

# DOWNLOAD PDF MILITARY AIRFIELDS OF THE COTSWOLDS AND THE CENTRAL MIDLANDS

## Chapter 1 : Aircraft Crashes Around Turvey

*Military Airfields Of The Cotswolds And The Central Midlands has 2 ratings and 1 review. Peter said: It is interesting to reflect, on the cusp of the*

In the section on the former Denton training airfield was recorded the crash of Tiger Moth BB into power cables at Turvey on the 25th July , the two occupants being killed. On searching through archive records for further details of this incident I noticed other local place names connected with different incidents and a picture of the hazards of wartime flying began to emerge. The thousands of accident record cards that reside in the RAF Museum archives at Hendon show that during the war years, to , a colossal number of aircraft came to grief across the whole of the UK. The vast majority of these losses were not directly due to enemy action, but were the result of mechanical failure or human error as crews prepared for their first missions, were converting to new aircraft types, or just honing their flying and navigation skills. Those involved were often young - in their late teens or early twenties - and in the cemetery at Kempston Church End Ordnance Survey 1: To date I have found references to more than aircraft crashes and forced landings within a 12 mile radius of Turvey. This article chronicles eight of the closest, and in the course of researching and pinpoint them official records are full of anomalies, mis-spellings and inaccuracies I have received invaluable help from several local people to whom I am grateful. There was an explosion and, trailing flames, the aircraft lost height and crashed to the ground yards beyond, next to the buildings of Northey Farm. Exactly three weeks later Germany would invade Poland and precipitate the start of World War Two, and this was the first of a number of flying accidents that happened close to Turvey in the six years of war. Peter Allan, were killed instantly. The third member of the crew, wireless operator Aircraftman 1st Class Ivor Roberts, was badly burned and critically injured. In their appearance must have posed a relatively new and unexpected hazard for low flying aviators and unfortunately, four years later and little over a mile away, the cables of this line were to bring down another aircraft. Had he missed the pylon that day one wonders what the future might have held for these men. By early June it is recorded that no aircraft were left in Squadron and all remaining personnel were evacuated to the UK where re-equipment with Bristol Blenheims began on the 13th June at RAF Mildenhall in Norfolk. The next aircraft that appears to have come down in this corner of North Bedfordshire was also a Fairey Battle. On the 9th April Battle K of Squadron based at Cranfield is recorded as having suffered engine failure near Turvey. This was probably the same aircraft that Francis Bailey of May Road recalls sat for several days in a field opposite the water tower on Pictshill. It had crash-landed with wheels up and and spun round, with its propeller blades bent back, and being unguarded he had the opportunity to climb all over it! This aircraft was transferred to the Royal Canadian Airforce in December and presumably ended its flying days in Canada. In passing over the farm the starboard wing tip of the aircraft struck the top of a 40 foot high Ash tree, which damaged it, and probably damaged the aileron. The aircraft started a turn to starboard, which gradually steepened; after losing height the aircraft struck the ground just to the NE of Harrold and caught fire. The three occupants were killed instantly. His parents lived in Australia and he is remembered by several local residents visiting his aunt and uncle in Harrold when on leave, and attending church at Carlton. Mary Churchyard, west of the tower, on the 18th July His name appears on the Harrold War Memorial. Established in mid RAF Cranfield was the closest airfield to Turvey until Thurleigh in , and airfields at Twinwoods and Podington a few years later. Throughout the war it was mainly used for flying training and inevitably there were many accidents on and around the airfield as pilots lost control of their machines at critical times - taking off, landing, and in the circuit. Outside the circuit area additional height usually allowed greater margins for error and time to respond to mechanical failure, and so crashes were fewer, more widely distributed, and often less catastrophic. However when low flying or at night when vision was impaired, this safety margin did not come into play. The accident happened at about 3. His wife lived at Bedford and he is buried at Bedford Cemetery. The 22 year old pilot, Sergeant William Whalley, of Blackburn, Lancashire, had been on his first

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solo night flight. By the end of August the war had been underway for nearly three years and the United States of America had entered the war in Europe. The airfields at Podington and Chelveston were also receiving their first combat groups around this time, and the number and types of aircraft flying over Turvey was about to dramatically increase. It was flying low along the valley of the River Ouse towards Harrold and must have just passed Turvey when, opposite Carlton Church, and at a height of roughly 45 feet, it struck the high tension electricity cables spanning the river. It crashed to ground in the riverside meadow yds further on at the rivers bend and completely disintegrated, killing the crew of two instantly. These Norwegian Officers had been with the unit since the middle of May and had nearly completed their training. Three of these were less than 12 miles from Turvey. In some of the story behind the first, which happened sometime between October and March, was related by Fred Proctor, a former Thurleigh pilot, at the first local reunion of the 8th Bomb Group. Having an ear infection his regular crew had been taken for a mission by another pilot. The heavily laden aircraft was said to have come down shortly after take-off from Thurleigh, with some or all of the crew being killed. This was possibly Flying Fortress BF of BG which crashed and exploded in a field a few hundred yards from the Headquarters building at Sharnbrook ammunition depot. Only the co-pilot and tail gunner survived the crash which occurred at hours on 5th January Alford of the 8th Squadron. Upon attempting to land after the mission the wheels bounced on the runway and the aircraft was airborne again, with one wing bursting into flames. Lt Alford climbed to about feet, levelled off and ordered the crew to bale out; the plane crashed and burned about six miles south of the base. Lt Alford and his co-pilot, 2nd Lt Robert E. Madden, the engineer, parachuted safely with only slight skin lacerations. Jim Northern of Harrold recalls that he was picking raspberries behind his parents farm when he saw the aircraft going down trailing black smoke with just two engines operating. Being used to the sound and sight of aircraft she could tell that it was in trouble. Through her front window what appeared to be parcels could be seen dropping out, but it was quickly realised that this was the crew abandoning the stricken bomber and, with it heading their way, she rushed outside to call in her young son. Fortunately it did not reach them and a few minutes later jeeps and ambulances from Podington rushed past the house and up the road towards the crash site. Just over a week later there was another aircraft crash, this time much closer to Turvey. A brief entry in a log book now at the County Records Office shows that at Turvey resident Francis Bailey of May Road recalls that the aircraft was reduced to a pile of charred remains and, judging by the position of the wreckage, had been travelling from east to west at the time. The two instructor pilots flying in it that day had both reported, along with four others, from No. While many types of aircraft still fly over Turvey at a wide variety of heights fortunately the factors that led to so many crashes during the war years have all but gone. Today the technology is more advanced and the machinery more reliable, low flying at tree top level is no longer allowed and much lower numbers of aircraft have more sky to themselves. Indeed flying is supposedly now safer than driving! With the passing of time, and living memory, the airmen who were killed or seriously injured in flying accidents around Turvey - and further afield - between and are likely to become some of the less conspicuous casualties of the Second World War please do not forget them. Airfields of the 8th: Includes Podington, Thurleigh and Chelveston airfields. Aviation in Northamptonshire ; by Michael L Gibson available Northampton Central Library - excellent comprehensive history of flying in our neighbouring county with many fascinating photographs. The Route As Briefed: Air-Britain is an International Association of Aviation Historians run by enthusiasts providing information, for enthusiasts worldwide.

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*The following is a list of Satellite Landing Grounds (SLG).. A Satellite Landing Ground is typically an airfield with one or two grass runways which is designed throughout to be "hidden" from the sky by using woods and other natural features to hide the presence of aircraft and associated buildings.*

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