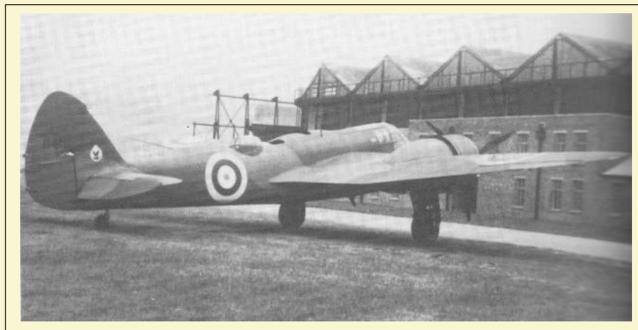
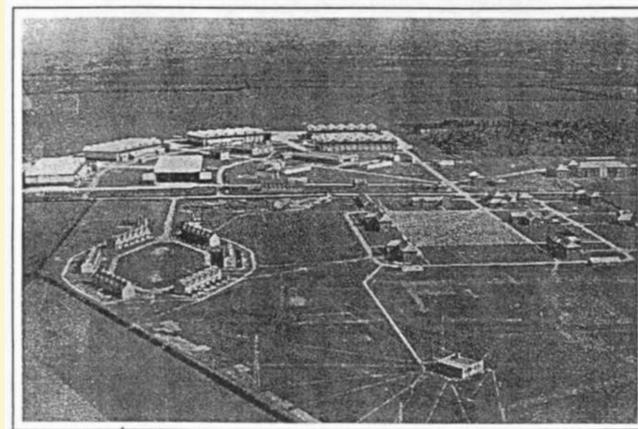


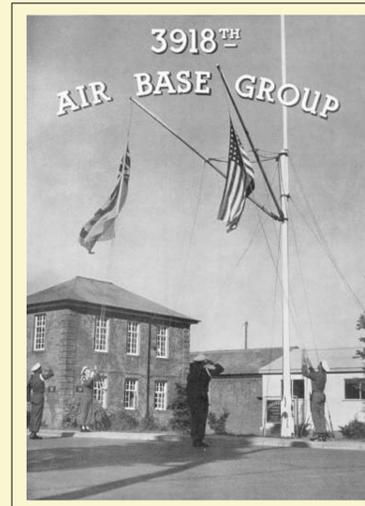
THE USAF UPPER HEYFORD STORY: 1



Handley Page Hyderabads at Upper Heyford in 1928 (above and below)

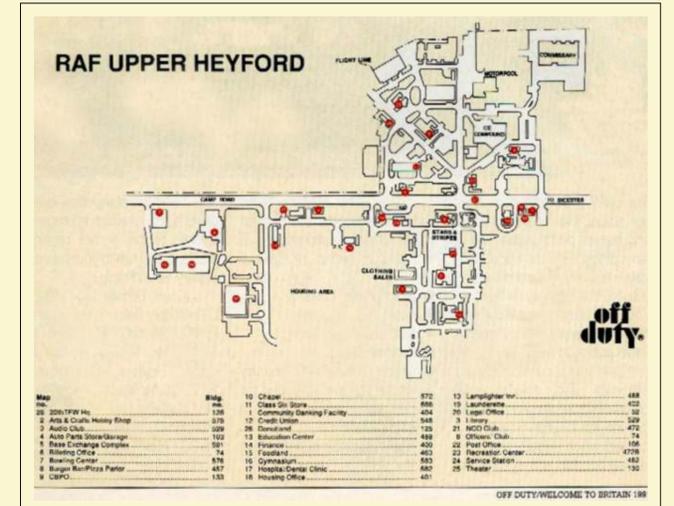


An RAF Blenheim in 1939 (above) and a USAF B47 (below) in 1956, both at Upper Heyford.



1915 to 1969

- 1915 First use of the land as an airfield.
- 1939-45 R.A.F. Upper Heyford station bombers at the airfield
- 1951 USAF takes over operational charge of the Base which expands in size throughout the '50s with increasing influence over local commerce and employment.
- 1950s Some complaints about low-flying or night-flying aircraft as well as noise from heavy air-tankers
- 1953 A bomber, coming in to land, crashes onto the railway line at the foot of Cow Lane. An approaching train is able to stop in time.
- 1955 First "Open House" for the Base attended by general public.
- 1969 9.00am 12th May. A Voodoo aircraft, piloted by Major Sipes, fails to make height at take-off and the pilot remains with the stricken plane in order to save lives. It crashes 300 yards from the school. His sacrifice is commemorated in a plaque in the church. The story appears in national newspapers.



The plaque in honour of Major Sipes in the Church.

May 1969



"Scrip" was the slang name given to Military Payment Certificates (MPC) which were notes issued to U.S. military forces from about 1946 until 1973 when serving abroad. Though looking like dollars, they were more cheaply printed and sometimes compared to Monopoly money. Their design and appearance changed frequently in order to stop them being mistaken for genuine currency. During the early years at Upper Heyford, "scrip" was paid to servicemen but had value only when used for purchases on the Base. In order to make the most of "scrip", many airmen bought goods which were cheaper in military shops than the civilian equivalents and sold them on to their British neighbours and workers for profit. That is how so many locals were able to benefit from lighting up a Lucky Strike cigarette to accompany a glass of Jack Daniels bourbon.

RUNWAY ROW AT CRASH VILLAGE

STEEPLE ASTON parents last night renewed demands to have the runways at the Upper Heyford U.S. air base pointing away from the village.

The demands were made at a village protest meeting a few hours after a Voodoo jet plane crashed on take-off, killing the pilot. The meeting agreed to send a letter of sympathy to the American authorities on the pilot's death.

The meeting went on to form a village action committee to press for the closure of the runways. The Voodoo reconnaissance plane crashed in a field less than 300 yards from Dr. Radcliffe's Secondary School where an overflow class from the nearby primary school was being taught. Before the protest meeting, there was a meeting of secondary-school parents, arranged before the crash, to discuss arrangements for the transfer of pupils from the secondary school to the Windmill School at Deddington, when Dr. Radcliffe's closes at the end of summer term.

Jet pilot was father of four

The pilot of the Voodoo jet reconnaissance plane which crashed after taking off on a routine training mission from Upper Heyford yesterday was Major Robert R. Sipes, 35, a married man, with four children. He lived with his wife, Phyllis, and their four children - James, aged 13, Lilla, nine, Jeffrey, seven and Anna, ten months, at 16 Castle Field, Arleley, near Brighthelm. Major Sipes, whose home was in Jackson, Tennessee, had served for over 14 years in the United States

