its native Scotland.

Another move came in January 1943, this time to the South.

A notable operation for the Squadron was the joint action which took part with 452 Squadron on the German warships Scharnhorst, Prinz Eugen and Gneisenau, damaging one of the escorting destroyers.



The Squadron that was not reported to be there, but was.

308 Polish Squadron (RAF). In October 1941 the Squadron was based at Baginton Aerodrome with 'Tommy' Yeo-Thomas, known by the Gestapo as 'The White Rabbit', as the Squadron's Intelligence Officer. Later, the Squadron operated with Spitfires from RAF Northolt. The Squadron was known as No.308 'Krakowski' a manned fighter Squadron with the markings ZF.

On 6 July 1942 the Squadron launched a secret operation from RAF Redhill with the loss of Pilot Officer Kawczynski. Only the death of Kawczynski gave clue that 308 Squadron was at RAF Redhill which was not recorded in the first place.

The Legendary Polish Battle of Britain Fighter Squadron 303.

No.303 Polish Fighter Squadron. On 15 August 1942, *The Legendary Battle of Britain Fighter 303 Squadron* moved temporarily to Redhill in preparation for the Allied Raid on Dieppe (Operation Jubilee) under the command of Squadron Leader Jan Zumbach.



During this period, Zumbach flew three Supermarine Spitfire Vbs, carrying the serial numbers BM144, EP594 and EN951.

All these aircraft carried the same code, RF-D, 'RF' being the Squadron code for 303 Squadron and "D" the individual aircraft code. All three aircraft carried a cartoon of Donald Duck on the port side of the fuselage, slightly forward of the cockpit.

Spitfire Mk.Vb EN951 'RF D' of S/Ldr Jan Zumbach with Donald Duck motif over Redhill.

Flying with Zumbach was F/Lt Zygmunt W Bienkowski who was trained as a pilot with the Polish Air Force Academy. Joined 303 on 6th Nov 1941. Shot down a Me105 and was shot up by Fw 109 and made a forced landing on the South Coast. Served as Squadron Leader 1942-3. The Americans gave him the nickname Bing Crosby which was a play on his name. He led a wing of 12 Spitfires. His own Spitfire carried the squadron marking of FR-H - 'H' being his fiancée's initial, which had her first name 'Halszka' in small print alongside the 'H' on the side of the aircraft.

Towards the end of the war in 1945 he was made a Wing Commander of 303 Squadron. Unfortunately he was shot down by flak near Wessel, held as a POW and planned an escape but was advised to cancel due to advancing American Forces who released him.

Zygmunt Bienkowski flew 74 combat sorties and was awarded the 'Silver Cross', 'Cross of Valour' (3 times) and the 'Airman Cross'



Bienkowski and Zumbach in RAF Redhill 'Operation Jubilee' ops room



Bienkowski and Zumbach at RAF Redhill



more relaxing time at RAF Redhill, Bienkowski second from the right

A notable operation for the No.303 Squadron claimed the highest number of aircraft shot down of all Allied Squadrons participating (see picture above). No.303 then returned to Kirton in Lindsey from RAF Redhill, where it remained until March 1943.

*'Had it not been for the magnificent material contribution
by the Polish Squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry,
I hesitate to say that the outcome of the Battle would have been the same'.*

Sir Hugh Dowding

Air Chief Marshal

It was discovered after publishing 'This Hallowed Airstrip' that Bienkowski's daughter was now living in South Nutfield.

*Many thanks to her for showing her father's 303 Squadron records in his photo album
and giving permission to use pictures, which shed new light on 303 Squadron at RAF Redhill.*

*She also helped and supplied her personal insight of how her father met up with Halszka
after she escaped from occupied Poland, not knowing whether each other was alive or dead
meeting up after 6 years and then getting married.*

**The Squadron that operated a shuttle service,
day and night, bringing back casualties from Europe.**

RCAF No.6 Casualty Air Evacuation Unit. The CCAEU detachment of Dakotas had moved from RAF Gatwick which was immediately adjacent to No.9 Canadian General Hospital at Horsham.



RCAF No.6 Casualty Air Evacuation Unit, like other Medical Aero Units, had no medical marking.

On 1 February 1945 the CCAEU unit moved to RAF Redhill, to conform to changing conditions. During the following months CCAEU Squadron operated a shuttle service, day and night, from the war zone, evacuating casualties to Smallfield Hospital and, in some cases, Special Canadian Plastic Burns Unit at East Grinstead.

CCAEU Dakotas would carry 14 stretcher cases and six sitting wounded from Europe to Redhill.

RCAF Flight nurses were among the first to step foot in Europe.

CCAEU Dakotas carried no Squadron markings as they were also used for carrying military supplies.

Emergency landings strip at RAF Redhill

Most of the squadrons left Redhill in September leaving the airfield to be used for unofficial emergency landings on 18 and 23 September with two B17s. One of these was Lt William Lawley's 'Cabin in the sky', belonging to the American 8th Air Force, which made an emergency landing.



B 17 'Cabin in the sky' crash lands at RAF Redhill. © Official American 8th Air Force

'Cabin in the Sky'. As part of a 700-strong operation to bomb Leipzig in February 1944 B17G 4238109 'Cabin in the sky' was piloted by Lt Lawley.

While the B17 was over its target, the first enemy salvo killed the co-pilot Lt Paul Murphy, breaking its wind screen, with Lt Murphy slumped across the controls, putting the B17 into a steep dive from 10,000ft.

The captain, Lt Lawley, moved Lt Murphy's body off the controls and stabilised the aircraft at 1,200ft.

One engine was on fire which he extinguished, feathering its propeller. He then realized he was wiping blood from his own face and later discovered that others were also injured, two

of them badly. The bomb-aimer joined Lt Lawley on the flight deck and helped him strap his dead co-pilot to his seat away from the controls.

Lt Lawley then lost consciousness which left the bomb-aimer, with limited flying knowledge, reaching the south of England. Lt Mason was aware that one engine had stopped and another had caught fire.

This meant that his B17 was down to just one engine.

He then spotted an RAF base at Redhill and was able to get Lt Lawley revived in time to land the B17.

Unfortunately they discovered the undercarriage would not come down and landed in a shower of sparks from RAF Redhill's Sommerfield runway.

B17 'Cabin in the sky' crash land picture is the only genuine photo of this landing at RAF Redhill.

The crew were treated at the RAF Redhill's Avenue House Hospital and the B17 'Cabin in the Sky' was restored to an excellent flying condition by the airfield Servicing Echelons before being flown back to base.

Lt W Lawley was awarded the 'Congressional Medal of Honour' for this action.

It was said this aircraft was repaired. A second landed OK and flew back to its base. B24 landed, being short of fuel. A Liberator also made a forced landing and likely was dismantled to be taken away.

The work goes on Keeping the memory of RAF Redhill alive today

RAF Redhill was a satellite aerodrome of Kenley which has been designated by Tandridge and Croydon Councils as a conservation area in recognition of the part it played in the Battle of Britain.

It could be argued that RAF Redhill should have been given the same degree of recognition as Kenley at the same time.

During WW2, RAF Redhill had 33 squadrons there and, at one time, 200 fighters were there.

RAF Redhill played a vital role in the D-Day invasion to free Europe with two headquarters for the RAF 2nd Tactical Airforce. Not only that but RAF Redhill's DC Dakotas brought back casualties day and night from the battlefields of Europe, saving many lives, building on its fame for the freedom of Europe.

The lack of interest shown in this country regarding what the airfield has done for us is evident, whereas Polish schoolchildren know the names of their pilots who flew with the RAF and the contribution they made in winning the Battle of Britain. Today we have a descendant of a Polish fighter pilot living in Nutfield who, I'm sure, would not want it *Destroyed!*

PROTECT OUR WW2 HERITAGE

RAF REDHILL



76 fighters pilots
gave their lives in
defending our
way
of life
flying from RAF
Redhill In the
Battle of Britain

MAKE RAF REDHILL AIRFIELD A HERITAGE SITE LIKE BOSWORTH FIELD
Source: Nutfield link with Bosworth Field, Mike Garwood "Queens Head 1505 Tudor Wing", 2013, p.12. Published by NHG

One day, RAF Redhill may be seen as international importance as a part UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Nutfield is proud of being part of the history
of Royal Air Force in their 100 years**